

# US Army charges accused WikiLeaks source Private Bradley Manning with capital offense

By Barry Grey

The United States Army late Wednesday notified Private First Class Bradley Manning, whom it suspects of being WikiLeaks source for thousands of classified military reports and embassy cables, that it was filing an additional 22 charges against him.

The new charges in Manning's court martial process include "aiding the enemy," a capital offense. A news release from the Army said the prosecution team has "notified the defense that the prosecution will not recommend the death penalty." However, it is up to the commander overseeing the case to make the final decision

about imposing the death penalty.

This means that Manning, who has already suffered through ten months of solitary confinement in a brig at the Marine base in Quantico, Virginia, now has the possibility of execution hanging over his head. His alleged "crime" is facilitating the publication of documents and videos that expose war crimes committed by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan and some of the diplomatic conspiracies carried out by the US government.

Manning, who was serving as an intelligence specialist in Iraq, was first charged in May with 12 counts of downloading without authorization a secret video of US attack helicop-

ters shooting down civilians in Baghdad (posted last April by WikiLeaks) as well as military and diplomatic files, and sharing them.

The military has held him since then under abusive conditions that amount to torture, even though he has been convicted of no offense and has no history of violence. He is confined to his cell 23 hours a day, allowed out but one hour for exercise, not permitted to sleep during the day, and severely restricted in the use of his glasses and his access to reading material.

Amnesty International, among other human rights groups, has denounced his treatment as "inhuman," and the United Nations is investi-

gating whether it constitutes torture.

The "aiding the enemy" charge involves "giving intelligence to the enemy," which is defined as "organized opposing forces in time of war but also other hostile body that our forces may be opposing such as a rebellious mob or a band of renegades." Under this definition the enemy could be civilian or military.

The charge sheet does not mention by name the alleged enemy. It could refer to anti-occupation insurgents in Afghanistan or Iraq, or to WikiLeaks, which Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has accused of launching an "attack on America."

The new charges also include the use of unauthorized software on official computers for obtaining secret information. This offense is also punishable by death under the US Uniform Code of Military Justice.

## German Defence Minister resigns

By Peter Schwarz

**On Tuesday, German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (Christian Social Union, CSU) announced his resignation. He was responding to growing pressure over a plagiarism scandal.**

In the past two weeks, it was revealed that Guttenberg had copied entire sections of his doctoral thesis from other sources, without any attribution. The plagiarism was so blatant that many commentators suspect Guttenberg employed a ghostwriter for the text.

Guttenberg began by vehemently denying any plagiarism, describing such claims as "absurd". However, Internet research continually revealed new incidences of Guttenberg's copy-and-paste methods, forcing him to admit to accidental "mistakes". Finally, he confessed that he had written "nonsense" and temporarily waived his doctorate. A short time later, he then permanently waived his doctor title. The University of Bayreuth, where he obtained his doctorate (*summa cum laude*) in 2006, also withdrew its recognition of his doctorate.

The debate over Guttenberg has split the conservative Union (CDU and CSU). While the Social Democratic Party, the Greens and the Left Party had demanded his resignation, Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) came to his support, arguing that she had appointed a defence minister, not a scientific assistant.

The *Bild* newspaper and the right wing inside the Union have conducted an aggressive campaign to defend the blue-blooded minister. They played down his brazen forgery as a

minor offence ("everyone copies at some time") and treated his plagiarism as a mere "lack of footnotes." At a meeting of the CDU in Hesse attended by former Prime Minister of Hesse Roland Koch and his successor, Volker Bouffier (both of the CDU), Guttenberg was feted as a national hero, whose fraud and deception were all to his credit.

Last weekend, Guttenberg treated the crisis as over and stressed that he would remain in office. His arrogant behaviour, however, had unleashed a wave of public opposition that neither he nor Merkel had anticipated.

Above all, academics and Internet users were not prepared to passively swallow his evasions and lies. The web site GuttenPlag Wiki, which opened up shortly after the first allegations against Guttenberg, systematically scoured his thesis for plagiarism. Shortly after Guttenberg's resignation on Tuesday at 15:00, the website reported: "Plagiarised postings have been found on 324 pages of the 393 page dissertation. This corresponds to 82.44%. There are currently 891 examples of plagiarism from over 120 different sources covering 8,061 lines of the 16,325 lines in the total document."

*Spiegel Online* commented: "This Tuesday it is finally clear: [former German chancellor] Gerhard Schröder's old quip that all one needed to govern was the *Bild* newspaper, the *Bild on Sunday* and the television, no longer applies. At least not when someone is actually guilty of something. There is a new public out there with its own forms of stimulation. This is also not

the work of an ominously named 'web community'. Germany's intellectual elite is increasingly dependent on the web. German political circles must quickly ditch the notion of the few lunatics out there in the digital realm who can be safely ignored."

Within the space of a few days, a protest letter addressed to the chancellor by young academics had gathered 50,000 signatures. Tobias Bunde, who wrote the letter and started the campaign with four friends, is not a member of a political organisation. He said his aim was to protect the integrity of the German scientific community.

