

THE DAILY MAIL



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Mr Ben Milloy
Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
20/23 Holborn
London
EC1N 2JD

10th February 2012

Your ref: 115620

Dear Mr Milloy,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January regarding the complaint from Julian Assange and please accept my apologies for the tardiness of this response.

For your information, we have now changed our procedures on Mail Online so that amended articles carry both the date-created and date-last-updated time stamps.

On the point about the risks involved with the Wikileaks operation, I note that the Wikileaks site itself acknowledges this as a factor.

It says that 'Historically, information has been costly in terms of human life, human rights and economics.' It goes on to say that technical advances have improved things but only to the extent that 'the risks of conveying important information can be lowered.'

Elsewhere, the site talks of the need on occasion to 'delay the publication of some identifying details from original documents to protect life and limb of innocent people.'

The Obama administration echoed these warnings by saying that the release of this information presented a risk to human life, regardless of what Bradley Manning's legal defense team is saying.

The White House released a statement specifically saying that the release had 'put at risk... the lives and work of... individuals.'

US vice-president Joe Biden also went on record as saying that the release had put lives at risk, as did US state department legal adviser Harold Koh.

Retired army Colonel Richard Kemp said that it was 'not a great thing to have that kind of information in the public domain.' He said 'it just helps the terrorists do their job.'

With regards to whether Mr Assange 'hacked into the security services' I would refer you to the comments I made in my letter of 6 January.

In particular, I continue to take the view that it is disingenuous for Mr Assange to say that Wikileaks does not 'solicit anonymous sources of information'.

It is also a shame that Mr Assange is apparently seeking to disown the activities of individuals who have taken considerable personal risks to furnish his site with the information he relies on.

That said, we accept that it is not strictly accurate to say that Mr Assange has himself 'hacked into the security services'.

To that end, subject to the Editor's approval, I propose the following clarification to run on page 2 and online:

A column on 12 July suggested that Wikileaks founder Julian Assange had hacked into the security services and published information which got people killed. Mr Assange points out that Wikileaks does not itself engage in hacking but provides an electronic drop box for anonymous sources of information. He also says that, to date, he is not aware that anyone has died as a result of his publications.

I would be grateful for your confirmation that this is acceptable to resolve the complaint.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box with a thin black border, used to redact the signature of Alex Bannister.

Alex Bannister
Group Managing Editor