

## US fears more files release

REUTERS

US officials are worried about what other secret US documents the whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks may possess and have tried to contact the group without success to avoid their release, the State Department said on Friday.

The shadow group publicly released more than 90,000 US Afghan war records spanning a six-year period on Sunday. The group also is thought to be in possession of tens of thousands of US diplomatic cables passed to it by an Army intelligence analyst, media reports have said.

"Do we have concerns about what might be out there? Yes, we do," State Department spokesman PJ Crowley told a briefing, adding that US authorities have not specifically determined which documents may have been leaked to the organisation.

He said the State Department could not confirm the long-standing reports that WikiLeaks is in possession of a large set of US diplomatic cables.

But the fact that the documents released Sunday last contained a handful of State Department cables suggests that other secret diplomatic messages may have been included in data transmitted to WikiLeaks, Crowley said.

"When we provide our analysis of situations in key countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, we distribute these across the other agencies including to military addresses," Crowley said. "So is the potential there that State Department documents have been compromised? Yes."

Both Crowley and White House spokesman Robert Gibbs urged WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange, not to release further classified US government documents.

Gibbs, noting WikiLeaks claims to have at least 15,000 more secret Afghan documents, told NBC's "Today" show there was little the government could do to halt the release of the papers.

"We can do nothing but implore the person who has those classified top secret documents not to post any more," Gibbs said. "I think it's important that no more damage be done to our national security."



## Obama warns of failure to resume direct talks

AFP, Ramallah

US President Barack Obama has warned Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas that failure to resume direct peace talks with Israel could undermine US-Palestinian ties, Palestinian officials said yesterday.

Obama made the warning in a letter to Abbas but also pledged to rally Arab, European and Russian support for the Palestinians if direct negotiations resume, a Palestinian official told AFP speaking on condition of anonymity.

"In the letter, President Barack Obama warned president Mahmud Abbas that his refusal to enter into direct negotiations with Israel next month will have consequences for American-Palestinian relations," the official said.

The 16-point letter had a "carrot-and-stick approach," he added.

Obama stressed "it is high time to resume direct negotiations with Israel" and told Abbas that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "is ready to resume direct negotiations."

**BOYS BACK HOME:** Erin Bramhall, right, holds her daughter Scarlet Bramhall, 8, as they wait for Erin's husband Spc Joshua Bramhall to return from a yearlong tour in Iraq with the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division on Friday in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Over 300 paratroopers in the 1st Brigade of the 82nd Airborne returned today to their families, who waited in a large hall adjacent to the flight line.

## Black box found in Pak plane crash wreckage

AFP, Islamabad

Recovery workers found the "black box" flight data recorder yesterday in the wreckage of Pakistan's worst-ever plane crash, and it appeared to be in good condition, officials said.

An analysis of the data on the recorder could provide clues as to why the Airblue flight crashed Wednesday into the hills overlooking the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, killing all 152 people onboard, including two Americans. The recorder's decoding may take weeks, however.

## Ex-militia chief blames US for delays in Iraq govt forming

REUTERS, Iraq

Washington is holding up the formation of a new Iraqi government by insisting the two main election winners form a coalition, allowing Iraq's neighbours to meddle in its affairs, a top Shia politician told Reuters.

Hadi al-Amiri, a parliamentarian who heads the Badr Organisation, the former armed wing of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council's (ISCI), said the United States was pressuring Iraqi leaders to form a government of the two main electoral blocs led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and former Premier Iyad Allawi.

He said Washington wanted to exclude others, including the Badr group, which won 11 seats in parliament.

"The Americans think that the best coalition is between Maliki and Allawi ...

and in this way they exclude (people who they view as) extremists such as the Sadrist, Badrist and others," Amiri told Reuters in an interview on Friday.

"The insistence of the Americans on their project is what is delaying forming the government," he said at the ISCI's compound in Baghdad, which is guarded by uniformed Badr guards.

"Today, it's the Americans who are standing against (Iraq's government formation) project, not the Saudis, not the Syrians and not the Iranians. Regional interference comes when there is persistence by the Americans."

Iraqi political parties have been deadlocked since an election on March 7 which produced no outright winner.

Shia, Sunni and Kurdish factions have been negotiating to form a parliamentary majority but they are unable to agree on

who will hold the highest offices.

