



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 30, 2013

## Bradley Manning Verdict to be Announced Tuesday

A verdict has been reached in the court martial of Bradley Manning, but the judge will wait until Tuesday to announce her decision on whether the Army PFC violated the Espionage Act and aided foreign terrorist groups when he released more than 700,000 classified documents for publication on the whistleblower website Wikileaks in 2010.



Army Colonel Denise Lind began her deliberations Friday evening and scheduled the announcement of her verdict, wire services [reported](#), following nearly two months of testimony and evidence against Manning, the 25-year-old soldier who could, if convicted, spend the rest of his life in a military prison with no possibility of parole. While fighting the espionage charge, he has pled guilty to the lesser charge of mishandling government property, for which he faces a possible 20 years of imprisonment.

Military prosecutors have called Manning's distribution of materials, including classified combat videos, State Department cables, and terrorist prisoner assessments, the greatest breach of U.S. secrets in history. Manning's lawyers have argued that their client is not a traitor, but a whistleblower who discovered and exposed unlawful government conduct during his assignment as an intelligence analyst in a unit based southeast of Baghdad, Iraq. The most damning and controversial of the materials published by Wikileaks has been a [video](#) shot from aboard a U.S aircraft showing gunners aboard the plane firing on and killing several civilians, including a news cameraman, in Baghdad. The video was released on YouTube and went viral on the Internet.

Some of the documents proved embarrassing to United States and other governments when published by Wikileaks, including those quoting unflattering, not-for-publication assessments by U.S. diplomats of officials of other nations.

While unauthorized release of classified documents fits the violations described in the Espionage Act, Manning has been hailed as a hero by many who opposed the U.S. military invasion of Iraq, much of its conduct during the nearly nine years of occupation there, and the general cult of secrecy that has greatly expanded the amount of information that is classified, keeping the American public in the dark about much of what our government has been doing. Sympathy for Manning has also been aroused by reports of the conditions of his imprisonment, including long months in [solitary confinement](#).

The Espionage Act was passed during World War I under the Woodrow Wilson administration, but has been invoked only half a dozen times in its 96-year history. Critics of the Obama administration have



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charged the president has violated his pledge to conduct an “open and transparent” government by prosecuting whistleblowers. Obama’s Justice Department has prosecuted three cases under authority of the Espionage Act or half of all cases prosecuted under the law since its passage in 1917.

Daniel Ellsberg, the intelligence analyst and former Department of Defense employee who released the documents the *New York Times* and other newspapers published as “The Pentagon Papers,” was prosecuted under the Espionage Act, but the charge was dismissed in court when it became clear that illegal means were used to obtain evidence against him. Members of President Nixon’s “plumbers,” created to discover the sources of leaked government secrets, broke into the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist in an effort to gain evidence they could use against the Pentagon whistleblower.

*Photo of Bradley Manning: AP Images*



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