



CENSORSHIP

At the same time the U.S. government and media are telling people that there is nothing of importance in the diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks, the government is ordering many American citizens not to read them. Vice President Joe Biden initially tried to downplay the impact of the documents but then labeled WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange a "high-tech terrorist." Biden said Assange "has done things and put in jeopardy the lives and occupations of people in other parts of the world. He's made it difficult to conduct our business with our allies and our friends. It has done damage." In trying to stop people from reading the diplomatic cables:

- The Obama administration has ordered hundreds of thousands of federal employees and contractors not to read the WikiLeaks cables on either government or personal computers.
- The Air Force is barring its personnel from using work computers to view the Web sites of The New York Times and more than 25 other news organizations that have posted secret cables obtained by WikiLeaks.
- And, graduate students at some US universities are being warned not to read or post links to WikiLeaks documents, or they could be denied future work with the US government.

SO HERE ARE THE QUESTIONS: The government is acting hypocritically in employing their tactic of trying to convince people WikiLeaks releases are unimportant while also telling people not to read them. How do you think this is understood by the American public, or what do you think this says about the government? And, how do you think Air Force personnel feel when they're told they are 'fighting for our freedom' but they are not allowed to exercise that freedom in choosing which websites they read?

RETALIATION

- Sarah Palin said WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange should be hunted down like Al-Qaida. Republican congressman Peter King has called WikiLeaks a terrorist organization. And Bob Beckel, a democratic political commentator who was Walter Mondale's campaign manager, said about Assange, "a dead man can't leak stuff... I'm not for the death penalty, so...there's only one way to do it: illegally shoot the son of a bitch."
- According to a released cable, the former United States ambassador to France suggested, "moving to retaliation" against France and the European Union to fight a French ban on Monsanto's genetically modified corn.
- Diplomatic cables reveal that the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer hired investigators to find evidence of corruption against the Nigerian attorney general to pressure him to drop a \$6 billion lawsuit

over fraudulent drug tests on Nigerian children. Medical personnel said Pfizer did not tell parents their children were getting an experimental drug. Eventually, eleven children died, and others suffered permanent, disabling injuries.

- Leaked U.S. embassy cables reveal the United States pressured the Spanish government to close a court case brought by the family of a Spanish cameraman, José Couso, who was killed in Iraq when the U.S. fired on a hotel that was filled with journalists in 2003. "I am outraged," says Javier Couso, the brother of José Couso. "I can't believe my government conspired with a foreign government... It seems we are citizens, or at least a small province, of the empire of the United States."
- And, U.S. Army private first class Bradley Manning has been held for the last seven months on suspicion of providing documents he received from the State Department to WikiLeaks. Manning is being held under conditions that constitute cruel and inhumane treatment—and even torture. Former presidential candidate Mike Huckabee and ex-Pentagon official KT McFarland were among those claiming Manning should face execution for putting national security at risk by leaking the inflammatory information.

QUESTION: There is a universally accepted view that the United States is a protector of free speech and a country based on the rule of law. How does calling for the imprisonment or execution of others, specifically someone in their own military for revealing its dirty deeds, impact that view?

EMPIRE

- Private individuals in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states friendly to the United States are the chief source of funding for al-Qaeda, the Taliban and various terrorist groups, according to leaked US diplomatic cables.
- Despite sustained denials by the Pentagon, the leaked cables from WikiLeaks confirm that U.S. Special Operations have been secretly working with the Pakistani military to conduct offensive operations inside Pakistan.
- The British government has been training a Bangladeshi paramilitary force condemned by human rights organizations as a "government death squad".
- A released diplomatic cable shows how the US was able to get troops stationed in Colombia by dodging legislative review.
- Ousted Honduran president Mel Zelaya said that one of the US diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks demonstrates Washington's 'complicity' in the 2009 coup against his government.
- The documents released by Wikileaks have revealed that the Yemeni government covered up US drone strikes in Yemen by claiming the bombs as its own. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh told General David Petraeus: "We'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours."
- And, Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak told French officials in 2009 that Israel has a "secret accord" with the US government to maintain the "natural growth" of settlements in the West Bank.

QUESTIONS: Some of the information in the WikiLeaks releases may have already been suspected by many, but now there is proof. What can you personally do to help spread the word of the corrupt actions being done by the U.S. and its allies? Given that Saudi Arabia, which recently bought \$60 billion worth of arms from the Obama administration, is the largest funder of al-Qaeda – doesn't this seem to make a mockery of the "war on terror"?

DISRESPECTING WORLD LEADERS

- One of the most embarrassing revelations to emerge from the cables has been that US diplomats were asked to gather intelligence on U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, U.N. Security Council members and other foreign diplomats, including surveillance of the telephone and Internet.
- Afghan President Hamid Karzai routinely pardons drug dealers and corrupt officials, and a senior U.S. diplomat calls Karzai's brother, Ahmad Wali, a corrupt drug dealer.
- The cables include embarrassingly frank US assessments of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is described as a weak leader and rarely creative. Merkel's vice-chancellor minister is described as incompetent, vain and critical of America.
- US diplomats believed that the Sri Lankan president (who is supported by the U.S.), bore responsibility for a massacre last year that is the subject of a UN war crimes inquiry.
- Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev is derided as playing "Robin to Vladimir Putin's Batman".
- French President Nicolas Sarkozy is described as "susceptible and authoritarian",
- And, Hillary Clinton wanted a briefing on the mental health of Argentina's President Cristina Kirchner and asked whether she was taking medication to calm her down.

QUESTION: How do these revelations help the United States' prospects of having positive diplomatic relations with other nations?