US President Barack Obama pressed Iraqi leaders last week to end the post-election deadlock and form a government soon since the reduction of US troops in Iraq was running ahead of schedule.

Talks forming a coalition have failed to make progress because of discord among the main Shia coalition, made up of Maliki's State of Law bloc (SOL) and the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), about Maliki's desire for a second term.

Together the merged Shia coalition has 159 seats in the new 325-seat parliament, four short of a majority.

Amiri's ISCI and the Sadrist political movement -- followers of anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr -- are the INA's two main factions. Sadrists are known to oppose Maliki after he sent the Iraqi army to crush their Mehdi Army militia in 2008.

## Political detainee sues Saudi government

AFP, Riyadh

More than three years after he was arrested on vague allegations, Saudi political detainee Suliman al-Reshoudi who has yet to be tried or even charged with a crime is now taking on the system.

Although his situation is not unusual for political prisoners in Saudi Arabia, the former judge is suing the security police and interior ministry to either charge him or release him.

It is a remarkable challenge and the first case of its kind in the kingdom.

The lawsuit, filed by activists on his behalf and led by a lawyer who cannot meet his client, is based on a little-tested legal code that offers protection to detainees for the first time.

It did not exist when Reshoudi was jailed along with dozens of others for pro-reform activities, but now has become a test of the Saudi government's avowal to improve its

judicial system and boost human rights.

"We are defending Reshoudi as a model for others in prison," said Mohammed al-Qahtani, a member of the small Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) which has organised his defence.

In six hearings since December, the interior ministry that has historically exercised a strong influence over the justice system has failed to have the suit thrown out.

Reshoudi's lawyer, Abdulaziz al-Wahabi, sees that as a measure of success even if his client remains in jail without charge.

Moreover, despite what one supporter called a "menacing heavy police presence" at the last hearing, the judge allowed Saudi human rights observers to attend.

"This is the first case of people publicly challenging the interior ministry in their own courts," said Qahtani, an economist in a government think-tank.

## Iran filmmaker accuses FBI of pressuring in US custody

AFP, Tehran

An Iranian documentary filmmaker who returned home after reportedly spending two months in US custody has said the FBI held him in solitary confinement and put "pressure" on him, state media reported yesterday.

Hossein Dehbashi, 38, was reportedly arrested on June 6 for forging a letter in the name of the director of communications of the United Nations supporting his immigration application to the United States, the English-language Press TV said on its website.

The website quoted Dehbashi as saying upon arrival in Iran that he had been arrested for "incomplete immigration documents" and was held in a "FBI jail called super maximum security institution" in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Farsi-language state television reported on its website that Dehbashi was arrested by agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US immigration department.



In a file picture taken on August 5, 2010 Filipinos flash the L sign with their fingers for "Laban" (fight), the slogan of late former Philippine president Corazon Aquino, and hold up a magazine showing her portrait during her funeral procession in Manila. The Philippines today marks one year since the death of democracy heroine Corazon Aquino, a momentous event that is still being felt as it propelled her son to the presidency.

## Hamas vows revenge after Israeli strikes

AFP, Gaza City

Hamas vowed revenge yesterday after Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip killed a senior militant and wounded eight other people.

The overnight Israeli raids came after a rocket fired from the strip hit a southern Israeli city.

One Hamas militant was killed in an air strike on a caravan near the Magazhih refugee camp in the centre of the Palestinian enclave, a Hamas official said. The Israeli military said the site was "a weapons-manufacturing warehouse."

In a statement yesterday, the military wing of Hamas identified the man as Issa al-Batran, 40, and said he was a senior field commander.

"These new Zionist crimes will not pass without answer," the statement said.

Israel has tried to kill Batran in the past. His wife and five sons were killed in an attack on his house during Israel's three-week offensive on the territory in December 2008.

Aircraft also fired at least four missiles at buildings used by Hamas security forces in Gaza City, wounding eight people, several of them seriously, said Muawiyah Hassanein, the head of Gaza emergency services.

The site targeted used to house the offices of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas before his Western-backed Fatah party was ousted from Gaza by the Islamist Hamas in 2007.

Fearing further strikes, Hamas ordered the evacuation of all its security offices, a security source told AFP.

