



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on January 18, 2011

WikiLeaks to Release Banking Information

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange [promised](#) at a January 17 press conference to verify the information and start posting the data on the web within two weeks. "There will be a full revelation," Assange told reporters at the press conference with former Julius Baer official Rudolf Elmer.



The list [reportedly](#) contains some 2,000 names, though Elmer pledged only to release the names of famous people. But Bloomberg.com [reported](#) that the disks included information on at least 40 politicians and some celebrities. "I was an expert in the offshore business," Elmer told reporters at the meeting. "I am against the system. I want to let society know what I do know, and how this system works, because it's damaging society." Elmer was dismissed from Julius Baer in 2002, so it's unclear how much of the information is current. Elmer will be [arraigned](#) in Switzerland Wednesday on charges of violating Swiss banking privacy laws. Julius Baer has accused its former employee of a variety of charges, including blackmail.

Julius Baer has had an [ongoing lawsuit](#) against WikiLeaks to prevent leakage of the information. Shares in the company [fell](#) sharply in stock trading January 17, after the press conference.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with someone doing everything he can to avoid taxes. Revelations that WikiLeaks will expose the so-called "pillars of society," the super-rich, may please the political Left seeking vindication of their view that there are two sets of tax laws, one for the super-rich and one for everyone else. But that may depend upon which politicians, industrialists, and celebrities are caught in the crossfire. If a significant portion of them are leftist politicians or socialist celebrities, that may actually expose the hypocrisy of many on the Left who seek to impose high taxes and personally avoiding the same taxes they seek to impose on everyone else.

A highly embarrassing revelation for powerful American politicians and industrial leaders may, however, spur the move to criminalize WikiLeaks and its increasing number of [copycat](#) websites across the globe. WikiLeaks has powerful political enemies in the United States. The Obama administration has [condemned](#) the website, and so has possible Republican presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who has called Assange "anti-American" and [suggested](#) that he be "pursued with the same urgency we pursue al Qaeda and Taliban leaders."

Assange also has a bizarre personal legal battle and has been released on bail in the United Kingdom



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where he is fighting extradition to Sweden. The Swedish case reportedly involves two rape charges under Sweden's liberal sexual assault laws, even though the "rapes" [apparently involved consensual sex](#).

Photo of Julian Assange at Jan. 17 news conference, holding CD files: AP Images

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