

Assange & Sweden

Miscellaneous Information: Part 6

28 October 2012 – 30 June 2013

This is a somewhat random collection of news clippings and other items relating to accusations of sexual misconduct that have been made against Julian Assange by Swedish authorities. Much of the material is in Swedish, but I believe that at least half is in English.

The quality and reliability of the various items vary widely. In some places I have added clarifications, warnings, etc. [*in italics, within square brackets and initialed--A.B.*]. But there is nothing systematic about that, either, and everything in this document should be interpreted with due caution.

Questions and comments regarding any of the information included here are welcome and may be addressed to me via e-mail at: editor@nnn.se

– Al Burke
Nordic News Network

Links to other parts of the series

Documents in PDF format

Part 1: 14 August 2010 – 16 December 2010
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case1.pdf

Part 2: 17 December 2011 – 17 February 2011
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case2.pdf

Part 3: 20 February 2011 – 17 July 2011
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case3.pdf

Part 4: 8 August 2011 – 30 June 2012
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case4.pdf

Part 5: 1 July 2012 – 27 October 2012
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case5.pdf

For more and better-organized information:
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange.htm

Assange is well — but in need of fresh vegetables, says Westwood

Emily Dugan
The Independent
28 October 2012

Dame Vivienne Westwood has ended speculation about the ill health of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, following her visit to him at the Ecuadorian embassy last week.

Speaking to *The Independent* on Sunday, the punk fashion designer said that Assange looked well when she met him on Tuesday night, with his worst ailment appearing to be a need for fresh vegetables. The news comes as his bail sureties struggle to gather funds for payment in time for a court deadline in 10 days' time.

Assange, who has been granted political asylum by the government of Ecuador, is seeking to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over claims of sex offences. He fears being handed over to the United States over the activities of his whistleblowing website. Westwood's assurances on Assange's well-being come after Ecuadorian Vice foreign minister Marco Albuja Martinez told Russian reporters on Tuesday that Assange had "grown noticeably thinner", and that they were "very concerned about his health".

Westwood said: "When I went to see him I realised the best thing I can do is get people to bring lots of raw vegetables that he can grate up and eat. I took him some booze and he said 'that's what everyone brings me, but what I'd really like is an apple or something'. He's eating those dreadful microwave meals. I took him a bottle of red wine because that's my favourite."

Ecuador has asked the British Foreign Office for a document that would enable Assange to enter hospital safely if necessary and return to the embassy with refugee status. Westwood said: "He's well and I think the embassy is just being sensible. They want to know what they would do if anything goes wrong with his health."

Dame Vivienne described Assange as a "real hero," adding: "He's a very brave man. He's a noble adventure figure like Robin Hood."

Since Assange skipped his bail terms and sought asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy, those who provided sureties are now having to pay up. Following a negotiation over the "exceptional case", the amounts demanded have been reduced, but Assange's high-profile backers still have to pay £93,500 within the next 10 days or face jail.

Sarah Saunders, a chef whose East Sussex cottage Assange shared in the latter part of his house-arrest, says she will have to empty out her savings to pay the £12,000. "It's all my savings. My children are all grown up but it does have an effect on what I can do for the rest of my life."

Saunders says she has been ordering Assange to improve his nutrition. "I'm worried about his health. Living in such a confined space without fresh air is worrying and he does look pale. I've organised for some high nutrition food and given him some recipes."

Vaughan Smith, who owns the Norfolk manor house where Assange originally stayed, will have to pay £12,000. Though significantly less than the £20,000 he pledged, the request for money has still come as a shock. He said: "It's not money I have in the bank— I'll have to borrow it. We will clearly feel it. Over the summer because of the Olympics we didn't get the trade in the restaurant and then farming hasn't been doing very well because of the weather, so my situation isn't as good as it might have been."

"It feels pretty unfair because the situation is political— everyone knows where he is. I don't think we could've predicted what happened— we made a risk assessment based on the fact that he didn't have a passport and was highly recognisable," he said.

Philip Knightly, an investigative journalist who outed the spy Kim Philby, now owes £15,000. He said: "I know that some of us are going to find it difficult. People will have to cut expenses in other areas, but I don't think it's going to bankrupt anybody."

Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser tweeted that he does not believe the Australian Government is doing enough for Julian Assange, and that, were he still PM, he would work to keep Mr Assange out of U.S. hands.

www.thisdayinwikileaks.org
November 4, 2012

CIA Plot Against Correa Funded by Drug Money

Craig Murray
November 9, 2012

Hillary Clinton is repeating the methodology of the Iran/Contra affair, using "black" funds to finance the operation to ensure President Correa is not re-elected.

I had two excellent sources for the news that the US/UK strategy against Julian Assange was to ensure the defeat of President Correa in Presidential elections next spring, and then have him expelled from the Ecuadorean Embassy. One source was within the UK civil service and one in Washington. Both had direct, personal access to the information I described. Both told me in the knowledge I would publish it.

Of course Assange is not the only reason Clinton wants rid of Correa; but it adds spice and urgency. We now have completely independent evidence from Chile that this CIA operation exists, from journalists who were investigating a smuggling operation involving 300 kg per month of cocaine, organised by the Chilean army and security services.

The links to US intelligence emerged after an anonymous source from the Agencia Nacional de Inteligencia (ANI) told Panoramas News that the smuggling of 300 kilos of cocaine was in fact a highly sensitive CIA/DEA operation that would help to raise money to topple the government of Ecuador. **The operation is similar to the one carried out by the Agency in Central America during the Iran-Contra scandal in the 1980's, the source said.**

A few days ago I published information I had received that Patricio Mery Bell, the director of the news programme which broke the story, had been lured to a meeting with a young lady "informant" who had worked with CIA-backed anti-Cuban groups in Miami. She had then accused him of sexual assault (does any of that scenario sound familiar?) He was arrested and his materials had been confiscated. However I took the article down after jst a few minutes because I had received the information in emails from sources I did not know previously, and was unsure it could stand up. It does now appear that this is indeed true.

My Washigton informant had told me, as I published, that the funds for the anti-Correa operation were not from the CIA budget but from secret funds controlled by the Pentagon. This could not be done by CIA funds because, perhaps surprisingly, for the CIA to operate in this way is a crime in the United States.

Whether my informant knew or suspected that the "secret Pentagon funds" were drug money I do not know. They did not mention narcotics.

<http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2012/11/hilarcia-plot-against-correa-funded-by-drug-money/>

Julian Assange says victorious Barack Obama 'wolf in sheep's clothing'

*Agence France-Presse
November 07, 2012*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Wednesday described re-elected US President Barack Obama as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and said he expected his government to continue attacking the anti-secrecy website.