Warplanes also hit smuggling tunnels on the border with Egypt without causing casualties, witnesses said.

Also yesterday, two Palestinians were wounded by Israeli fire while searching for scrap material near the Gaza border fence, Hassanein said.

The army said the two were in a no-go zone and that troops fired at their legs after they failed to heed warning shots.

The air strikes came after a rocket fired by Gaza militants on Friday slammed into the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, causing no casualties but some damage, and prompting sharp criticism from the United Nations.

## N Korean FM visits Myanmar amid nuke worries

AFP, Seoul

North Korea's foreign minister met his Myanmar counterpart during a trip to the country, Pyongyang media reported yesterday, in a visit likely to be watched by Western nations fearful of the two regimes could be co-operating on nuclear weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency said a delegation led by Pak Ui Chun met with U Nyan Win and officials on Friday in the administrative capital Naypyidaw.

"At the talks the two sides exchanged views on the issue of developing the friendly relations between the two countries and regional and international issues of mutual concern," KCNA said.

## Military keeps distressed soldiers at Afghanistan combat site

AP, Forward Operating Base Bostick, Afghanistan

Sgt Thomas Riordan didn't want to return to Afghanistan after home leave. He had just fought through a battle that killed eight soldiers, and when he arrived home his wife said she was leaving. He almost killed himself that night.

When his psychologist asked what he thought he should do, Riordan said: Stay in Colorado.

Instead, the military brought Riordan back to this base in the eastern Afghan mountains, where mortar rounds sound regularly and soldiers have to wear flack jackets if they step outside their barracks before 8:00am, even to go to the bathroom.

Increasingly, the army is trying to treat traumatized soldiers "in theatre" --

where they're stationed. The idea is that soldiers will heal best if kept with those who understand what they've been through, rather than being dumped into a treatment centre back in the States where they'll be surrounded by unfamiliar people.

However, the policy may serve the military at least as much as the soldiers. Treating soldiers on site makes it easier to send them back into battle -- key for a stretched military fighting two wars. It also brings up a host of challenges: Ensuring soldiers get the treatment they need in the middle of war, monitoring those on antidepressants and sleeping pills, and deciding who can be kept in a war zone and who might snap.

"There's not been a lot of studies on those types of interventions," said Terri Tanielian, a military health policy researcher with the RAND Corp think tank. "There isn't necessarily a magic formula that says who's going to go back and be okay and who isn't."

Riordan's commanders with the 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry of the Army's 4th Brigade Combat Team say they're doing their best for him by keeping him in Afghanistan. The 4th Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Carson, Colo has reason to be particularly conscientious -- Fort Carson came under scrutiny after a string of murders by returned soldiers.

Riordan acknowledges that in-theatre treatment has helped a lot of his fellow soldiers, but says it's never been enough at the right time or place for him. Through all the psychologists, psychiatrists, medications and brain scans, he just feels more alone.

## Fidel Castro says US mistreats convicted spies

REUTERS, Cuba

Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro on Friday stepped up criticism of the United States over its treatment of five Cuban agents imprisoned for more than a decade for spying and said one of them was in a cell so small it amounted to torture.

Castro, who for 49 years headed a government criticized by human rights groups for holding political prisoners in bad conditions, said Cuba would never torture captured spies.

Castro, 83, spoke to a group of young Communist Party members in his latest of a series of appearances since recently emerging from four years of seclusion after falling ill in 2006. A videotape of his presentation was shown on national television.

In his previous two appearances, he wore a green military shirt, but he was back in civilian clothes on Friday.

"They are people who have suffered for 12

years. The sufferings of these people don't count, they're not worth anything?" Castro said of the imprisoned agents, known in Cuba as the "Five Heroes."

The case has long been a point of contention between the United States and Cuba, which demands their release and said they were trying to prevent "terrorist" attacks by exile extremists.

The five men were arrested in 1998 and convicted in a Miami court in 2001 of 26 counts of spying. They received sentences ranging from 15 years to life in prison.

US prosecutors have said the men were part of a Cuban espionage ring that spied on the Cuban exile community in Florida and sought to penetrate US military facilities.

US prosecutors linked the men's activities to the 1996 shooting down by Cuban fighter jets of two planes belonging to an exile group, Brothers to the Rescue, which flew near Cuba. Four men in the planes were killed.