



Wikileaks

Please read the articles about Wikileaks in their entirety before completing this assignment. Familiarize yourself with the details of the story: what happened, who's involved, why the actions of Julian Assange and The New York Times and other news outlets have been controversial. Consider the many sides of the debate: Was Assange right to share the cables? Was The New York Times right to print stories based on classified information? Are their critics right? Is new legislation necessary to prevent something similar from happening in the future?

The Debate Question: Was the New York Times correct to publish the Wikileaks documents or is this information so damaging to the national security of the United States that it all should have been withheld? Could the Espionage Act of 1917 be applied to this situation by the government?

What You're Doing

In the Wikileaks folder, read the stories on The New York Times' decision to publish classified documents provided to Wikileaks. Based on the readings, make four lists of at least 5 talking points that you could use in a debate or a courtroom:

List 1: Five arguments in support of the Times' decision and/or publishing the information.

List 2: Five arguments against the Times' decision and/or against publishing the information.

List 3: Five arguments in support of Julian Assange and Wikileaks' decision to provide the information and classified documents to news media outlets.

List 4: Five arguments against Assange and Wikileaks' decision to provide the information and classified documents to news media outlets.

A talking point is a simple statement of a point you wish to make during the debate, followed by the list of supporting facts or information.

Why You're Doing This

In recitation, your class will debate the merits and repercussions of the Times' decision to publish information provided to them by Assange and Wikileaks. You won't know until you get to class which side of the debate you'll be on, or how extensively you may be called to argue, so you must be prepared to argue from either side.

What You Should Aim to Get Out of It

This week's lecture addresses whether the U.S. press has too much or too little freedom, a brief history of press freedom, and the legal and ethical limitations on what stories can be published or broadcast. This assignment will require you to study that material and apply it to a critical analysis of the Wikileaks story, one example of a difficult decision made by journalists. You should come out of this assignment with a more nuanced understanding of the mission and responsibilities of the press. A great job earns 4 points.