

Last Afghan WikiLeaks out in 'couple of weeks'

August 14 2010, by Marc Preel



US soldiers take part in a military parade at the Arghandab Base in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, on August 9. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange vowed Saturday to publish the last batch of secret documents on the Afghan war in "a couple of weeks", despite Pentagon pleas they would put further lives at risk.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange vowed Saturday to publish the last batch of secret documents on the Afghan war in "a couple of weeks", despite Pentagon pleas they would put further lives at risk.

Asked at a press conference in Stockholm when the final batch of 15,000 classified files on the Afghan war would be published, Assange said that "We're about half way through, so a couple of weeks."

The announcement at a seminar on the control of information came after the [Pentagon](#) on Friday renewed pressure on the whistleblower website

not to release the [documents](#), saying they posed greater risks than previously released files.

"We still are hopeful that [WikiLeaks](#) will not publish those documents and put further lives at risk," said Pentagon spokesman Colonel David Lapan.

"We are concerned that the additional documents that they have may cause even greater risks than the ones they released previously," he said, calling them "potentially more damaging".

However, the Australian former computer hacker said that "We proceed cautiously and safely with this material as it was always intended... line by line."

Assange vowed that all the documents would be published but that there would be some redactions including "the names of innocent parties that are under reasonable threat".

WikiLeaks has already released 76,000 classified documents about the war, including of allegations that Pakistani spies met with the Taliban and that deaths of innocent civilians at the hands of international forces were covered up.

But the documents also included the names of some Afghan informants, prompting claims that the leaks have endangered lives.

The website said last month that it had delayed the release of the final 15,000 documents "as part of a harm minimization process demanded by our source".

"After further review, these reports will be released, with occasional redactions, and eventually in full, as the security situation in Afghanistan

permits."

Daniel Schmitt, a WikiLeaks spokesman in Germany, has previously said that the site wanted to open a line of communication with the Pentagon to review the final documents, in order to "make redactions so they can be safely published."

The Pentagon however has insisted it never received any such request from WikiLeaks, while Assange said on Thursday that the site had received "no assistance, despite repeated requests, from the White House or the Pentagon".

The site, which styles itself as "the first intelligence agency of the people," was founded in December 2006 and invited would-be whistleblowers from around the world to make anonymous contributions.

The Pentagon and the Federal Bureau of Investigation swiftly launched an investigation into the case when it came to light July 25.

WikiLeaks has never identified the source of the Afghan files but suspicion has fallen on Bradley Manning, a US Army intelligence analyst under arrest for allegedly leaking video of a 2007 US Apache helicopter strike in Baghdad in which civilians died.

In an open letter to Assange, media rights group Reporters with Borders said it "regrets the incredible irresponsibility you showed when posting your article 'Afghan War Diary 2004 - 2010' on the WikiLeaks website on 25 July."

The group said WikiLeaks had in the past played a useful role by making public information that exposed violations of human rights committed in the name of the US "war against terror".

"But revealing the identity of hundreds of people who collaborated with the coalition in Afghanistan is highly dangerous.

"It would not be hard for the Taliban and other armed groups to use these documents to draw up a list of people for targeting in deadly revenge attacks," it said.

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