Speaking to AFP by telephone from Ecuador's London embassy, where he sought asylum in June in a bid to avoid extradition to Sweden over sex crime allegations, Assange said Obama's victory was no cause for celebration.

"Obama seems to be a nice man, and that is precisely the problem," the 41-year-old Australian said, after the president defeated Republican Mitt Romney on Tuesday night to sweep back into the White House.

"It's better to have a sheep in wolf's clothing than a wolf in sheep's clothing." He added: "All of the activities against WikiLeaks by the United States have occurred under an Obama administration. The Republican party has not been an effective restraining force on government excesses over the last four years. There is no reason to believe that will change— in fact, **the Republicans will push the administration into ever greater excesses."**

Assange called on the United States to free Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of leaking a huge cache of classified military documents to WikiLeaks and has been held in solitary confinement in a military prison for over two years. **"The re-election of Barack Obama coincides with the 899th day of Bradley Manning's confinement,"** Assange said....

Pirate Bay co-founder suspected of serious fraud and another data intrusion

Despite being detained since September, Pirate Bay co-founder Gottfrid Svartholm Warg has not been officially charged

*Loek Essers
IDG News Service
November 12, 2012*

IDG News Service — Swedish authorities now suspect Pirate Bay co-founder Gottfrid Svartholm Warg of serious fraud and another data intrusion in addition to the alleged hacking of IT company Logica that led to his arrest, public prosecutor Henrik Olin said Monday.

Svartholm Warg was arrested in Cambodia in August and deported to Sweden. In September, Swedish authorities arrested him on suspicion of hacking Logica, which handles taxes for the Swedish government. **Since then, his detention has been extended by a court every fortnight.**

"On Friday, he was detained for another two weeks," said Olin. But this time he was also detained on suspicion of additional crimes. "We added new suspicions of new crimes," Olin said.

Olin did not want to be specific because of the sensitiveness of the investigation, but said the alleged data intrusion and fraud are not linked to the Logica hack. "The fraud is linked to this data intrusion," said Olin. Svartholm Warg is suspected of "aggravated fraud", a more serious crime, he added.

Aggravated fraud could, for example, involve a large amount of money, false documents or a systematic fraud scheme, said Olin, who was quick to add that these were mere examples, not necessarily related to the new suspicions about Svartholm Warg.

Svartholm Warg hasn't been charged with anything yet, said Olin. The investigation into Warg's alleged role in the theft of sensitive tax records from Logica is still ongoing. "In the Swedish system, he will not officially be charged before the preliminary investigations are over," Olin said, adding that the Logica investigation is now concentrating on IT forensics.

After Svartholm Warg's arrest in Cambodia, many expected that he was sought by the Swedish government because he still had to serve a prison sentence for his role in creating the Pirate Bay. He and the other Pirate Bay founders were convicted for copyright related offenses, fined and sentenced to prison for their involvement in the creation of the popular torrent-tracking site. Svartholm Warg later missed an appeal hearing, pleading illness, and moved to Cambodia.

While Svartholm Warg is in prison, the time served is deducted from his one-year Pirate Bay prison sentence, said Olin. He expected to return to the court within two weeks to ask for another extension of Svartholm Warg's detention.

'Cablegate': Assange's WikiLeaks legacy

RTAmerica
Nov 28, 2012

It has nearly been six months since WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been protected from political persecution in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. Ecuador granted Assange asylum for his involvement in "Cablegate" which exposed the corruption of governments across the globe, but the whistleblower has been held at a standstill due to the threat of arrest if he were to step foot outside the facility. RT's Laura Smith brings us the latest from London on Assange's case.

Video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlpCjR5k4lc&feature=youtu.be>

Julian Assange Refuses to Submit to Erin Burnett's Planned Hit Job

Kevin Gosztola
Firedog Lake
November 28, 2012

The interview was anticipated. CNN host Erin Burnett was to have WikiLeaks Editor-in-Chief Julian Assange, author of the new book, *Cypherpunks*, come on her show. Another pundit, Brooke Baldwin, promoted it on CNN just after 3:30 pm EST and said, "You have quite the big interview scoop, so we'll talk about that in a minute," just before getting to a segment on Pfc. Bradley Manning.

Burnett set out to do a hit job on Assange. From the beginning, Assange tried to discuss what he found to be important and not trivial or plain disingenuous and ignorant. As the clip shows, he got into how companies are working in countries to engage in widespread surveillance showing documents. Burnett reacted, "I'm curious though about this — a lot of people share this fear about being under surveillance, right? Some people might say you go way too far on it, but people do share your fear. But you are someone trying to champion and like I said benefiting by the Internet by putting out information governments don't want people to have."

"Some people might say" is Burnett saying what she thinks. She thinks Assange's fear of the surveillance state goes to far. She does not want to talk about this issue and, though Assange began the interview ready to talk on this topic, Burnett is prepared to steer this to Ecuador (but not before casting his agenda as something that is nefarious and shady).

She asks him about whether he has a lung infection since he's had to stay there and if this is true. Assange says he is not important and has been in an "extraordinary situation" for over two years. **But, "what is important is this development that is affecting all of us." Burnett cuts him off:**

BURNETT: Can you answer the question whether your sick or do you not want to talk about it?

ASSANGE: I don't think it's important.

BURNETT: Let me ask you this...

ASSANGE: ... We are in an extremely serious situation...

BURNETT: .. I know. Let me ask you this though about Ecuador because look, as you say you've been in there in this extraordinary situation for five months. They've provided you asylum. They've been trying to get you out of the country that you're in right now to avoid facing charges in Sweden or the US. But when you talk about this governments clamping down on people's right to speak, Ecuador's an unlikely champion of your call for free speech. And I wanted to lay this out for you because just this month Human Rights Ecuador reports President of Ecuador, President Correa...

ASSANGE: Serious, Serious...

BURNETT: Let me finish... Let me finish for my viewers then you can go ahead and rip it apart...

Assange won't have it and says he's not here to talk about it. He is not about to let Burnett do this "exclusive" interview with him and try to educate him on air as if she knows more than he does about the issues related to press freedom in Ecuador, which he no doubt has had the time to study intensively in his time in the Ecuador embassy.

Burnett then responds to Assange's remark that what she is seizing upon is a very little thing. She says it's not a "little thing." Suppressing journalists is not "a little thing for someone who says is their job is to put out information that governments try to suppress." And Assange quickly replies that it is a very big problem:

ASSANGE: ...It's a very big problem, the suppression of freedom of speech all over the world, an extremely big problem, and so is the collapse in the rule of law. And you should be well aware that Al Jazeera journalist spent six years in Guantanamo Bay, that there are cases all across the US, that the Pentagon is now taking a position where it is saying arbitrarily, completely invented, that the act of receiving information by any journalist, anywhere in the world, that the Pentagon says is classified and publishing some portion from it or quotes from it is espionage...

