

RELEASE IN PART
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From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2010 7:44 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Helpful Wikileaks Editorial

Helpful editorial in wp. We'll try and get pickup in international media.

Jm

----- Original Message -----

From: DiMartino, Kitty
To: 'preines [redacted] <preines [redacted]> McHale, Judith A; Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Tue Nov 30 19:39:34 2010
Subject: Helpful Wikileaks Editorial

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Philippe,



B5

The right response to Wikileaks

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

MANY OF the State Department documents released so far by WikiLeaks are embarrassing to their authors or subjects, but otherwise harmless. Some might even be helpful: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was among those fuming Monday at the news that most of the Arab states surrounding Iran might welcome a U.S. attack on his country. Still, there is little doubt that the release of the cables will damage the State Department and its diplomacy. Sensitive relations with countries such as Yemen, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia might be impaired; foreign leaders everywhere may consider carefully, at least for a while, before speaking frankly to U.S. diplomats.

Some in Washington are calling on the Obama administration to respond to the leak with drastic measures, such as a cyberattack on the WikiLeaks Internet site or the prosecution of its Australian-born leader, Julian Assange. That would be an overreaction. There is apparently no top-secret material in the WikiLeaks documents; the U.S. cyberwar capacity should not be deployed for less-than-critical interests. Mr. Assange's arrest and prosecution would turn a man now widely perceived as a self-promoting sex crimes suspect into an international martyr.

There is a much more immediate and sensible task for Congress and the administration - starting with the Defense Department. That is to thoroughly plumb how a 22-year-old Army private at a remote Iraqi base could have gotten access to 250,000 State Department cables, as well as tens of thousands more military reports from Iraq and Afghanistan, and how he could have downloaded them onto CDs without being detected. The chief suspect in the deliveries to WikiLeaks, Bradley Manning, was a disconsolate man who had been reprimanded for assaulting an officer and believed he might be discharged for his misconduct. Why was he allowed to retain access to classified information? How could he have stolen such a large amount of material without triggering any alarms?

The Pentagon announced several procedural changes on Sunday in reaction to Pfc. Manning's alleged actions, including the disabling of the capacity to copy classified material onto portable devices and limits on the transfer of material from

classified to unclassified computer systems. Still, these changes come too late - it's notable that at the State Department itself, the downloading Mr. Manning allegedly carried out would not have been possible. What's needed is a thorough review of why the Defense Department failed to adopt simple security procedures, how it managed Pfc. Manning, and whether the announced reforms are adequate.

Also needed is a broader government review of whether the distribution of classified information has gone too far. Of course there must not be firewalls that prevent senior intelligence analysts and their bosses from seeing and sharing sensitive information. That does not mean a troubled 22-year-old in Baghdad should have access to secret State Department cables from all over the world. Surely there is a way to create a system that can do the former while preventing the latter.