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July 6, 2010

Charges for Soldier Accused of Leak

By **STEVEN LEE MYERS**

BAGHDAD — An American soldier in [Iraq](#) who was arrested on charges of leaking a video of a deadly American helicopter attack here in 2007 has also been charged with downloading more than 150,000 highly classified diplomatic cables that could, if made public, reveal the inner workings of American embassies around the world, the military here announced Tuesday.

The full contents of the cables remain unclear, but according to formal charges filed Monday, it appeared that a disgruntled soldier working at a remote base east of Baghdad had gathered some of the most guarded, if not always scandalous, secrets of American diplomacy. He disclosed at least 50 of the cables “to a person not entitled to receive them,” according to the charges.

With [the charges](#), a case that stemmed from the furor over [a graphic and fiercely contested video](#) of an attack from an American helicopter that killed 12 people, including a reporter and a driver for Reuters, mushroomed into a far more extensive and potentially embarrassing leak.

The charges cited only one cable by name, “Reykjavik 13,” which appeared to be one made public by [WikiLeaks.org](#), a whistle-blowing Web site devoted to disclosing the secrets of governments and corporations. The Web site decoded and in April made public an edited version of the helicopter attack in a film it called “Collateral Murder.”

[In the cable](#), dated Jan. 13, the American deputy chief of mission, Sam Watson, detailed private discussions he held with [Iceland](#)’s leaders over a referendum on whether to repay losses from a bank failure, including a frank assessment that Iceland could default in 2011. (The referendum failed, but negotiations continue.)

[WikiLeaks](#), which reportedly operated in Iceland for a time, disclosed a second cable from the nation in March profiling its leaders, including Prime Minister [Johanna Sigurdardottir](#).

Although hardly sensational in tone, [the cable](#) does reveal a complaint over the “alleged use of Icelandic airspace by [C.I.A.](#)-operated planes” by the Icelandic ambassador to the United States, Albert Jonsson, who is described as “prickly but pragmatic.” Such are the sorts of assessments that diplomats go to great lengths to keep private.

WikiLeaks has not acknowledged receiving the cables or video from the soldier, Pfc. Bradley E. Manning, 22, who worked as an analyst and [whose case has been the subject of vigorous debate](#) between defenders and critics.

Private Manning, who served with the Second Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division, based at Contingency Operating Station Hammer, [was arrested in May](#) and transferred to a military detention center in Kuwait after the military authorities said he had revealed his activities in online chats with a former computer hacker, who turned him in.

Private Manning now faces an Article 32 investigation, the military’s equivalent of a civilian grand jury, into charges that he mishandled classified information “with reason to believe the information could cause injury to the United States.”

That investigation could lead to administrative punishments or more likely, given the gravity of the charges, a court-martial.

Officially [he has been charged](#) with four counts of violating Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for disobeying an order or regulation and eight counts of violating Article 134, a general charge for misconduct, which in this case involved breaking federal laws against disclosing classified information.

The formal charges suggested an extensive effort by military investigators to scour the official and personal computers he used, in order to trace the recipients.

The charges cited unauthorized handling of classified information from Nov. 19, 2009, until May 27 this year, two days before his detention and well after the leak of the helicopter video. The charges accused him of using the classified network to obtain the “Reykjavik 13” cable on the day the one disclosed by WikiLeaks was written.

He was also charged with downloading a classified PowerPoint presentation, one of those heavily used by the American military, but what secrets it contained remained unknown.

Adrian Lamo, the former hacker who reported Private Manning to the authorities, has said that they struck up an online friendship in which the private complained of personal discontent with the military and American foreign policies.

Because the investigation continues, military officials here would not elaborate on the case.

The United States Embassy did not respond to a query. One senior commander, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the investigation, said, "It appeared he had an agenda."