

US journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave takes 'hiatus' amid plagiarism claims

May 23, 2012



Journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave (R), pictured with talk show host Larry King in 2007, is taking time off to finish his memoirs as the Washington Times looks into allegations of plagiarism against him.

Veteran international journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave is taking time off to finish his memoirs as the Washington Times looks into allegations of plagiarism against him, the newspaper said Tuesday.

On its website, the editorially right-wing Times -- owned by Sun Myung-Moon's Unification Church -- said it would conduct "an internal assessment" of De Borchgrave's weekly columns.

De Borchgrave, 85, a former Times editor-in-chief who is also a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "has long been an asset to this organization," current Times editor Ed Kelley said.

But the allegations regarding his work "require attention," Kelley said, adding that the assessment would be completed "relatively soon" and that "we wish him the best during his hiatus."

Last week Erik Wimple, an opinion blogger at the rival Washington Post, citing three examples, claimed that De Borchgrave's journalism was "pocked by evidence of lifting from reports previously published on the Internet."

Salon, a news website, meanwhile alleged that De Borchgrave had "lifted passages verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from the Internet and other sources, without attribution" and that Times management sought to cover up the practice.

De Borchgrave -- who made his mark as a globe-hopping Newsweek correspondent for 30 years -- himself said on the Times website Tuesday he had decided to take a three-month break to complete his memoirs.

"In a body of work which includes thousands of columns and news analysis over six decades, I have paid close attention to attribution, even today in an online age, when the rules for aggregators and others are changing," he said.

"Everybody makes mistakes, and I take responsibility for mine. I will redouble my efforts to attribute with precision," he added, without acknowledging or denying the plagiarism claims.