

RELEASE IN FULL

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From: Rapid-Response [mailto:Rapid-Response@state.gov]
Sent: Thursday, December 02, 2010 5:01 PM
To:
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Special Report
WikiLeaks
17:00; 12/2/10

Media coverage in many countries of WikiLeaks releases is decreasing, with new stories from wire services on Assanage and Interpol and the latest Russia reports. Reporting on specific cables is shifting to more local issues, such as US military use of Ireland's Shannon Airport or US interest in Iran's activities in Peru. Governments and many commentators assert US relationships will not be significantly damaged, and there are frequent observations that the releases have not revealed "anything new." Anti-US writers and media continue to use the opportunity to skewer the United States.

Many of the items below are digests of more extensive Embassy reporting. Additional reporting is available from post email submissions.

AF:

Burundi

Swahili *Bonesha FM* radio broadcast a report that a Spanish official told Embassy Madrid that Russia, Belarus, and Chechnya had become mafia states, and also mentioned anti-terrorism expert Russell Travers would investigate the leak. The story suggested the leaks have embarrassed US diplomats.

Mali

No local mention in print or broadcast media in Mali.

Niger

No local media coverage.

Zimbabwe

An online website reports Zimbabwean political parties in a fragile coalition government on Tuesday dismissed WikiLeaks revelations that a power sharing deal between them is doomed because of acute differences between rival politicians.

NEA:

Jordan

Most local newspapers carry wire reports on Assange's legal situation. Dailies also cited Assange calling for Secretary Clinton to if it's proved she ordered American diplomats to spy on U.N. officials. Local dailies focus on Iran's President Ahmadinejad saying "the documents lack the legality and the credibility and they will not affect on Iran's relations with other countries in the region." Dailies also focused on one alleged report that Syrian President Al-Asad's "is not convinced Iran is developing nuclear weapons." There is no mention of the Jordan-specific leaks in any print media.

A columnist writing for *Al-Ghad* contends the leaks will not harm the region or the US, although they could undermine trust. He sates the documents show that the positions of the US and Middle Eastern states on regional issues is clear. Another columnist writing for the same paper catalogues criticisms of international leaders and concludes by wondering "what will happen next."

EUR:

Azerbaijan

The only Azerbaijan-specific newspaper reporting is an article in opposition daily *Yeni Musavat* containing a denial by the Bank of Baku of an allegation that it is involved in Iran's sanction-busting. Wide coverage of a document comparing President Aliyev to both Sonny and Michael Corleone in the online news websites. TV maintains tone that Wikileaks is criminal conspiracy and that the documents are inaccurate.

Finland

Coverage continues, but much reduced. Focus has shifted to the refusal of Finnish authorities, notably President Halonen and FM Stubb, to comment on revelations about Finland that have emerged from the leaks. Much speculation has focused on suggestions in the leaked documents that China had pressured Finland not to accept Uigur prisoners being released by the U.S. from Guantanamo Bay. Finnish officials continue to assert publicly that the leaks will not affect relations with the United States. It was also reported that Finland has no plans to reassess its own policy on confidentiality. Commentary speculates about what may be revealed in the future, but expects little damage to relations.

Germany

Coverage is still primarily focused on the domestic impact of the leaks, particularly on the hunt for the young politician who allegedly provided the U.S. Embassy with confidential government documents. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* said in a joint editorial that "those in Germany who thought North Korea was a dark empire but not a real threat have been proven wrong by the WikiLeaks revelations." *Der Spiegel* is continuing to publish new material on roughly the same timeline and topics as the New York Times; today's coverage focused on Russia and was substantively the same as the English-language reporting over the past few days.

Ireland

Media is focusing on specific revelations about the use of Shannon Airport by the U.S. military. According to the *Irish Daily Mirror* "it appears the (Irish) government was not serious about dealing with real concerns about the use of Shannon by the U.S. military on their way to Iraq and Afghanistan. Bloggers opine the Irish government felt conflicted – it liked the revenue it received from U.S. troops passing through, as well as the diplomatic benefits, but felt it had to placate the Irish public before the 2007 elections and publicly decry the use of Shannon. *The Irish Examiner* relied on an excerpt from *TIME* Magazine's interview with Assange. An analyst writing for the *Irish Independent* headlines "Diplomatic corps' horror is pure gold for historians," concluding that, with 900 further Irish cables set to be published in the coming months, the trouble may only be starting for the mandarins of Iveagh House (Department of Foreign Affairs)."

Malta

Interest in Wikileaks continues in the online media, with comments on the more general revelations. There were no new pieces about Malta itself.

Montenegro

Over the course of the last two days, the Wikileaks story has moved from the cover pages and headlines of Montenegro's media to the international news sections. All major electronic and print media carried the first official statement of a Montenegrin official on the topic. PM Djukanovic said American diplomats were doing their job and nothing can spoil the US-Montenegrin relationship. There was wire coverage of the Interpol warrant and Secretary Clinton at the OSCE.

Portugal

Calling it "an Invaluable Service to Democracy, a columnist for *Público* condemns "the orders that American diplomats received to collect personal information from high-ranking international officials, and in particular, Ban Ki-Moon's." He concludes that "The future of freedom is linked to the security and integrity of our personal data – and I do not know that the U.S., after having lost 250,000 of its secret documents, is in any condition to guarantee either one of them."

Switzerland:

Swiss press reports feature extensive coverage; however, very little new information. Items reported included preparations for a Clinton meeting with Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey in 2009; the Swiss - Libya affair; FBI-Swiss Federal Police liaison in 2006; Papers also reported that Julian Assange has contacts in Switzerland and that a Swiss citizen from Basel is allegedly in charge of processing donations for Wikileaks. According to the press, Assange met representatives of the Swiss Pirate Party in Geneva. Finally, Swiss papers took up the story that Wikileaks might be targeting Bank of America, writing that the bank is trying to calm down the stock markets. The *NZZ* published two opinion pieces. Both critical of the leaks for the harm they do to diplomacy.

