

# Army charges soldier for leaking video of US massacre in Baghdad

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The United States Army on Monday filed charges against Private 1st Class Bradley Manning, accusing the 22-year-old of giving a video of a US military massacre in Baghdad to the WikiLeaks web site, which posted an edited version in April under the title “Collateral Murder.”

The video was taken by US Apache helicopters in July of 2007 and showed them firing on mostly unarmed Iraqis in East Baghdad. It was accompanied by voiceover of radio traffic in which American soldiers gloated about gunning down defenseless Iraqis. Among the 12 people acknowledged killed by the US government were a Reuters reporter and his driver. The wounded included two small children.

The video showed that after the initial deadly Apache attack, the helicopters returned to gun down unarmed civilians who sought to rescue those wounded in the first assault.

An internal US military investigation conducted in 2007 exonerated the troops involved in the incident, concluding that the force used was justified under the rules of engagement and that the civilians targeted were fair game because they were in the company of insurgents.

The video evoked a wave of revulsion and anger internationally over the wanton killing carried out by the US in Iraq. It also prompted a furious response from the Obama administration. Defense Secretary Robert Gates denounced the release of the video, while conceding that the footage was produced by the US military and had not been doctored.

Manning, an intelligence analyst from Potomac, Maryland, is part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division in Iraq. He was arrested in May after he confided to an online acquaintance that in the course of his intelligence work at Forward

Operating Base Hammer, east of Baghdad, he had acquired a large stockpile of internal military and State Department documents and communications, including the original footage from which “Collateral Murder” was produced. The acquaintance turned Manning in to the FBI and the Army.

Manning is currently being detained in Kuwait. He faces up to 52 years in prison on charges of leaking classified information. One charge specifies that Manning revealed classified information “with reason to believe that the information would cause injury to the United States,” according to a news release from US Division Center in Iraq.

In addition to leaking the helicopter attack video, Manning is charged with illegally obtaining more than 150,000 diplomatic cables and leaking 50 other classified State Department communications.

In emails to the person who subsequently turned him in, Manning said that besides the video that became “Collateral Murder,” he supplied WikiLeaks with a second video showing a May 2009 US air strike near the village of Garani in Afghanistan, in which more than 100 people were killed, including many children.

After the filing of charges, the next step in the proceedings against Manning is an Article 32 hearing, following which the commander of US Division Center in Iraq will decide if the accused must face a court-martial.

It is virtually certain that Manning will be put on trial. The US military and the Obama administration want to make an example of him in order to intimidate others from exposing the crimes of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. Last month, Pentagon investigators revealed that they were looking for Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, in connection with the Manning investigation. Assange cancelled scheduled speaking

engagements in New York and Las Vegas, citing “security considerations.”

Manning's only “crime” was to break the wall of government censorship and media silence and expose one instance of the war crimes carried out by the United States repeatedly in Iraq and Afghanistan. His detention and prosecution represent an attack on the democratic rights of the American people, who have a right, along with the people of the entire world, to know of the atrocities being carried out by the American military/intelligence apparatus under the orders of President Obama.

The *World Socialist Web Site* joins with all those, including relatives of those killed in the July, 2007 helicopter attack, demanding that Manning be released and all charges against him be dropped. We further demand the dropping of all efforts to investigate and suppress the activities of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.



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