

Translation of section from "Staatsfeind WikiLeaks" (pages 165-167), Marcel Rosenbach and Holgar Stark, *Staatsfeind WikiLeaks: wie eine Gruppe von Netzaktivisten die mächtigsten Nationen der Welt herausfordert*, München: Deutsche Verlags-anstalt; Hamburg: Spiegel-Verlag, 24 January 2011

The media partners' intensive work with the material [i.e. the Afghan war logs] quickly uncovered possible stories, but also raised critical questions. The classified field reports included many names: those of members of the military, those of insurgents and those of people who the Americans suspected of supporting insurgents. However, they also identified local sources, who had provided ISAF troops with tips and information for their fight against the Taliban. Among other things the military had logged payments - and even persons which were not directly named could have been identified by their location, as the reports included GPS coordinates.

The Guardian and Der Spiegel reporters discussed the problem with their editors and, at another dinner, directly with Julian Assange. There were now just over three weeks left until the planned release date. It is one of the points that demonstrate the difference between WikiLeaks and the established media. The newspapers were not going to print names, and on that evening in London we and the Guardian reporters urged Assange to do the same.

For WikiLeaks, which set out to publish original documents this did not go without saying. The website, which had already published Sarah Palin's private e-mails and the membership list of the far-right BNP had no experience in respecting privacy rights. Only recently had Assange even introduced a so-called "harm minimization" process. This did not consist of much more than informing stakeholders of a planned publication and a slight delay in publication. That evening Assange said that this was what they had done with the members of the BNP, for instance. And no one had been harmed. "Well," he conceded, "some may have lost their jobs."

But the Afghanistan documents cannot be compared with membership lists of British parties. There's a war being fought in Afghanistan. The Taliban kill their fellow countrymen for far less than passing information to the enemy. Assange agreed to take care of the problem. He recognized that handling it carelessly might not only endanger human lives, but also bring his organization into disrepute. He said he envisioned a technical solution, but he would have to discuss this with his people. However, it appears that he made the decision on his own. Daniel Domscheit-Berg only learned of it via Der Spiegel and was perplexed about the break with Wikileaks' previous principles. Assange was unable to completely rule out any danger, considering the volume of the data: "We've had to make tough decisions before". WikiLeaks would try to "minimize harm", but publish the Afghan documents in any case: "This archive belongs to the Afghan people. "

And the expected outcry, the criticism from the Pentagon? Assange smiled, he was enjoying the idea already, and he was now, three weeks before the planned publication date,

downright boisterous. Last time, he joked, the American Defense Secretary criticized the video about the incident in Baghdad as merely a snapshot, a small section, seen as if through a straw. "This time he won't be able to complain about that, this time we also show the before and after, the entire context, everything." Ultimately, WikiLeaks decided to keep back approximately 15,000 reports which could contain material that might endanger the people mentioned in them.

And here is an alternative translation published on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011:

<http://ccwlja.wordpress.com/2011/06/03/staatsfeind-wikileaks-harm-minimization-and-the-afghan-war-logs/>