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How WikiLeaks Enlightened Us in 2010

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WikiLeaks has brought to light a series of disturbing insinuations and startling truths in the last year, some earth-shattering, others simply confirmations of our darkest suspicions about the way the world works. Thanks to founder Julian Assange's legal situation in Sweden (and potentially the United States) as well as his media grandstanding, it is easy to forget how important and interesting some of WikiLeaks' revelations have been.

WikiLeaks revelations from 2010 have included simple [gossip about world leaders](#): Russia's PM Vladimir Putin is playing Batman to President Dmitri Medvedev's Robin; Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is crazy and was once slapped by a Revolutionary Guard chief for being so; Libya's Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has a hankering for his voluptuous blond Ukrainian nurse; and France's President Nicholas Sarkozy simply can't take criticism.

[CBS News Special Report: WikiLeaks](#)

However, WikiLeaks' revelations also have many major implications for world relations. The following is a list of the more impactful WikiLeaks revelations from 2010, grouped by region.

The United States

- [The U.S. Army considered WikiLeaks a national security threat as early as 2008](#), according to documents obtained and posted by WikiLeaks in March, 2010.

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- [Then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his top commanders repeatedly, knowingly lied to the American public about rising sectarian violence in Iraq](#) beginning in 2006, according to the cross-referencing of WikiLeaks' leaked Iraq war documents and former Washington Post Baghdad Bureau Chief Ellen Knickmeyer's recollections.
- [The Secretary of State's office encouraged U.S. diplomats at the United Nations to spy on their counterparts](#), including collecting data about the U.N. secretary general, his team and foreign diplomats, including credit card account numbers, according to documents from WikiLeaks U.S. diplomatic cable release. Later cables reveal [the CIA draws up an annual "wish-list" for the State Department](#), which one year included the instructions to spy on the U.N.
- [The Obama administration worked with Republicans during his first few months in office to protect Bush administration officials facing a criminal investigation overseas for their involvement in establishing policies that some considered torture](#). A "confidential" April 17, 2009, cable sent from the US embassy in Madrid obtained by WikiLeaks details how the Obama administration, working with Republicans, leaned on Spain to derail this potential prosecution.
- WikiLeaks released a secret State Department cable that provided [a list of sites around the world vital to U.S. national security, from mines in Africa to labs in Europe](#).

Iraq

- [A U.S. Army helicopter allegedly gunned down two journalists in Baghdad](#) in 2007. WikiLeaks posted a 40-minute video on its website in April, showing the attack in gruesome detail, along with an audio recording of the pilots during the attack.
- [Iran's military intervened aggressively in support of Shiite combatants in Iraq, offering weapons, training and sanctuary](#), according to an October, 2010, WikiLeaks release of thousands of secret documents related to the Iraq war.
- According to one tabulation, [there have been 100,000 casualties, mostly civilian, in Iraq](#) - greater than the numbers previously made public, many of them killed by American troops but most of them were killed by other Iraqis, according to the WikiLeaks Iraq documents dump.
- [U.S. authorities failed to investigate hundreds of reports of abuse, torture, rape and even murder by Iraqi police and soldiers](#) whose conduct appears to be systematic and normally unpunished, according to the WikiLeaks Iraq documents dump.

Afghanistan

- [U.S. special-operations forces have targeted militants without trial in secret assassination missions, and many more Afghan civilians have been killed by accident than previously reported](#), according to the WikiLeaks Afghanistan war document dump.

- [Afghan President Hamid Karzai freed suspected drug dealers because of their political connections](#), according to a secret diplomatic cable. The cable, which supports the multiple allegations of corruption within the Karzai government, said that despite repeated rebukes from U.S. officials in Kabul, the president and his attorney general authorized the release of detainees. Previous cables accused Karzai's half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, of being a corrupt narcotics trafficker.

Asia

- [Pakistan's government has allowed members of its spy network to hold strategy sessions on combating American troops with members of the Taliban](#), while Pakistan has received more than \$1 billion a year in aid from Washington to help combat militants, according to a July, 2010, WikiLeaks release of thousands of files on the Afghanistan war.

- [A stash of highly enriched uranium capable of providing enough material for multiple "dirty bombs" has been waiting in Pakistan for removal by an American team for more than three years](#) but has been held up by the country's government, according to leaked classified State Department documents.

- Despite sustained denials by US officials spanning more than a year, [U.S. military Special Operations Forces have been conducting offensive operations inside Pakistan](#), helping direct U.S. drone strikes and conducting joint operations with Pakistani forces against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces in north and south Waziristan and elsewhere in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, according to secret cables released as part of the Wikileaks document dump.

- [China was behind the online attack of Google](#), according to leaked diplomatic cables. The electronic intrusion was "part of a coordinated campaign of computer sabotage carried out by government operatives, private security experts and internet outlaws recruited by the Chinese government."