BURNETT: ...Okay...

ASSANGE: ...Saying that is something that applies to journalists and applies to people in government...

BURNETT: ...I understand your point...

ASSANGE: ... [still talking]

BURNETT: ... But the Committee to Protect Journalists says about Ecuador. Let me ask you the question—"In less than five years, President Correa has turned Ecuador into one of the hemisphere's most restrictive nations for the press."...

ASSANGE: ...As we agreed to this program the issue is the surveillance state....

BURNETT: How do you justify?...

ASSANGE: ...We are in a situation...

BURNETT: I didn't agree to talk about the surveillance state.

Assange then motions and says he can bring on his PAs. And continues saying we have a serious situation here. Whatever is happening in these small countries is not of concern. We must concentrate on what is happening in whole of the world. Burnett then interjects, "Okay, but Ecuador is the country that is preventing you from being arrested the minute you walk outside the door."

Burnett then makes it clear her focus on Ecuador is because it is preventing Assange from being arrested. Assange still does not play along. He eventually holds up his book and says:

ASSANGE: The topic of this book is what is happening to all of us and the threats that all of us face. You know in the 1930s, certain people saw what was going on. And they saw the general trends. I'm telling you there is a general trend. I am an expert and I've lived through it. Other experts have also lived through different facets of this— an American, a German and a French man, all experts on different parts of what is happening legislatively and what is happening in terms of the technology. Now we have all been intercepted permanently. This is a state change. This is not matter of simply a change to any individual. This is a sea change in politics and we are going to have to do something about it. If we don't do something about it, we run the risk of losing the democracy we have treasured for so long.

Assange won in the end. He was able to get in a good comment on Bradley Manning's case.

Erin Burnett did not get the segment she wanted except if you go to CNN Video where they are featuring a part of the segment that makes it seem like all Assange was asked to do was come on and talk Ecuador and refused to cooperate with Burnett.

Assange was clearly told he could come on and they would talk about the book. She opened with a question about his thoughts on the Internet. Then, she gradually moved the discussion into one about Ecuador because all she wanted to do was make the point that in her mind she sees Julian Assange, who she thinks is probably a criminal, seeking asylum in a country where the government has no respect for press freedom and he is being used or manipulated for their purposes.

If Burnett had her way, the interview would have been some looney segment about Ecuador exploiting him for their ends to get away with violating freedom of the press. And she would have touted it as "aggressive journalism," when it is not aggressive at all to set someone up who is the target of one of the most powerful governments of the world and has been granted what someone would consider a refugee status to push for safe transport to Ecuador.

Julian Assange on WikiLeaks, Bradley Manning, Cypherpunks, Surveillance State

Democracy Now!
November 29, 2012

Transcript

In his most extended interview in months, Julian Assange speaks to Democracy Now! from inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he has been holed up for nearly six months....

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Bradley Manning, the U.S. Army private accused of leaking hundreds of thousands of classified documents to the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks, may testify today at a pretrial proceeding for the first time since he was arrested in May 2010. Manning could face life in prison if convicted of the most serious of 22 counts against him. His trial is expected to begin in February.

Meanwhile, the founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, remains holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he sought refuge nearly six months ago to avoid being extradited to Sweden to be questioned over sexual assault claims. Earlier this week, Assange vowed WikiLeaks would persevere despite attacks against it. On Tuesday, the European Commission announced that the credit card company Visa did not break the European Union's antitrust rules by blocking donations to WikiLeaks. Shortly after the ruling, Assange addressed reporters in Brussels via video stream from inside the Ecuadorean embassy.

JULIAN ASSANGE: The strength of popular and private support means that we continue. **There is no danger that WikiLeaks will cease to exist as an organization.** Rather, its natural and rightful growth has been compromised, and that is wrong and must change. It would set a very bad precedent—it was not only wrong for WikiLeaks; it sets an extremely bad precedent for all other European organizations and all media organizations worldwide that monopolies can simply exercise financial death penalties over organizations and companies as a result of political controversy.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Julian Assange speaking on Tuesday. He now joins us in a rare interview from inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London. He has been granted political asylum in Ecuador but can't leave the embassy because the British government promises to arrest him if he steps foot on British soil. He has just co-authored a new book called *Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet*. The book examines how the internet can be used as both an instrument of freedom and oppression.

We want to welcome you, Julian Assange, back to Democracy Now! and first get your reaction to the European Commission's decision around the issue of Visa, saying it wasn't breaking antitrust laws when it blocked donations to you. The significance of the credit card company's blockade of donations to WikiLeaks, what it's meant for your website?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, it's good to be with you, Amy and Juan. The decision is disgraceful, **but it is only a preliminary decision. We have another submission that the commission has asked for, so hopefully they will turn around before the end of the year or the beginning of next year.** Commission had been investigating our

complaint for 16 months. The normal turnaround time is four months. The European Parliament last week voted, through an Article 32 section, on how banks should be reformed and credit card companies should be reformed in order to stop arbitrary, extrajudicial financial blockades such as the one that is being applied to WikiLeaks. The Council of Europe, all 47 foreign ministers last year passed a resolution saying that these sorts of arbitrary financial blockades on WikiLeaks should not continue, so that **it's interesting to see the payoff in the political wills in Europe between, on the one hand, the Council of Europe and the Parliament and, on the other hand, the commission. But it's been known for a long time that the commission is closer to big business,** and it is often successfully lobbied. Hopefully the commission will do the right thing and turn around in this case.

AMY GOODMAN: And how devastating has it been for WikiLeaks?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Since the blockade was erected in December 2010, WikiLeaks has lost 95 percent of the donations that were attempted to be transferred to us over that period. So, that is over \$50 million. Now, fortunately, our 5 percent of \$50 million is still not nothing, and so the organization can continue. But as I said in that press conference, our rightful and natural growth, our ability to publish as much as we would like, our ability to defend ourselves and our sources, has been diminished by that blockade.

Now, the United States government has looked into the blockade in January of 2011 and formally found that there is no lawful reason to erect a U.S. financial embargo against WikiLeaks. So what has happened here is that— and this came out in the commission documents that we published yesterday— is that Senator Lieberman and Congressman Peter T. King pressured at the very least MasterCard and Amazon, but perhaps others, including Visa, as well, pressured those organizations to erect an extrajudicial blockade that they were not able to successfully erect through the legislature or through a formal administrative process.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Julian, turning to your new book, *Cypherpunks*, those around the world who have been amazed at your ability to advocate transparency in government and in the corporate world through the internet might be surprised that in your book you now say the internet is a danger to human civilization. Could you explain why?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Human civilization has merged with the internet. Every society has gone onto the internet, with communications between all of us as individuals but also communications between businesses, economic transfers, and even the internal communications and external communications of states. So there is no barrier anymore between the internet and global civilization. That means that when the internet develops a sickness, global civilization also runs the risk of suffering the same sickness.

