

Pentagon bracing for new WikiLeaks release

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The homepage of the WikiLeaks website. The Pentagon scoured through an Iraq war database Monday to prepare for potential fallout from an expected release by WikiLeaks of some 400,000 secret military reports.

The Pentagon scoured through an Iraq war database Monday to prepare for potential fallout from an expected release by WikiLeaks of some 400,000 secret military reports.

The massive release, possibly early this week, is set to dwarf the whistleblower website's publication of 77,000 classified US military documents on the war in Afghanistan in July, including the names of Afghan informants and other details from raw intelligence reports. Another 15,000 are due out soon.

In order to prepare for the anticipated release of sensitive intelligence on the US-led [Iraq war](#), officials set up a 120-person taskforce several weeks ago to comb through the database and "determine what the

possible impacts might be," said Colonel David Lapan, a Pentagon spokesman.

The Department of Defense is concerned the leak compiles "significant activities" from the war, which include incidents such as known attacks against coalition troops, Iraqi security forces, civilians or infrastructure in the country.

The data was culled from an Iraq-based database that contained "significant acts, unit-level reporting, tactical reports, things of that nature," said Lapan, noting that [Pentagon](#) officials still do not know how many and which documents would be released.

He urged WikiLeaks to return the documents to the US military, which he said found no need to redact them in the interim.

"Our position is redactions don't help, it's returning the documents to their rightful owner," Lapan said.



US soldiers guard a detained Iraqi suspected of ties to Al-Qaeda on the southern outskirts of Baghdad, in 2007. The Department of Defense is concerned a new WikiLeaks leak compiles "significant activities" from the war, which include incidents such as known attacks against coalition troops, Iraqi security forces, civilians or infrastructure in the country.

"We don't believe WikiLeaks or others have the expertise needed. It's not as simple as just taking out names. There are other things and documents that aren't names that are also potentially damaging."

For the Iraq leak, Wikileaks is believed to be teaming up with the same news outlets as it did for the Afghanistan document dump -- The New York Times, Britain's Guardian and Der Spiegel of Germany -- and Newsweek magazine has reported that all partners would release the material simultaneously.

The July release caused uproar in the US government, with director of National Intelligence James Clapper and former CIA director Michael Hayden warning it could undermine the post-9/11 effort to break down walls between rival intelligence agencies.

Difficulties in sharing intelligence information have been repeatedly identified as a problem plaguing spy and law enforcement services since the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In a speech this month, Clapper said President Barack Obama was full of "angst" over a "hemorrhage" of leaks of sensitive intelligence from government officials.

"I think it's going to have a very chilling effect on the need to share," he said.

WikiLeaks has not identified the source of the documents it has released so far but suspicion has fallen on Bradley Manning, a US Army intelligence analyst who is in military custody.

Manning was arrested in May following the release by WikiLeaks of

video footage of a US Apache helicopter strike in Iraq in which civilians died, and he has been charged with delivering defense information to an unauthorized source.

Launched in 2006, WikiLeaks is facing internal troubles amid criticism its releases harm US national security and an ongoing investigation into its founder, Julian Assange, over an alleged sex crime in Sweden.

It also has some money problems.

Assange told The Guardian that British firm Moneybookers, an online payment company it uses to collect donations, closed his website's account in August after the US and Australian governments blacklisted [WikiLeaks](#) in the days following the initial release of Afghan documents.

The website has been undergoing "scheduled maintenance" since September 29, but promises to "be back online as soon as possible."

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