

U.S. Military, State Department and White House Trapped in Bradley Manning Quagmire

Continued Prosecution of Manning Will Embarrass U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment

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The Obama administration finally did the right thing and is moving Manning from the abusive Quantico Marine Corps. Brig, but that is just the beginning of their problems with the prosecution of Bradley Manning. This is a trial that could rock U.S. foreign policy and undermine U.S. credibility around the world.

After months of pressure, the Obama administration is finally transferring PFC Bradley Manning to a military prison appropriately designed for pre-trial detention in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. While the transfer of Manning away from the abusive Quantico Marine Corps Brig may be a positive step, the U.S. government remains trapped in a Manning Quagmire. If they proceed their embarrassment will continue to grow as the truth about U.S. foreign policy is reviewed under a microscope.

The nine month-long abusive mistreatment of Manning in the brig at the Quantico Marine Corp. Base has put international attention on his case. The prosecution of Manning will result in the videos and documents he is accused of releasing being more closely examined. The war crimes and other misdeeds of military and foreign policy personnel will be highlighted to the world. People are already wondering why this young private has been so mistreated. What did he do to aggravate the Obama administration, U.S. military and foreign policy establishment?

At every stage of the prosecution: pretrial hearing, motion hearings and trial, there will be more focus on what he is accused of doing and that will inevitably lead to the documents and videos he allegedly leaked being more closely examined. This attention will not be kind to the U.S. military and State Department as the documents show consistent illegal and unethical behavior by the U.S. government; support for dictators, oligarchs and royalists who work against their people's interests; as well as U.S. foreign policy and war being a vehicle for big business interests.

In addition to the content of the materials he is accused of leaking, the trial of Bradley Manning will be closely watched. People are already wondering whether a fair trial in the U.S. military is possible. If the Obama administration allowed nine months of abusive solitary confinement before trial how can they be expected to give Manning a fair trial? The media and people concerned about this case will be watching closely to see if he gets a fair, fully open, public trial.

Rule for Courts-Martial 806(b) states that military courts are presumptively open to the public. In a [series of cases](#) military courts have found the media has a right to attend preliminary hearings and trials in military courts. This is consistent with a long-line of U.S. Supreme Court decisions beginning with [Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia](#), 448 U.S. 555 (1980) where the court recognized that public access to criminal proceedings is a critical component of a fair justice system that inspires public confidence and integrity. In 1987 the Court of Military Appeals wrote: [W]e believe that public confidence in matters of military justice would quickly erode if courts-martial were arbitrarily closed to the public.”

There is keen public interest in the case of Bradley Manning as he is accused of leaking documents that provide evidence that U.S. foreign policy is not what Americans have been told. The military has no basis for keeping the public from seeing all of Manning’s trial, but there was no basis for pre-trial mistreatment either. No doubt groups spearheaded by the [Bradley Manning Support Network](#) will be working to make sure the media and public has complete access to all hearings and documents related to Manning’s prosecution.

But, the focus will not be primarily on process but on content - what is Bradley Manning accused of leaking? And, that is a question the U.S. military and foreign policy establishment does not want Americans or people around the world to look at. It is not a pretty picture. Here are a few examples among many:

- That U.S. troops [kill civilians](#) without cause or concern and then [cover it up](#) (more examples of hiding civilian killings [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) including killing [reporters](#);
- The diplomatic cables also show that beyond the war fronts that [Hillary Clinton has turned State Department Foreign Service officers into a nest of spies](#) who [violate laws to spy on diplomats](#) all with marching [orders drawn up by the CIA](#);
- The [U.S. looks the other way when governments it puts in power torture](#);
- That Israel, with U.S. knowledge is [preparing for a widespread war](#) in the Middle East, [keeping the Gaza economy at the brink of collapse](#) and show [widespread corruption](#) at border checkpoints.
- The CIA is fighting an undeclared and unauthorized [war in Pakistan](#) with [Blackwater mercenaries](#);
- The [Collateral Murder](#) video shows American soldiers in an Apache helicopter gunning down a group of innocent men, including two Reuters employees, a photojournalist and his driver, killing 16 and sending two children to the hospital. This one video describes [multiple war crimes](#).
- Another document showed the 2009 [Granai airstrike](#) in Afghanistan, in which as many as 140 civilians, including women and children, were killed in a U.S. attack, a fact disputed by the U.S. military.

It will not only be the American people who become more aware that the United States is not the “good cop” of the world but people and governments around the world will also more clearly see it.

The U.S. is in a Bradley Manning quagmire that is going to undermine its reputation in the world unless they find a way out of this case quickly. President Obama still has an opportunity to do the right thing – acknowledge the reality of the history and current make-up of U.S. foreign policy and begin a discussion within government and among the people about radically altering the direction, strategies and tactics of the U.S. around the world. If he shows this kind of leadership a quagmire could turn into positive change for the United States and the world.

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