And the sickness that the internet has developed over the past 10 years is that nation states and their corporate powers have ganged up together to engage in strategic interception of all communications flowing over the internet across national borders and in many countries even within, within its national confines, such as the United States. We know that that has occurred in different places as a result of whistleblowing cases, such as Mark Klein's case or William Binney's, a former chief of research at the National Security Agency. So, we have gone from a position that dissidents face and activists face and individuals face 10, 20 years ago, where if we're engaged in political activity, we could be individually targeted and our friends could be targeted, to a situation where **everything, almost, that everyone does over the**

internet is recorded and intercepted all the time. And that shift is a shift, as it's called in the internal documents of the hundreds of companies now who supply this national security sector, a shift between tactical interception on a few people and strategic interception, intercepting the entire nation.

We exposed documents earlier this year, the Spy Files— you can look them up— where, for example, **the French company AMISYS, which is closely connected to French intelligence, supplied a nationwide— that's its own words— interception system to Gaddafi's Libya back in 2009.** And in fact, lawyers connected to WikiLeaks and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism were in the manual that AMISYS shipped to Gaddafi as an example of how the interception system worked.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And in terms of corporate surveillance, as well, you often find now in the media a huge push to get people to use social networks. The degree to which private surveillance or corporate surveillance is going on, as well as government surveillance?

JULIAN ASSANGE: There's not a barrier anymore between corporate surveillance, on the one hand, and government surveillance, on the other. You know, Facebook is based— has its servers based in the United States. Gmail, as General Petraeus found out, has its servers based in the United States. And the interplay between U.S. intelligence agencies and other Western intelligence agencies and any intelligence agencies that can hack this is fluid. So, we're in a— if we look back to what's a earlier example of the worst penetration by an intelligence apparatus of a society, which is perhaps East Germany, where up to 10 percent of people over their lifetime had been an informer at one stage or another, in Iceland we have 88 percent penetration of Iceland by Facebook. Eighty-eight percent of people are there on Facebook informing on their friends and their movements and the nature of their relationships— and for free. They're not even being paid money. They're not even being directly coerced to do it. They're doing it for social credits to avoid the feeling of exclusion. But people should understand what is really going on. I don't believe people are doing this or would do it if they truly understood what was going on, that **they are doing hundreds of billions of hours of free work for the Central Intelligence Agency, for the FBI, and for all allied agencies and all countries that can ask for favors to get hold of that information.**

William Binney, the former chief of research, the National Security Agency's signals intelligence division, describes this situation that we are in now as "turnkey totalitarianism," that the whole system of totalitarianism has been built— the car, the engine has been built— and it's just a matter of turning the key. And actually, when we look to see some of the crackdowns on WikiLeaks and the grand jury process and targeted assassinations and so on, actually it's arguable that key has already been partly turned. The assassinations that occur extrajudicially, the renditions that occur, they don't occur in isolation. They occur as a result of the information that has been sucked in through this giant signals interception machinery.

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, we can't ignore the fact that we're speaking to you inside the Ecuadorean embassy, where you've taken refuge, where you're really there as a kind of refugee. You've gotten political asylum from Ecuador but can't leave the embassy. What are your plans right now? Are you negotiating with the Swedish government, if you were to be extradited there, that they would not extradite you to the United States?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, Amy, Ecuador has really stepped up to the plate and must be congratulated. I have been found to be, through a formal process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a political refugee and have been granted political asylum, in relation to what has been happening in the United States and allied countries and their behavior— Sweden and the United Kingdom. The situation for me now is that I have been here for five months in this embassy; prior to that, 18 months under house arrest; prior to that, being chased around the world for about six months by U.S. intelligence and its allies.

Now, I must correct an earlier statement that you made— this has become common in the press— saying that I was here in relation to Sweden. The reason I am here is essentially in relation to the United States. But the Swedish government said publicly that it would imprison me without charge. And in such a situation, I'd not be able to apply for asylum. Now, the Ecuadorean government has asked the Swedish government to give a guarantee that I would not be extradited to the United States. We have asked for a long time for such a guarantee. That has been refused. All the regular processes have been refused in this case. You know, it's an extremely odd and bizarre case, and I encourage everyone to go and look at that aspect of the case at justice4assange.com. And you can see report after report. You can see all the material that the police claim to be true and all the things that have occurred, the *Cambridge International & Comparative Law Journal* condemning the decisions that were made here in the British courts.

AMY GOODMAN: Are you saying, Julian, that you would go to Sweden, if they assured you that you wouldn't be extradited to the United States, to answer questions about these two women who have made charges on sex abuse on your count?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Yes, that has been our public position for quite a long time.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Julian, I'd like to get back to your book for a second and talk about, at this crossroads, as you see it, in terms of the future of the internet, the importance that you see of cryptography as a weapon of the people on the internet.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, the development of cryptography is absolutely fascinating. So, we're not just talking anymore about people being able to write in a secret code that other people can't read except their intended recipient. Cryptography, as a science, in the last 30 years, has developed a basic techniques that we would normally associate with democratic civilization and moved it into the digital realm. So that includes things like anonymous electronic cash and digital voting and signatures and proofs of agreements between people.

So, when we look at what happens when civilization moves onto the internet, how is it controlled? At the moment, a lot of the problems we face on the internet and the independence of the internet is guys with guns can simply turn up to any internet server and tell the people there to behave in a certain way, just like they do with oil wells or they do with customs. **So, as an international new civilization, a forum where people are intellectually expressing themselves, where we deposit our history and our political ideals and ambitions, the internet is suffering, on one hand, from mass interception and, on the other hand, that it is still in many ways subservient to the physical force in the various states that its infrastructure is located in. Crypto-graphy provides a way to abstract away from the physical world to create a sort of mathematical barrier between the physical world and the intellectual world, and in that way slowly declare independence from nation states.** So our intellectual world

cannot simply be censored or deleted or taxed in the manner which we have suffered from for so long in nation states.

