

Assange calls on Clinton to quit

by Dylan Welch via reed - SMH *Wednesday, Dec 1 2010, 6:16pm*

international / mass media / other press

THE editor of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, has called on the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to resign over suggestions she encouraged US diplomats to spy on their foreign counterparts.



US Sec. of State, Hillary Clinton

His call comes as the whistleblower organisation continues to slowly release dozens of damaging cables sent from US embassies all over the world.

Speaking to Time magazine, Mr Assange said WikiLeaks would release about 80 cables a day and planned to ramp up that rate as media partners began publishing them.

Asked if Mrs Clinton was responsible for revelations that diplomats were being pushed to collect information such as the DNA and credit card numbers of their foreign counterparts, Mr Assange said: "She should resign if it can be shown that she was responsible for ordering US diplomatic figures to engage in espionage in the United Nations, in violation of the international covenants to which the US has signed up."

He also said WikiLeaks was not breaking laws by publishing the cables, contrary to the claims of the Obama administration.

"It's very important to remember the law is not what, not simply what, powerful people would want others to believe it is. The law is not what a general says it is. The law is not what Hillary Clinton says it is."

Mrs Clinton, in Kazakhstan for a security summit, did not respond to Mr Assange's claim, but she criticised WikiLeaks.

"This was a very irresponsible, thoughtless act that put at risk the lives of innocent people all over the world, without much regard for those who are most vulnerable," she said.

The US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, denied the cables were affecting US foreign policy, saying such views were "overwrought". "Is this embarrassing? Yes. Is it awkward? Yes.

Consequences for US foreign policy? I think fairly modest," he said.

But the release of documents had only begun and the upcoming releases may have some sting in their tail, the investigations editor of The Guardian, David Leigh, said.

"In the coming days, we are going to see some quite startling disclosures about Russia, the nature of the Russian state, and about bribery and corruption in other countries, particularly in central Asia."

WikiLeaks has released only about 300 of more than 250,000 cables sent from US embassies.

The US is investigating whether it can prosecute Mr Assange, who was born in Australia and founded WikiLeaks.

In Australia, a spokesman for the Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, said he would be arrested should he return.

Mr Assange is wanted for questioning in Sweden in connection with allegations of rape, sexual molestation and unlawful coercion, stemming from his encounters with two women there earlier this year.

Sweden issued a warrant for his arrest last week and Interpol has issued a "red notice" for the 39-year-old activist. A red notice is not an arrest warrant but can be considered a "valid request for provisional arrest" by member countries, Interpol said.

Mr Assange has denied the Swedish accusations and is appealing against the warrant.

Mr Assange's mother, who operates a puppet theatre in Noosa, told the ABC yesterday that the Interpol red notice worried her. "He's my son and I love him and obviously I don't want him hunted down and jailed," she said.

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Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-2217.html>