- Secret State Department cables show a South Korean official quoted as saying that [North Korea's collapse is likely to happen "two to three years" after the death of the current dictator, Kim Jong Il](#). The U.S. is already planning for the day North Korea implodes from its own economic woes. China has "no will" to use its economic leverage to force North Korea to change its policies and the Chinese official who is the lead negotiator with North Korea is "the most incompetent official in China."

- [North Korea is secretly helping the military dictatorship in Myanmar build nuclear and missile sites in its jungles](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. Although witnesses told the embassy that construction is at an early stage, officials worry Myanmar could one day possess a nuclear bomb.

- Five years ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross told U.S. diplomats in New Delhi that [the Indian government "condones torture" and systematically abused detainees in the disputed region of Kashmir](#). The Red Cross told the officials that

hundreds of detainees were subjected to beatings, electrocutions and acts of sexual humiliation, the Guardian newspaper of London reported Thursday evening.

- [The British government has been training a Bangladeshi paramilitary force condemned by human rights organisations as a "government death squad"](#), leaked US embassy cables have revealed. Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which has been held responsible for hundreds of extra-judicial killings in recent years and is said to routinely use torture, have received British training in "investigative interviewing techniques" and "rules of engagement".

- Secret U.S. diplomatic cables reveal that [BP suffered a blowout after a gas leak in the Caucasus country of Azerbaijan in September 2008, a year and a half before another BP blowout killed 11 workers](#) and started a leak that gushed millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Middle East

- [Saudi Arabia's rulers have deep distrust for some fellow Muslim countries, especially Pakistan and Iran](#), despite public appearances, according to documents from the late November, 2010, WikiLeaks U.S. diplomatic cable dump. King Abdullah called Pakistan's president Asif Ali Zardari "the greatest obstacle" to the country's progress and he also repeatedly [urged the United States to attack Iran](#) to destroy its nuclear program to stop Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon.

- [Iranian Red Crescent ambulances were used to smuggle weapons to Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group during its 2006 war with Israel](#), according to the leaked U.S. diplomatic memos.

- In a leaked diplomatic memo, dated two weeks after elections that landed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in office, a senior American diplomat said that during a meeting a few days before "[Netanyahu expressed support for the concept of land swaps](#), and emphasized that he did not want to govern the West Bank and Gaza but rather to stop attacks from being launched from there."

- [The United States was secretly given permission from Yemen's president to attack the al Qaeda group in his country](#) that later attempted to blow up planes in American air space. President Ali Abdullah Saleh told John Brennan, President Obama's counterterrorism adviser, in a leaked diplomatic cable from September 2009 that the U.S. had an "open door" on terrorism in Yemen.

- Contrary to public statements, the Obama administration actually helped fuel conflict in Yemen. [The U.S. was shipping arms to Saudi Arabia for use in northern Yemen even as it denied any role in the conflict.](#)

- [Saudi Arabia is one of the largest origin points for funds supporting international terrorism](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

urged U.S. diplomats to do more to stop the flow of money to Islamist militant groups from donors in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government, Clinton wrote, was reluctant to cut off money being sent to the Taliban in Afghanistan and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan.

- The U.S. is failing to stop the flow of arms to Middle Eastern militant groups. [Hamas and Hezbollah are still receiving weapons from Iran, North Korea, and Syria](#), secret diplomatic cables allege.

- A storage facility housing Yemen's radioactive material was unsecured for up to a week after its lone guard was removed and its surveillance camera was broken, a secret U.S. State Department cable released by WikiLeaks revealed Monday. "[Very little now stands between the bad guys and Yemen's nuclear material](#)," a Yemeni official said on January 9 in the cable.

- [Israel destroyed a Syrian nuclear reactor in 2007, constructed with apparent help from North Korea, fearing it was built to make a bomb](#). In a leaked diplomatic cable obtained by the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, then-US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice wrote the Israelis targeted and destroyed the Syrian nuclear reactor just weeks before it was to be operational.

- Diplomatic cables recently released by WikiLeaks indicate [authorities in the United Arab Emirates debated whether to keep quiet about the high-profile killing of a Hamas operative in Dubai in January](#). The documents also show the UAE sought U.S. help in tracking down details of credit cards Dubai police believe were used by a foreign hit squad involved in the killing. The spy novel-like slaying, complete with faked passports and assassins in disguise, is widely believed to be the work of Israeli secret agents.

- WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange told Al Jazeera network that some of the unpublished cables show "[Top officials in several Arab countries have close links with the CIA](#), and many officials keep visiting US embassies in their respective countries voluntarily to establish links with this key US intelligence agency. These officials are spies for the U.S. in their countries."

Europe

- Of the 500 or so tactical nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal, it is known that about 200 are deployed throughout Europe. Leaked diplomatic cables reveal that [dozens of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons are in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium](#).