Now, on the internet, there's no direct physical force that needs to be policed in that manner, so we don't need armies on the internet. We don't need policemen on the internet, in a way that we may need them in our regular nation states. So, we do have this opportunity, with careful use of cryptography and a movement behind it, to achieve some forms of independence for the intellectual record and for our communications with one another. And those aspects of cryptography, we have used, with varying degrees of success, in WikiLeaks to publish **material that no other publisher in the world was able to publish because they were constrained by physical threats within particular nation states.**

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, we are talking to you on the day that Bradley Manning is expected to testify, be heard publicly for the first time in over two years at Fort Meade. His lawyer has said he would plead guilty to certain charges, and that is releasing documents that he got in Iraq on the computer to your organization WikiLeaks, but refused to plead to others, like aiding the enemy. Talk about Bradley Manning, and then talk also— if you could weave that into why you're so concerned about being extradited to the United States.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Amy, what is happening this week is not the trial of Bradley Manning; **what is happening this week is the trial of the U.S. military. This is Bradley Manning's abuse case.** Bradley Manning was arrested in Baghdad, shipped over and held for two months in extremely adverse conditions in Kuwait, shipped over to Quantico, Virginia, which is near the center of the U.S. intelligence complex, and held there for nine months, longer than any other prisoner in Quantico's modern history. And there, he was subject to conditions that the U.N. special rapporteur, Juan Méndez, special rapporteur for torture, formally found amounted to torture.

There's a question about who authorized that treatment. Why was that treatment placed on him for so long, when so many people— independent psychiatrists, military psychiatrists— complained about what was going on in extremely strong terms? His lawyer and support team say that he was being treated in that manner, in part, in order to coerce some kind of statement or false confession from him that would implicate WikiLeaks as an organization and me personally. And so, this is a matter that I am— personally have been embroiled in, that this young man's treatment, regardless of whether he was our source or not, is directly as a result of an attempt to attack this organization by the United States military, to coerce this young man into providing evidence that could be used to more effectively attack us, and also serve as some kind of terrible disincentive for other potential whistleblowers from stepping forward.

AMY GOODMAN: Julian, the Ecuadorean ambassador to the U.K., to Britain, Ana Alban, was quoted in The Independent saying that you're suffering from a chronic lung infection from being in captivity for so long in London in the embassy. Can you talk about your health?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Amy, being in prison, house arrest, and now held captive in an embassy, with a bunch of cops outside, of course is a difficult circumstance, but it is not more difficult than the circumstance that is faced by Bradley Manning in Fort Leavenworth or by Jeremy Hammond, an alleged source related to the Stratfor files in New York, or by many other prisoners around the world. So, yes, circumstances are hard, but it could be much worse than it is, and people should direct their attention on these other cases.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk more about Jeremy Hammond, who is in prison here in New York City? Explain what Stratfor is; if you can, how you got the documents; or just explain what has taken place.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, Stratfor is a organization based in Texas. It has tried to model itself after some weird combination between doing private intelligence work, on the one hand, and covering that with an illusion of journalism by creating this thing called the Stratfor report, which has become very influential within— within the military and within government. It has a particular worldview, which is— which the head of Stratfor, Friedman, admits to being a Kissingeresque realpolitik. And through stealing, bribing, gathering information in various ways, they're able to influence U.S. policy and, more broadly, Western policy. Now, it's also— you know, it's done all the usual nasty stuff, like working for Coca-Cola, making reports on PETA, making reports on Bhopal activists and so on. But its greatest importance is its private influence into the decision making of different people throughout government.

But we have found through the Stratfor files, which this young activist Jeremy Hammond is accused of hacking out of Stratfor and giving to us— we have found that actually the information or the sourcing for these reports is rather thin in many places or politically biased or is used to feed something that Stratfor set up called StratCap, which is a private capital investment company which takes the information that they've gained from bribery and uses it to make investments in, say, gold futures and so on. So, you know, you can see from the Stratfor material that this is a company where the boss, Friedman, has gone, "How can I be as evil as possible? How can I be some kind of stereotype cross between Kissinger and James Bond and tell everyone else to do it?" And that's what is done in that company. So, whoever the source is of the Stratfor material deserves enormous credit. Story after story has come out from all around the world of— about material that Stratfor collected and didn't publish or gave to their private clients.

AMY GOODMAN: And Julian, one of the emails that WikiLeaks released of Stratfor of the vice president said that there was a secret indictment against you by the secret grand jury that we believe is convened in Alexandria, Virginia, that is going after you and other WikiLeaks volunteers. Do you know any more about this information or any confirmation that there is this sealed indictment against you?

JULIAN ASSANGE: There are some 3,000 emails in the Stratfor collection about me personally and many more thousands about WikiLeaks. The latest on the grand jury front is that the U.S. Department of Justice admits, as of about two weeks ago, that the investigation is ongoing. On September 28th this year, the Pentagon renewed its formal threats against us in relation to ongoing publishing but also, extremely seriously, in relation to ongoing, what they call, solicitation. So, that is asking sources publicly, you know, **"Send us important material, and we will publish it." They say that that itself is a crime.** So this is not simply a case about— that we received some information back in 2010 and have been publishing it and they say that that was the crime; the Pentagon is maintaining a line that WikiLeaks inherently, as an institution that tells military and government whistleblowers to step forward with information, is a crime, that we are— they allege we are criminal, moving forward.

Now, the new interpretation of the Espionage Act that the Pentagon is trying to hammer in to the legal system, and which the Department of Justice is complicit in, **would mean the end of national security journalism in the United States, and not**

only the United States, because the Pentagon is trying to apply this extraterritorially. Why would it be the end of national security journalism? Because the interpretation is that if any document that the U.S. government claims to be classified is given to a journalist, who then makes any part of it public, that journalist has committed espionage, and the person who gave them the material has committed the crime, communicating with the enemy. And we released other material about a young Air Force woman who was suspected of communicating with us, and they went to internally prosecute her under 104-D, which is communications with the enemy. So, who's the enemy? Well, the enemy is either WikiLeaks, formally an enemy of the United States, or the interpretation is that any time that there is a communication to the public— and we saw this in the Bradley Manning case— there is a chance for al-Qaeda or the Russians or Iran to read it; therefore, any communication to a journalist is communication to the public, is communication to al-Qaeda, which means that any communication to a journalist is communicating to the enemy. Now, **it's absurd overreach, but it is an overreach now which has been put into practice, not at the conviction level yet, but certainly at the investigative and prosecution level.** Barack Obama brags publicly on his campaign website of having prosecuted more people under the Espionage Act than all previous presidents combined, in fact, more than twice that of all previous presidents combined.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Julian, on that particular note, I'd like to ask you to, if you can, talk about what you consider to be the long-term impact of WikiLeaks, that as governments continually centralize through the digital revolution their information, it makes it more possible for dissidents or whistleblowers within the structures of these governments to make that information available to broader sectors of the public. And if WikiLeaks— if the governments are able to squash WikiLeaks, how do you see that movement developing in terms of other organizations that are arising that continue the kind of work that you've been doing?