WHA:**Brazil**

Brazilian media today featured extensive coverage. *Folha de Sao Paulo* dedicated six pages, including an op-ed by Ambassador Shannon outlining the U.S. viewpoint. *Folha's* editorial said the information released is relevant but neither surprising nor dangerous, while another outlet praised efforts by certain papers to filter the information and adding that Wikileaks is on the whole valuable to society. A commentator in *Folha* wrote that President Lula should not so quickly dismiss the U.S. observations about the GoB (which he claimed are likely accurate), and another used the documents' description of President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin to analyze the possible role of Lula in the Rousseff Administration.

Cuba

Cuban media coverage continues at levels similar to yesterday's. Online *Cubadebate* and *Juventudrebelde.cu* publish wide-ranging articles, many of them culled from news wires, covering USG reaction, third country reaction (Canada), and Wikileaks reaction (Julian Assange's "insurance" against prosecution and accusations that Amazon violated the First Amendment). In commentary, *Granma's* Manuel E. Yepe, a Cuban lawyer, economist, journalist and former Cuban ambassador to Romania, suggests that Wikileaks "yielded to pressure from the USG and the media in managing how and when information was released, and insinuates that right wing elements in the U.S. are behind the disclosure of the documents.

Eastern Caribbean:

Reporting continues to be general, with the exception of one radio report on *StarCom's LOVE FM 104.1* that WikiLeaks may soon release cables about the Caribbean, and mentioning that the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain released a statement that WikiLeaks' actions jeopardize the U.S. national security.

Ecuador

Discussion continues to dominate the front pages of major newspapers as well as the editorial pages--with an increase in the number of opinion articles. Press continues to report and opine on the invitation to Ecuador offered by Deputy Foreign Minister Kintto Lucas to Assange and the subsequent disclaimer and withdrawal of the invitation by President Correa. Most articles criticized Lucas for his error. A tongue-in-cheek editorial in *El Universo* "The Coming of Julian" expressed regrets that Assange would not be coming to Ecuador as he might have revealed the secrets of the GOE and then would have faced the same or worse treatment that Ecuadorian investigative journalists receive.

El Salvador

A columnist for *El Diario de Hoy* asked "What is the big deal?" He said the cables about Honduras "tell us ...that the American diplomats were lost and did not understand what was happening" during the coup there. Any Ambassador who is not reporting on the mental state of people like Hugo Chávez, Daniel Ortega, Evo Morales and Cristina Kirchner, is not doing his job ... This is all so routine that it cannot greatly affect American diplomacy ..." Salvadoran media reporting continues to rely almost exclusively on wire stories. Locally produced articles and TV/radio reports have focused on reaction from Foreign Minister Martinez and Ambassador Aponte, both of whom have repeatedly explained the nature of diplomatic correspondence and have underscored the strength of the US-Salvadoran bilateral relationship.

Honduras

The buzz around the WikiLeaks scandal is slowly taking a backseat -- for now -- to Honduran issues such as taxes and security issues. Conservative *Tribuna* had a positive editorial arguing countries maintain relations with each other based on national interest. It suggested "the importance of the U.S. on the global stage will ensure that other countries will continue to work closely with Washington in the pursuit of those interests." An op-ed in liberal daily *Tiempo* titled "In defense of Ambassador Hugo Llorens," stressed that diplomats must provide honest advice to their government. *Tiempo's* op-ed claims that "the documents divulged so far have been, in their majority, frivolities without importance, however highly sensitive and dangerous issues could pop up in them...[d]iplomacy is a prolonged example of hypocrisy and cynicism."

Mexico

El Universal in its editorial questions the wholesale, unfiltered dumping of classified information; "the fact that a government hides something does not make it damnable. It's normal...for diplomats to prepare reports about the countries and leaders where they are posted." The paper asserts that "it may be interesting to know that U.S. officials had questions about the mental health of the president of Argentina, but the benefit to citizens of such a revelation is marginal in proportion to the potential damage to relations between the two countries." An op-ed writer for *El Universal*, claims that the "released documents show U.S. diplomats rummaging through personal lives and privately mocking the same leaders whom they publicly treat as friends." Another daily *La Jornada's* in its editorial concludes that "the main factor of diplomatic tension and greatest security risk to world peace is not Wikileaks but Washington's belligerent, unilateral and imperialist warmongering, aggravated now by its defense of opacity."

Peru

Peru media are focusing on the first alleged cable to come from Peru, on US concern about Iran's interest in Peru's uranium, as well as regional "revelations" in regards neighboring Chile, Venezuela and Argentina. TV, radio and internet reflect similar slants.

Venezuela

Articles on Interpol's "Red Notice" for Julian Assange appeared in most dailies. *El Nacional* cites assessments by the Embassy's Economic Counselor about the development of nuclear energy in Venezuela. *El Mundo* reports alleged comments by then Ambassador Duddy describing the Venezuelan bank interventions in November 2009. A columnist in government owned *Correo de Orinoco* says accuses the U.S. of diplomatic 'excesses,' torture in occupied territories, hiring contractors that fire on crowds, using lies to justify wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Taking a different tack, an Op-Ed in *El Universal* remarks sarcastically, "the

U.S. does not have friends, only interests. Bold discovery! Only the ignorant, the naïve, or the crazy – or a combination of those three – can say that this constitutes an international declassification.” An article in the online edition of *La Verdad* of Maracaibo speculates the State Department is using Wikileaks to put out information it does not want to release directly.