

Most Americans critical of WikiLeaks

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

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WASHINGTON, December 14, 2010 (AFP) - Nearly seven in 10 Americans believe the WikiLeaks exposure of thousands of secret US cables went too far, and most support the arrest and trial of its founder Julian Assange, a poll showed Tuesday.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents in the Washington Post-ABC News poll said the documents dump "harms the public interest" -- a sharp turn from Americans' assessment of WikiLeaks earlier this year, when the anti-privacy website released thousands of Afghanistan war reports.

The latest poll, conducted by telephone of 1,001 adults, showed 59 percent of respondents wanted the US government to arrest Assange and charge him with a crime for revealing the diplomatic cables, many of which exposed embarrassing assessment of world leaders.

Just 29 percent said it was not a criminal matter, while the remaining 12 percent were undecided.

WikiLeaks in late November began releasing a treasure trove of 250,000 classified documents, mostly by US diplomats based in missions around the world.

Assange, the site's 39-year-old Australian founder, was in a London jail facing unrelated allegations of rape and molestation in Sweden. He was granted conditional bail by a British judge Tuesday, but remained behind bars as prosecutors were given time to decide whether to appeal.

The latest poll was conducted 9-12 December, while Assange was under detention, and had a margin of error of 3.5 points.

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