JULIAN ASSANGE: The attempts to squash WikiLeaks are there to set a general deterrent. I mean, there's no doubt about this. Since 2008, that's been the case. We released a classified U.S. intelligence report, in fact, showing in 2008 the concern that the U.S. military had about WikiLeaks and the ways in which it could be crushed. Other material came out showing that Bank of America had hired lawyers who had looked into hiring people to make all sorts of attacks and smears on us, massively funded millions of dollars per month. And you can look that up. It's the HBGary report.

I think this tension between power and knowledge is extremely important. So, we've all heard the saying that knowledge is power. Well, it's true. And the mass surveillance and mass interception that is occurring to all of us now who use the internet is also a mass transfer of power from individuals into extremely sophisticated state and private intelligence organizations and their cronies. Now, if that is to be resisted, we must have a transfer of information that is going the other way.

Fortunately, the system is in part eating itself. When it sets up these huge databases designed to be extremely efficient, brings in five million people, a state within a state in the United States, who have security clearances to work out how to best use it in order to maximize the power of that sector, it also leaves itself open to people extracting some of that information and reversing the flow and giving it back to the public, putting it into our common intellectual record. But it's not, by any means, an easy battle. **I would say that the transfer of power that has occurred as a result of the NSA's admitted 1.6 billion interceptions per day is much greater than the transfer**

that has happened the other way. The successes of WikiLeaks, yes, to some degree, reflect our vigor and the vigor of activists on the internet, but I think they more fairly represent the vast treasure of global information that is being accumulated by these otherwise unaccountable intelligence organizations.

AMY GOODMAN: Your reaction— you mentioned Petraeus, General Petraeus, before and how he's been taken down as his email was gone through. What do you think about that?

JULIAN ASSANGE: I think it's fascinating, Amy. Now, we can look into— you know, if you've been involved in this business for a while, you can start to smell when there must be something more to the situation. So I assume, in those emails that the FBI got hold of, there's additional information that would be embarrassing to Petraeus above and beyond an extramarital affair, which is why he's resigned. But that someone in the position of being the ultimate— an ultimate insider, the head of the CIA, has fallen victim to the surveillance state really shows you how massively out of control the thing has become, where it is like a vicious dog that has suddenly spotted its own tail and has gone after it, is lashing out irrationally, and now it's affected an insider. And people have started to take note, but of course it's been doing that to activists and, in fact, most of— most of us, it has been doing that, although we can't see the result, for years.

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, as we wrap up, your final thoughts as you speak to us from political exile inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London? This is extremely rare. How long do you plan to be holed up there? Could you see yourself being there for years?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Possibly, Amy. I mean, it is possible. I mean, the Ecuadorean government said, "If it takes 200 years for Mr. Assange to be safe, then 200 years it is," to their credit. There's an Ecuadorean national election in February next year. And it seems to be that there's a bit of a diplomatic waiting game on, as far as the U.S. and the U.K. are concerned, to look to see how that election goes. President Correa is the most popular political leader in Latin America, so by rights it should be fine. But there have been reports that the United States has increased its sort of anti-Correa funding by three times, so that's a potential problem. But the people of Ecuador have been very supportive, so I suspect, even if there is a switch to another leader, it's now a matter of sort of national pride for Ecuador, so they'll stick the course.

AMY GOODMAN: And as to, you feel, the— how people should use the internet today and protect themselves, as we wrap up with your book, *Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet*?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, first, first, they have to— it is not always possible to protect oneself. You know, if you walk over the edge of a cliff, it's not really that possible to protect yourself. But it's important to know the cliff is there, so you can simply avoid doing certain things that would put you at risk. Now, the first thing they should do is go out and buy the book. **It's not easy to protect yourself. That is part of the problem. It really is not easy. It is, in fact, with some exceptions, something that is presently only open to extremely knowledgeable people.** So, we must push forward to empower the greater development of this technology, the— preventing moves to outlaw it, which have been done— we fought a big war in the 1990s to prevent the

outlawing of cryptography— and additionally, preventing the back-dooring of cryptographic technology. There are moves afoot to try and do that.... I'm sorry— sorry, Amy, I'm getting the cut-off signal for some reason.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, I want to thank you very much for being with us, Julian. Julian Assange spread that 10 minutes to about 40, and we thank you so much for being there. Julian Assange is the founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, now under political asylum in Ecuador's London embassy, happens to have co-authored this new book, *Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet*, which can make it outside of the embassy, which he can't do right now. Thanks so much for being with us.

Video at:

http://www.democracynow.org/2012/11/29/exclusive_julian_assange_on_wikileaks_bradley#transcript



Ambassador's rage doesn't dispel facts

*Elizabeth Farrelly
Sydney Morning Herald
November 29, 2012*

"Swedish ambassador goes berserk over Assange," read Monday's Wiki-tweet. It rang a bell, as it bounced around the globe, for while most diplomats are polite to the point of somnambulism, my sole encounter with the Swedish ambassador had been distinguished by rage (his). This rage, rooted in WikiLeaks, had itself been Wikileaked.

Sven-Olof Petersson is Sweden's man in Yarralumla. By now he may be wishing he'd followed the advice I give my 13 year-old. It's this. If you have something savage to say, sleep on it. Then, if it really must be said, pick up the phone. Say it in person.

Shout it from the rooftops, if need be. But under no circumstances commit it to cyberspace. Cyber-speech, seemingly ethereal, is etched in stone.

Back story: last April I wrote a column about Julian Assange. "It's quite clear," I said, "that Assange is not guilty— not of rape, not of treason", but it was more a logical deduction (from the definition of these things) than a claim to knowledge of the events. In particular, I wrote of my dismay at what can happen to speakers of truth, especially at the hands of those who pretend to uphold it.

It made the Swedish ambassador mad. Really mad. We now know it made him, by his own admission, out-of-control mad.

It was an opinion piece. And I did call the Swedish legal system "impenetrable". LOL. Yet there are facts here.

Assange had not been charged with any crime. The Swedish authorities had repeatedly refused even to question him in London, falsely saying it was illegal. Moreover, as Malcolm Turnbull told a university audience this year (contradicting Gillard), Assange had broken no Australian law. All this is still true.

Yet a European arrest warrant stands ready to whisk Assange to Sweden, where consensual sex without a condom can— for reasons I'll never understand— count as rape, where he can be locked in solitary without charge or extradited to America. *[It is defined as "minor rape" if the other party had insisted on the use of a condom. --A.B.]*

There, a grand jury— or secret military court— has been convened, again without charge. It can convict him, even apply the death penalty, without scrutiny or defence. Petersson insists "a person risking the death penalty cannot be extradited" but the Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt— whom WikiLeaks claims is a US spy— repeatedly refuses to give this assurance.