"We are proud that we prevented any return to business as usual because that was what the Chancellor intended. And I'm excited about the power of the Internet, it is indicative of the emergence of a new form of politics which is moulding our generation", he told *Spiegel Online*.

In addition to more liberally oriented newspapers, conservative papers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* also joined in the criticism of Guttenberg and his behaviour. Then, last weekend, a number of high-ranking CDU politicians and academics expressed their fears that their party would lose any authority amongst its supporters in the educated middle class and young professionals. They condemned the trivialisation of the charges of plagiarism as an attack on the integrity of science and questioned Guttenberg's suitability to hold ministerial office based on his character defects.

Education Minister Annette Schavan (CDU) told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "As someone who graduated 31

years ago and has supervised many graduate students in my career, I am ashamed, and not just in secret." The Bundestag President Norbert Lammert (CDU) described the affair and its repercussions as a "nail in the coffin of our democracy."

Guttenberg's own thesis supervisor, the 76-year-old retired constitutional lawyer Peter Häberle, also spoke out after two weeks of silence. He said that the doctoral thesis contained "unimaginable deficiencies" that were "serious and unacceptable".

His successor, Oliver Lepsius, was even blunter. He described Guttenberg as a fraud and called for his resignation. If he drew no consequences from his behaviour, then "the relationship between science and politics would be seriously damaged". He went on to warn of "damage of potentially unimaginable proportions."

Guttenberg's resignation is a severe blow for Chancellor Angela Merkel. For the last two years, the 39-year-old scion of a long-standing noble family was the most popular minister in her cabinet, having apparently survived a series of scandals. His public image was a product of the media, which portrayed him as honest, dynamic and youthful. Now, this artificially created image has played its own part in his downfall.

After the recent disastrous defeat for the CDU in Hamburg, and only four weeks before important state elections in Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg, the resignation of the defence minister will only accelerate the decline of the Merkel government.

The list of leading Union politicians who have ditched Merkel, either under pressure or on their own initiative is

The initial 12 charges carried a possible prison sentence of 52 years.

According to Manning's defense attorney, David Coombs, the 22 new charges were preferred by Manning's commanding officer after he made his own judgment of possible offenses in the case. Under the court martial procedure, a provisional hearing, known as an Article 32, is to be held in late May or early June, when final charges are to be laid.

At that stage it will be known for certain whether

growing longer: Friedrich Merz, CDU parliamentary faction leader and a leading light of the business wing; Roland Koch, the right-wing Hessian Minister President; Ole von Beust, the mayor of Hamburg; former Federal President Horst Köhler; and recently Bundesbank President Axel Weber have all thrown in the towel in the last year or so.

The Merkel government, which came to power intent on restoring the budget and passing on the costs of the financial crisis to the working population, is increasingly beset by crisis. The fundamental reason for its crisis is the exacerbation of social tensions that in turn have consequences for those who vote for, and are members of, the Union parties.

The ruling elite has long since been looking for a politician with the necessary arrogance and ruthlessness to impose its dictates. Guttenberg was being groomed to play such a role. The implementation of his planned reform of the German army—i.e., the transformation of the

Manning will face a possible death sentence.

David House, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is one of the few people to have visited Manning in prison. Alluding to President Nixon's charge that Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg was "providing aid and comfort to the enemy," he said, "Today we see the Obama administration continuing the legacy Nixon started by declaring whistleblowers as enemies of the state. It is a sad and dangerous day for transparency advocates everywhere." **WSWS**

Bundeswehr into a powerful international fighting force—was a first step towards higher posts.

The resignation of Guttenberg also shows, however, the extent to which the government has underestimated the political situation. The fierce opposition he provoked due to his arrogant behaviour led to his exposure as cheat and a fraud.

There is a growing lobby in the ruling elite—at least temporarily—that favours a return to power by the SPD and the Greens. The former SPD-Green coalition led by Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer, with its Agenda 2010 programme, was far more effective in attacking the gains of working people than anything the Merkel government has accomplished so far.

Politically, the SPD and Greens have backed Guttenberg to the hilt. They also advocate the transformation of the Bundeswehr into an international combat army but do not believe that a media creation like Guttenberg is substantial enough to stand up to public opposition. **WSWS**

## Libya's rebels say not reached out for Chavez's Libya plan: TV

**TRIPOLI**, — The chairman of the rebel National Libya Council said to Al-Jazeera TV on Thursday that the body has not been reached out by anyone regarding a plan put forward by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to peacefully end the crisis in Libya.

"No one had contacted us regarding Venezuela's proposal to resolve the Libyan crisis," Mustafa Abdel Jali told the Doha-based TV. Abdel Jali, a former justice minister who heads the opposition body

which lead rebels who are reportedly controlling the east of Libya, rejected any talks with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. The TV said Venezuela, a close friend to Libya, is still in contact with Arab and non-Arab countries to form a committee which would head for Libya to act as a conciliator between the Libyan government and rebels.

The Arab League said Chavez's plan is still under consideration. **(Xinhua)**



Armed Libyan protestors take their position during a battle against pro-Muammar Gaddafi fighters, in the town of Brega, east Libya, March 2, 2011.