- [NATO had secret plans to defend the Baltic states and Poland from an attack by Russia](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. NATO officials had feared "an unnecessary increase in NATO-Russia tensions," and wanted no public discussions of their contingency plans to defend Baltic states from Russian attack.

- [The Libyan government promised "enormous repercussions" for the U.K. if the release of Abdel Baset al-Megrahi, the Lockerbie bomber, was not handled properly](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. The Libyan government threatened "harsh, immediate" consequences if the man jailed for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 died in prison in Scotland.
- [Pope Benedict impeded an investigation into alleged child sex abuse within the Catholic Church](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. Not only did Pope Benedict refuse to allow Vatican officials to testify in an investigation by an Irish commission into alleged child sex abuse by priests, he was also reportedly furious when Vatican officials were called upon in Rome.
- [Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness carried out negotiations for the Good Friday agreement with Irish then-prime minister Bertie Ahern while the two had explicit knowledge of a bank robbery that the Irish Republican Army was planning to carry out](#), according to a WikiLeaks cable. Ahern figured Adams and McGuinness knew about the 26.5 million pound Northern Bank robbery of 2004 because they were members of the "IRA military command."

Africa

- [Anglo-Dutch oil giant Royal Dutch Shell PLC has infiltrated the highest levels of government in Nigeria](#). A high-ranking executive for the international Shell oil company once bragged to U.S. diplomats, as reported in a leaked diplomatic cable, that the company's employees had so well infiltrated the Nigerian government that officials had "forgotten" the level of the company's access.
- [Mozambique is fast on its way to becoming a narco-state because of close ties between drug smugglers and the southeastern African nation's government](#), according to U.S. Embassy cables released by WikiLeaks. The cables say cocaine, heroin and other drugs come in from South America and Asia, and are then flown to Europe or sent overland to neighboring South Africa for sale.
- Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe-appointed attorney general announced he was investigating Mugabe's chief opposition leader on treason charges based exclusively on the contents of a WikiLeaks' leaked cable. The cable claimed [Zimbabwe opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai encouraged Western sanctions against his own country to induce Mugabe into giving up some political power](#).

Americas/Caribbean

- Mexican President Felipe Calderon told a U.S. official last year that [Latin America "needs a visible U.S. presence" to counter Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's growing influence in the region](#), according to a U.S. State Department cable leaked to WikiLeaks.

- A newly released confidential U.S. diplomatic cable predicts [Cuba's economic situation could become "fatal" within two to three years](#), and details concerns voiced by diplomats from other countries, including China, that the communist-run country has been slow to adopt reforms.

- [The Honduran military, Supreme Court and National Congress conspired in 2009 in what constituted an illegal and unconstitutional coup against the Executive Branch](#), according to a leaked diplomatic cable. However, the constitution itself may be deficient in terms of providing clear procedures for dealing with alleged illegal acts by the President and resolving conflicts between the branches of government.

- [Venezuela's deteriorating oil industry and its growing economic problems are taking a toll on President Hugo Chavez's popularity](#). In one confidential leaked diplomatic cable dated Oct. 15, 2009, the U.S. Embassy said "equipment conditions have deteriorated drastically" since the government expropriated some 80 oil service companies earlier that year. It said safety and maintenance at the now state-owned oil facilities were in a "terrible state."

- [China has been reselling Venezuela's cheap oil at a profit](#), according to a classified U.S. document released by WikiLeaks. President Hugo Chavez was upset that China apparently profited by selling fuel to other countries, fuel that it had sold China at a discount in order to gain favor. The cable also describes falling crude output in Venezuela caused by a host of problems within the national oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA, or PDVSA.

- [Jamaica's counter-drug efforts have been so sluggish that exasperated Cuban officials privately griped about their frustrations to a U.S. drug enforcement official](#), according to a U.S. diplomatic cable. The communique released by WikiLeaks said Cuban officials painted their Caribbean neighbor to the south as chronically uncooperative in stopping drug smugglers who use Cuban waters and airspace to transport narcotics destined for the U.S.

- A leaked U.S. diplomatic cable published Saturday depicts the leader of Mexico's army "lamenting" its lengthy role in the anti-drug offensive, but expecting it to last between seven and 10 more years. The cable says [Mexican Defense Secretary Gen. Guillermo Galvan Galvan mistrusts other Mexican law enforcement agencies and prefers to work separately, because corrupt officials had leaked information in the past](#).

- [McDonald's tried to delay the US government's implementation of a free-trade agreement in order to put pressure on El Salvador to appoint neutral judges in a \\$24m lawsuit it was fighting in the country](#). The revelation of the McDonald's strategy to ensure a fair hearing for a long-running legal battle against a former franchisee comes from a leaked US embassy cable dated 15 February 2006.

In 2010, WikiLeaks released only about 2,000 of the approximate 250,000 cables it claims to possess, and the pace of those releases dropped dramatically as the holidays

approached. If Assange's promises are to be believed, 2011 will be another important year for learning about the hidden forces that drive our world.