Yet our government has given Assange minimal assistance. Despite what Jane Clifton-Bassett, the organiser of Thursday's candlelight vigil for Assange, calls this "outrageous flouting of the law", the government chooses "to put the American alliance first, and an Australian citizen second".

Petersson responded to my April story with an angry letter, published in the Herald. His "facts" were that the "Swedish judicial system is transparent and independent" and that Assange should have "full confidence in the Swedish judicial process". He would say that— right?

A second, angrier Petersson email came to me personally. Manfully resisting the urge to publish, I filed it, more fittingly, in the [trash] bin.

And forgot about it until, this week, the emails resurfaced, unexpurgated, along with Petersson's admission that his colleagues considered his missives extreme. "But," he notes, "I couldn't stop myself!"

In these now-public letters, Petersson accused me of harbouring a "special contempt for Sweden". (In fact, until then, I'd always wondered why Scandinavia was so much more civilised than we.) He derided me as an ignorant fantasist, a purveyor of "any kind of rubbish" and— worst of all— "an architect and writer from Downunder".

It's pretty funny. The mis-spelling, the splatter of exclamation marks and the eggy emotion sound more like some suburban troll than a high-order professional or diplomat.

The aggression is less amusing. This is how bullying works. After a while we start to anticipate, self-censor, evade the rage, like children tiptoeing around father.

This is ironic, since the Swedish case pivots on the "ultra-feminism" that many see as having colonised Swedish politics. This has not only shaped the unfair rape laws to which Assange, once extradited, would be subject, but also unites many key players.

All these are active members of the ultra-feminist Social Democrat party: the prosecutor Marianne Ny; the plaintiffs' lawyer Claes Borgstrom; his practice partner Thomas Bodstrom (the Swedish justice minister, 2000-06); the principal plaintiff Anna Ardin— who invited Assange to Sweden originally and wrote the notorious "Seven Steps to Legal Revenge"; and the police officer Irmeli Krans to whom Ardin took the secondary plaintiff, Sofia Welin. Welcome to Sweden's so-called "duckpond".

But when a mere opinion maddens a potentate into uncontrolled aggression, you have to wonder: why so defensive? What are they hiding?

Petersson was right about one thing. I know little of the Swedish legal system. (I do know educated Swedish-Australians, like retired medic Martin Gelin, who reinforce my impression that it is convoluted— some say "mediaeval"— and, with its politically appointed lay judges, heavily politicised. They also say Petersson is an embarrassment who should be sent home.)

Assange has been effectively detained for two years without charge. His only sin was having unprotected sex (which, even my 13-year old knows, would render him as vulnerable to STDs as the women).

He has won a Walkley, the Sydney Peace Foundation Gold Medal, and the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism. He came second in the Huffington Post's next head of the BBC poll (after Jeremy Paxman) and is regarded by many as the century's greatest journalist, with supporters including Mary Kostakidis, Julian Burnside, Geoffrey Robertson and Jemima Khan.

But even if Assange were, as some say, a Zionist, cultist, narcissist, misogynist or Marxist— even all of these— he'd still be entitled to a fair and open trial.

There are genuine doubts as to whether this can happen in Sweden, and worse about the US trial. (With the imminent and sinister Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement, its contents so secret they can't be disclosed for four years, we'll never exert pressure on the US.)

Australia must therefore demand a Swedish guarantee that Assange will not be sent to America. Otherwise he, and our own rights to truth, may end up naked in a cell like poor, sweet Bradley Manning.

www.smh.com.au/opinion/ambassadors-rage-doesnt-dispel-facts-20121128-2ae99.html#ixzz2De2OSaC5

DN: 2012-11-29

Ett nej är ett nej — om det kan bevisas

Ett nej till sex räcker— men det måste kunna bevisas. Det säger jurister som DN.se talat med angående våldtäktsmålet där en man friades trots att kvinnan hävdar att hon försökt stoppa honom.

Kvinnan uppgav i förhör att hon sagt nej till att ha sex med mannen. Dessutom försökte hon stoppa honom genom att hålla ihop benen. När han inte gav sig, ”stängde hon av”, som hon själv beskrivit det. Värmlands tingsrätt friade mannen från våldtäktsanklagelser trots att man fann kvinnans berättelse trovärdig.

Ett uttalande av åklagaren Barbro Brännlund till Nya Wermlands-Tidningen satte ny fart på debatten om var gränsen för våldtäkt går.

– Vi har ett problem här, man tutar i unga kvinnor att ett nej räcker, sade Brännlund till tidningen.

Men problemet i det aktuella fallet är inte var gränsen för våldtäkt går, enligt kammaråklagare Johan Ström som läst domen.

– Objektivt skulle våldet som beskrivs här kunna räcka till att få någon dömd för våldtäkt. Det krävs inte mycket våld, det räcker att kvinnan har hållits fast, knuffats eller att mannen hindrar kvinnan med sin kroppstyngd genom att lägga sig på henne, säger Ström till DN.se.

Problemet är istället att leda i bevis vad som faktiskt hänt, menar Johan Ström.

– Med tanke på det är det inte konstigt att domstolen ogillar åtalet. Rätten finner det inte styrkt bortom allt rimligt tvivel att den tilltalade verkligen tilltvingat sig samlag med våld.

– **Problemet i alla sådana här fall är att det sker bakom stängda dörrar. Efteråt finns kanske ingen teknisk bevisning och olika uppfattningar om vad som hänt,** säger Johan Ström som arbetar på Utvecklingscentrum Göteborg med bland annat att utveckla metoder för hur sexualbrott ska utredas. *[Det är också Marianne Nys arbetsplats. --A.B.]*

Ströms bedömning av det aktuella fallet delas av juristen Eva Diesen, sexualbrotts-expert på genusvetenskapliga institutionen vid Stockholms universitet.

– **Det är fel att säga att ett nej inte är ett nej. Problemet är bevisfrågan. Mannen kan bara säga att han inte förstod att hon inte ville så står ord mot ord.**

– Om det finns skador är det lättare att bevisa att mannen måste ha förstått. Men de flesta våldtäkter sker utan mycket våld, kvinnorna blir skräckslagna och kan inte göra motstånd, säger Eva Diesen till DN.se.

Diesen hör till dem som vill ändra lagen så att utgångspunkten är att bristande samtycke är tillräckligt för fälla gärningsmannen.

