



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on March 14, 2011

Protests Against Treatment of Alleged Wikileaks Source Widen

Crowley said during March 10 [remarks](#) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that forcing Bradley Manning to endure prolonged isolation, sleep naked at night, and stand at attention naked in front of male and female guards "is ridiculous and counterproductive and stupid" — officially acknowledging the treatment that is being meted out to Manning.

The on-the-record remarks prompted State Department officials to demand his resignation.

In Crowley's official statement of resignation, he praised the Obama administration generally, and stressed that he thought Manning should be charged in court, but was unrepentant about his remarks at MIT. "My recent comments regarding the conditions of the pre-trial detention of Private First Class Bradley Manning were intended to highlight the broader, even strategic impact of discreet actions undertaken by national security agencies every day and their impact on our global standing and leadership," he explained. Crowley's [official statement](#), [republished](#) on the State Department website, suggested that the treatment of Manning may violate the law. "The exercise of power in today's challenging times and relentless media environment must be prudent and consistent with our laws and values."



Crowley's original [remarks](#) on March 10 at MIT's Center for Future Civic Media stressed that whoever leaked the classified documents to Wikileaks needs to be punished:

What is happening to Manning is ridiculous, counterproductive and stupid, and I don't know why the DoD is doing it. Nevertheless, Manning is in the right place. There are leaks everywhere in Washington — it's a town that can't keep a secret. But the scale is different. It was a colossal failure by the DoD to allow this mass of documents to be transported outside the network. Historically, someone has picked up a file of papers and passed it around — the information



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exposed is on one country or one subject. But this is a scale we've never seen before.

If Julian Assange is right and we're in an era where there are no secrets, do we expect that people will release Google's search engine algorithms? The formula for Coca Cola? Some things are best kept secret.... There's a need for secrets.

President Obama then [claimed](#) in a March 11 press conference that:

With respect to Private Manning, I have actually asked the Pentagon whether or not the procedures that have been taken in terms of his confinement are appropriate and are meeting our basic standards. They assure me that they are. I can't go into details about some of their concerns, but some of this has to do with Private Manning's safety as well.

Though Manning is officially not on a suicide watch, his isolation and extraordinary treatment are part of a prison Prevention of Injury (POI) watch that officially is designed to prevent him from harming himself. It's unclear whether this precise treatment is being used against any other federal prisoner.

After President Obama defended the extraordinary treatment of Manning, Andrew Sullivan of *Atlantic* magazine [asserted](#) that "the president has now put his personal weight behind prisoner abuse. The man who once said that forced nudity was a form of torture, now takes the word of those enforcing it over a distinguished public servant."

Likewise, civil libertarian Glenn Greenwald of *Slate* magazine has [declared](#) of Crowley's resignation:

So, in Barack Obama's administration, it's perfectly acceptable to abuse an American citizen in detention who has been convicted of nothing by consigning him to 23-hour-a-day solitary confinement, barring him from exercising in his cell, punitively imposing "suicide watch" restrictions on him against the recommendations of brig psychiatrists, and subjecting him to prolonged, forced nudity designed to humiliate and degrade. But speaking out against that abuse is a firing offense.

Bradley Manning's father, Brian Manning, also broke his public silence last week after news that his son was made to endure prolonged nudity and isolation in his prison cell, [telling](#) a PBS interviewer that it was fundamentally un-American to punish a citizen before he had been convicted of a crime:

His clothing is being taken away from him, and he is being humiliated by having to stand at attention in front of people — male or female as far as I know — that are fully clothed.... This is someone that has not gone to trial or been convicted of anything, and that's prompted me to come out and go forward.

They worry about people down in a base in Cuba and here we have someone on our own soil and under our own control, and they are treating him this way. You just can't believe it. It's shocking enough that I would come out of our silence as a family and say you've crossed the line and this is wrong.

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