



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on July 7, 2010

Alleged Wikileaks Source Bradley Manning Arrested

Federal officials charged the alleged source for the April Wikileaks video that exposed U.S. helicopter gunners committing war crimes in Baghdad in 2007, Pfc. Bradley Manning, with a variety of charges July 5. The New York Times reported that Manning has also been “charged with downloading more than 150,000 highly classified diplomatic cables that could, if made public, reveal the inner workings of American embassies around the world, the military here announced on Tuesday.”



Other sources — including Wikileaks — say it is 260,000 different U.S. diplomatic cables that have been released to them, not 150,000, though Wikileaks has denied Manning is its source.

Wikileaks released a video in April that it called [“Collateral Murder.”](#) The video shows an engagement of two Apache helicopters in Baghdad in 2007. The helicopters shot and killed what turned out to be Reuters wire service photographers and their bodyguards. The video and audio, which revealed the engagement from the perspective of one of the helicopter gunners, showed the trigger-happy crews shooting up the square and killing about a dozen men and then re-engaging to shoot down a good Samaritan in a black van who stopped to bring one of the wounded survivors to the hospital. The latter engagement was a clear-cut war crime, as shooting the wounded has always been a war crime. The latter shooting also injured two girls who had been unseen in the van, after which the unrepentant gunners could be heard muttering, “It’s their fault for bringing kids into a war zone.” The U.S. government tried to suppress the video and never charged the gunners with any war crimes.

Manning, a 22-year-old intelligence analyst who has been held incommunicado in Kuwait since May, faces [as much as 52 years in prison if convicted](#). A computer hacker named Adrian Lamo turned Manning in to authorities after some revealing online chats. Lamo claims that he believed American national security could be threatened by Manning’s leaks. But according to [the chats made available publicly](#) (from Glenn Greenwald’s Salon blog), Manning had the American public interest at heart in releasing the documents:

Manning: i mean what if i were someone more malicious- i could’ve sold to russia or china, and made bank?

Lamo: why didn’t you?

Manning: because it’s public data

Lamo: i mean, the cables

Manning: it belongs in the public domain -information should be free - it belongs in the public domain - because another state would just take advantage of the information... try and get some edge - if its out in the open... it should be a public good.



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While Wikileaks has denied Manning was their source, it has publicly defended Manning and made three civilian lawyers available to him. "Mr. Manning allegedly also sent us 260,000 classified US Department cables, reporting on the actions of US Embassy's [sic] engaging in abusive actions all over the world," Wikileaks [said](#) in a statement. "We have denied the allegation, but the US government is acting as if the allegation is true." Wikileaks also [tweeted](#): "If the charges against Manning are true, he will be the Daniel Ellsberg of our times." Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers in the early 1970s to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The documents revealed duplicity in U.S. prosecution of the Vietnam War.

And Ellsberg himself has heaped praise upon Manning for his alleged actions. "He is the first person in 39 years to do something comparable to what I did — and really better than what I did, because it's current," Ellsberg told the Associated Press for July 5. Ellsberg [justifies](#) Manning's actions on the grounds that they were taken in an effort to expose corruption: "If [the alleged leaker, Bradley Manning] has done what he is alleged to have done, I congratulate him. He has used his opportunities very well. He has upheld his oath of office to support the Constitution. It so happens that enlisted men also take an oath to obey the orders of superiors. Officers don't make that oath, only to the Constitution. But sometimes the oath to the Constitution and oath to superiors are in conflict.

But Salon's Glenn Greenwald has [noted](#) the hypocrisy of the Obama administration prosecuting Manning — the man who allegedly revealed the war crimes — while letting the actual war criminals off the hook. "Perhaps Manning should have tortured people or criminally eavesdropped on Americans as he leaked these documents; then he could have availed himself of that sweet Presidential protective shield. As was true for Ellsberg, the issue isn't that Manning is being prosecuted; the issue is the extreme disparities in how such decisions are made and what that reveals about the objectives and priorities of those responsible for these decisions." Greenwald stressed that those who commit crimes — such as torture, eavesdropping, or the war crimes in the "Collateral Murder" video — are typically let off, but those who expose these same crimes, as Manning did, are pursued relentlessly by top officials.

Ellsberg also [told TheDailyBeast.com](#) that Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is in danger of assassination from the Obama administration. "President Obama has authorized the killing of American citizens overseas, who are suspected of involvement in terrorism. Assange is not American, so he doesn't even have that constraint. I would think that he is in some danger. Granted, I would think that his notoriety now would provide him some degree of protection."



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