

WikiLeaks chief lashes out at media during debate

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Writer

(AP) -- WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange lashed out at the mainstream media during a debate at a London university Thursday, fighting back at a string of unfavorable stories that have appeared since his organization's publication of a cache of U.S. intelligence documents.

Assange's group has reportedly suffered infighting and the former computer hacker-turned-online whistle blower also faces allegations of sexual misconduct in Sweden, where some of the organization's infrastructure is based.

As [WikiLeaks](#) fell behind on its promised release of a new tranche of 15,000 U.S. intelligence reports, one former group spokesman was quoted this week as saying that the organization was becoming consumed by its confrontation with the Pentagon.

Daniel Domscheit-Berg, a German who said he recently quit as Wikileaks' spokesman over Assange's management style, told Der Spiegel he had encountered problems with what he described as the Australian's obsession with attacking the U.S. government.

At the debate at London's City University, Assange disputed that Domscheit-Berg had quit, claiming he was suspended - but he refused to give details. He denied there had been a dispute over his management. "It was about a different issue," Assange said.

Assange repeated claims that his organization is sitting on a mass of classified information from countries from all over the world, but declined to confirm his publication schedule.

He accused the [Wall Street Journal](#) of participating in what he described as a "scam" to discredit WikiLeaks by publicizing the details of its e-mail exchanges with human rights groups, which reportedly expressed disquiet over the naming of informants in the Afghanistan intelligence reports it posted to the web.

Critics claim WikiLeaks may have endangered the lives of Afghan civilians and military personnel by failing to censor the files.

Assange attacked The Huffington Post website for investigating his organization's financing, and criticized Wired magazine - which recently published a report that claimed WikiLeaks was suffering from an internal power struggle that had led to the ouster of key staffers.

He also rejected claims that his group was obsessed with attacking the American military, but said "We have to deal with that country, if we are to deal - even partially - with the problem of secrecy in the world."

The WikiLeaks chief made only an oblique reference to his legal troubles in Sweden, where prosecutors are probing complaints against Assange filed by two women in August. Assange has denied the allegations, saying they are part of a smear campaign. Asked about his future plans in the Scandinavian country, Assange dodged the question, wistfully describing Sweden as a fascinating place.

WikiLeaks' site is currently down, citing maintenance issues.

More information: WikiLeaks: <http://wikileaks.org/>
City University London: <http://www.city.ac.uk/>

Index on Censorship: <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/>

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