



## Revealed: US plans to charge WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 9:38 AM February 28, 2012

The Sydney Morning Herald on February 29, 2012 released the following:

“Revealed: US plans to charge Assange  
Philip Dorling

UNITED STATES prosecutors have drawn up secret charges against the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, according to a confidential email obtained from the private US intelligence company Stratfor.

In an internal email to Stratfor analysts on January 26 last year, the vice-president of intelligence, Fred Burton, responded to a media report concerning US investigations targeting WikiLeaks with the comment: “We have a sealed indictment on Assange.”

He underlined the sensitivity of the information – apparently obtained from a US government source – with warnings to “Pls [please] protect” and “Not for pub[lication]”.

Mr Burton is well known as an expert on security and counterterrorism with close ties to the US intelligence and law enforcement agencies. He is the former deputy chief of the counter-terrorism division of the US State Department’s diplomatic security service.

Stratfor, whose headquarters are in Austin, Texas, provides intelligence and analysis to corporate and government subscribers.

On Monday, WikiLeaks began releasing more than 5 million Stratfor emails which it said showed “how a private intelligence agency works, and how they target individuals for their corporate and government clients”.

The Herald has secured access to the emails through an investigative partnership with WikiLeaks.

The news that US prosecutors drew up a secret indictment against Mr Assange more than 12 months ago comes as the Australian awaits a British Supreme Court decision on his appeal against extradition to Sweden to be questioned in relation to sexual assault allegations.

Mr Assange, who has not been charged with any offence in Sweden, fears extradition to Stockholm will open the way for his extradition to the US on

possible espionage or conspiracy charges in retaliation for WikiLeaks’s publication of thousands of leaked US classified military and diplomatic reports.

Last week the US Army Private Bradley Manning was committed to face court martial for 22 alleged offences, including “aiding the enemy” by leaking classified government documents to WikiLeaks.

In December the Herald revealed Australian diplomatic cables, declassified under freedom of information, confirmed WikiLeaks was the target of a US Justice Department investigation “unprecedented both in its scale and nature” and suggested that media reports that a secret grand jury had been convened in Alexandria, Virginia, were “likely true”.

The Australian embassy in Washington reported in December 2010 that the Justice Department was pursuing an “active and vigorous inquiry into whether Julian Assange can be charged under US law, most likely the 1917 Espionage Act”.

In recent answers to written parliamentary questions from the Greens senator Scott Ludlam, the former foreign affairs minister Kevin Rudd indicated Australia had sought confirmation that a secret grand jury inquiry directed against Mr Assange was under way.

Mr Rudd said “no formal advice” had been received from US authorities but acknowledged the existence of a “temporary surrender” mechanism that could allow Mr Assange to be extradited from Sweden to the US. He added that Swedish officials had said Mr Assange’s case would be afforded “due process”.

The US government has repeatedly declined to confirm or deny any reported details of the WikiLeaks inquiry, beyond the fact that an investigation is being pursued.

The Stratfor emails show that the WikiLeaks publication of hundreds of thousands of US diplomatic cables triggered intense discussion within the “global intelligence” company.

In the emails, an Australian Stratfor “senior watch officer”, Chris Farnham, advocated revoking Mr Assange’s Australian citizenship, adding: “I don’t care about the other leaks but the ones he has made that potentially damage Australian interests upset me. If I thought

I could switch this dickhead off without getting done I don’t think I’d have too much of a problem.”

But Mr Farnham also referred to a conversation with a close family friend who he said knew one of the Swedish women who had made allegations of sexual assault against Mr Assange, and added: “There is absolutely nothing behind it other than prosecutors that are looking to make a name for themselves.”

While some Stratfor analysts decried what they saw as Mr Assange’s “clear anti-Americanism”, others welcomed the leaks and debated WikiLeaks’s longer-term impact on secret diplomacy and intelligence.

Stratfor’s director of analysis, Reva Bhalla, observed: “WikiLeaks itself may struggle to survive but the idea that’s put out there, that anyone with the bandwidth and servers to support such a system can act as a prime outlet of leaks. [People] are obsessed with this kind of stuff. The idea behind it won’t die.”

Stratfor says it will not comment on the emails obtained by WikiLeaks. The US embassy has also declined to comment.”

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

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# Five Defendants Charged in a Criminal Information with an Alleged Mortgage Fraud Scheme

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 10:43 AM February 28, 2012

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on February 27, 2012 released the following:

## “Attorney and Bank Vice President Among Those Charged

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, John V. Gillies, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Miami Field Office, Jeff Atwater, Chief Financial Officer, State of Florida’s Department of Financial Services, and Tom Grady, Commissioner, State of Florida’s Office of Financial Regulation, announced the filing of an criminal information charging defendants Jacinto Puentes, 53, West Palm Beach, Elinor Puentes, 52, West Palm Beach, Theodore Tarone, 43, West Palm Beach, Raul Salabarría, 55, Royal Palm Beach, and Rogelio Ramirez, 42, Port Saint Lucie, with one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud in connection with a multi-million dollar mortgage fraud scheme. If convicted, the defendants face a statutory maximum sentence of thirty years in prison.

Friday, three of the defendants, Jacinto Puentes, Elinor Puentes, and Raul Salabarría, made their initial appearances and were arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Judge James M. Hopkins in West Palm Beach, Florida. Defendants Elinor Puentes and Raul Salabarría were released on \$250,000 personal surety bonds.

## Attorney General Eric Holder Testifies Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 9:17 AM February 28, 2012

“The President’s Budget demonstrates a strong commitment to the Justice Department’s work and ensures that we have the resources necessary to meet our essential responsibilities. Of course, no responsibility is more important than our obligation to protect the American people – from terrorism, violent crime, financial fraud, and a range of threats that put our national security and economic stability at risk,” said Attorney General Holder.

Defendant Jacinto Puentes was held on a \$50,000 corporate surety bond. The remaining two defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on Wednesday, February 29, 2012.

According to the information, the defendants engaged in a multi-million dollar scheme to fraudulently obtain mortgages through the use of false documentation. More specifically, from November 2006 through November 2007, Jacinto Puentes and Raul Salabarría found seventeen properties in Florida and Tennessee for which they sought financing above the actual sales price quoted by the seller. Defendant Jacinto Puentes prepared and submitted loan applications containing false information and false supporting documentation, including false verifications of bank deposits from Wachovia Bank’s then Assistant Vice President, defendant Rogelio Ramirez.

According to the information, defendant Elinor Puentes and others required the sellers to use the services of co-conspirator attorney Theodore Tarone as the settlement agent. Defendant Tarone prepared duplicate HUD-1 settlement forms to reflect the two different selling prices. The lender received a HUD-1 with an inflated purchase price, while the seller received a HUD-1 with the actual sales price. Through this scheme, the conspirators received approximately \$8 million in loan proceeds for the purchase of those 17 properties. Some of the defendants diverted approximately

\$500,000 of the loan proceeds for their personal benefit.

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of the FBI, the State of Florida’s Department of Financial Services, and the Florida Office of Financial Regulation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kerry S. Baron.

An Information is only an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.”

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