

Ex-Agent to Publish Book Without CIA

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A former CIA operative has decided to go ahead with publication of an uncensored book about his intelligence work in the Middle East despite CIA hints of a lawsuit.

The CIA warned the author that it felt he had failed to live up to his "fiduciary and contractual obligations" to the government. Agency officials refused to review the book because galley copies had already been distributed to magazine reviewers and others.

The book, "Ropes of Sand—America's Failure in the Middle East," is an autobiographical account by Wilbur C. Eveland, who says he served as the

late CIA Director Allen Dulles' principal representative in the Middle East in the late 1950s. It will be officially published tomorrow by W. W. Norton & Co.

Eveland said he was disappointed by the impasse that developed with the CIA, but maintained he had done his best to reach an agreement. In the end, he said he was forced to decide to "either scrap the book or—as I've done—proceed with its publication."

CIA spokesman Lavon Strong said it was too early to tell whether a lawsuit will be filed. "It's just under consideration," he said.

Eveland brought the book to the CIA's attention Feb. 29 in the wake of

the Supreme Court's controversial decision expanding the government's censorship powers. The ruling required Frank Snepp, another former CIA-officer-turned-author, to relinquish the profits on an unauthorized book he had written.

At first, CIA lawyers told Eveland his work would have to be cleared by the agency's Publication Review Board because of secrecy agreements he had signed, but they refused to supply him with any copies of the agreements on grounds they were still "properly classified."

A former National Security Council aide who was detached to the CIA in 1955 as a "covert associate, Eveland

Clearance

had been trying since 1976, under the Freedom of Information Act, to obtain copies of any contracts he signed but all he could get was an index. He said several weeks ago that he couldn't recall signing anything before September 1957, after all "the hanky-panky" he described in the book had taken place.

Highly critical of the CIA's preoccupation with covert actions, the book describes Eveland's work in Syria and other countries after he was sent to Damascus in 1955 to help "stem the leftist drift" in Syria and eventually attempt an abortive coup there.

Eveland said Friday that CIA assistant general counsel John F. Peyton Jr. informed him in an April 4 letter that the agency had decided not to review any portion of the book because of the widespread distribution of unexpurgated galley copies.

"If the agency were to review the manuscript and identify items of

classified information and such information were thereafter deleted," Peyton wrote, comparison of the book, as published, with the review copies would clearly identify and authenticate these items of classified information and thus exacerbate the damage . . . [Y]our beleated attempt to submit the manuscript cannot cure any breach of duty or contract already

The agency also finally supplied committed."

Eveland with copies of contracts, some slightly censored, that it said he signed under two pseudonyms, Perry M. Chapworth and, later, Donald B. Lakely.

According to Peyton, the first contract was a secrecy agreement apparently executed on June 3, 1955, but the copy supplied to Eveland carried no date. The second was a "covert associate" contract. It was dated June 9, 1955, at one point in the text, although Eveland said he does not believe he signed that until months later. The CIA had originally indexed it as "not executed."

Said CIA spokesman Strong:
"With or without the dates, as far as we're concerned, they're valid contracts."