– Nuvarande lagstiftning vilar på en patriarkal tradition som säger att det åligger kvinnorna att skydda sig själva. Den förutsätter att kvinnans kropp är tillgänglig så länge hon inte gör motstånd. **Det borde vara tvärtom, att en kvinnas kropp inte är tillgänglig förrän hon uttryckligen gett sitt samtycke.**

Eva Diesen medger att även med en sådan lagstiftning skulle det i många fall vara svårt med bevisningen. Men hon menar att en lagändring även skulle ha andra poänger.

– Det skulle lägga mer fokus på hur män tar reda på om tjejer verkligen vill. Vi skulle säkert utveckla nya verktyg för att utreda hur mannen tänkt och gjort.

– En sådan lagstiftning skulle vara förankrad i verkligheten, hur män och kvinnor verkligen beter sig. **Den nuvarande är utformad för överfallsvåldtäkter men de utgör bara en tiondel av fallen, säger Eva Diesen.**

Från brottsbalkens 6 kapitel § 1:

Den som genom misshandel eller annars med våld eller genom hot om brottslig gärning tvingar en person till samlag eller till att företa eller tåla en annan sexuell handling som med hänsyn till kränkningens art och omständigheterna i övrigt är jämförlig med samlag, döms för våldtäkt till fängelse i lägst två och högst sex år.

Detsamma gäller den som med en person genomför ett samlag eller en sexuell handling som enligt första stycket är jämförlig med samlag genom att otillbörligt utnyttja att personen på grund av medvetlöshet, sömn, berusning eller annan drogpåverkan, sjukdom, kroppsskada eller psykisk störning eller annars med hänsyn till omständigheterna befinner sig i ett hjälplöst tillstånd.

• *Andreas Rolfer & Hans Rosén*

“Martha Mitchell Effect” on Assange case

<http://marthamitchelleffect.org>
(No publication date; copied 2012-11-30)

Sweden's Intervention in Cuba, a US proxy and Julian Assange

Anna Ardin (who also goes by the name Anna Bernardin) visited Cuba four times between 2003 and 2006, becoming involved in the 59-year *de facto* war between Cuba and the United States of America. During this time she worked as intern in the Washington DC Swedish embassy and later worked at the Buenos Aires embassy as a PR manager.

Anna Ardin was visiting Cuba to research her Masters thesis, 'The Cuban Multi-Party System'. Her 'field tutor' was Miriam Leiva, a prominent member of the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White). In 2003, the Cuban government arrested Miriam Leiva's husband, Oscar Espinosa Chepe, for receiving money from U.S. 'diplomats'. Espinosa Chepe was writing anti-Castro propaganda for Cubanet and CubaEncuentro, both of

which were funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which in turn is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an organisation funded by the U.S. State Department. Espinosa Chepe's arrest was a part of 'Black Spring', a crackdown on 75 U.S. funded dissidents involved in 'destabilization' / 'pro-democracy' activities. The 'Ladies in White' consists of the wives and other female relatives of the jailed dissidents.

After Anna Ardin was asked to leave Cuba due to her political activities (in 2006), she travelled to Miami to continue her research, interviewing prominent expatriate Cuban anti-Castro and anti-Communist activists. **In Anna Ardin's 39-page thesis she does not mention U.S. interventionism in the internal affairs of Cuba**, or how this might affect a future multi-party democracy. She does not mention that all of the political parties she explores receive U.S. funding, or the influence and control exerted by the United States upon these groups.

The journal sources she cites (she later writes on Cuban affairs for websites funded by USAID such as Miscelánea de Cuba) are the same U.S. State Department-funded publications that Oscar Espinosa Chepe worked with. These journals are accused by the Cuban government of being part of an ongoing attempt to manufacture, support and finance a U.S.-friendly internal opposition movements in Cuba via a wide range of organisations. The 2004 Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry called the 'Varela Project' and other interventions "counterproductive" and stated that dissidents receiving money from U.S. sources, especially from the CIA, were immediately discredited. In 2008, the State Department and USAID trebled previous levels levels of funding, 'awarding' \$45.7 million in 'Cuba democracy' grants.

The links between Miami-based anti-Castro Cuban-American organisations and the U.S. government's Central Intelligence Agency forms one of the darkest episodes in U.S. history; the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by a counter-revolutionary militia trained and funded by the CIA, the Cuban missile crisis blow-back and the tangled horror of the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

In Miami, Anna Ardin interviewed CIA counter-revolutionary militant Lino Fernandez aka Ojeda. Fernandez and five hundred of his men were captured while awaiting a CIA air-drop one month before the invasion at the Bay of Pigs....

<http://marthamitchelleffect.org/#/assange-case-aa-cuba/4571327129>

* * *

**Manuel Cuesta Morúa on Anna Ardin:
"Her Attitude Was Certainly an Ironic Setback for Me."**

This is an interview Manuel Cuesta Morúa (Cuban socialist opposition leader) gave to Catalan journalist Oriol Malló. Sent to Cuba Nuestra by Federico Campbell Peña. December 29, 2010

Dear Oriol,

Our difficulties with the Internet are certainly annoying. It is increasingly clear that the government's intention is to keep us as disconnected from the Internet as possible, using myriad banal excuses typical of cynical minds. Our Internet is as slow as the

stagecoaches of the American Wild West, in a time when messages can be received much more quickly. I hope these answers will be quick, and I apologise for my delay in sending them, as I had urgent business to tend to in relation to our next conference in late January and the Nuevo País Project.

Here are my answers.

1. I met Anna Ardin in 2003. She came over that year heading a group of young Swedish Social Democrats we had been in contact with, at least since the year 2000—when I visited Sweden. From that time on, a working relationship and cooperation were established, in which these young people acted as the link between us (at that time under the name *Corriente Socialista Democrática Cubana*) and both the Olof Palme Centre and the Swedish Social Democrats. A representative from the Olof Palme Centre and one of these young people participated in our first conference in 2002 when we formed *Arco Progresista*. The next year, to continue our exchange, a group of them came over, amongst them Anna Ardin. The group even had a name; “Work” (in Swedish of course), and became the communications channel between the Swedish Social Democrats and us—by now using the name *Arco Progresista* only.

2. Her trips to Cuba at that time were on behalf of the Swedish Social Democrats and the Olof Palme Centre, who covered the group's travel and living expenses whilst in Cuba.

3. I cannot say for sure whether Anna Ardin was a member of the Olof Palme Foundation. Neither she, nor any of the other young people who came over, introduced themselves as such. **What I can say for sure is that it was the Olof Palme Centre who supported her.** Later on, around 2004, she showed an interest in getting information for her thesis at the University of Upsala, but she never introduced herself as a Christian or a representative of any Christian group. Then, around 2008, I found out that, apparently, she was no longer a Social Democrat, but had drifted towards Christian Socialism. [*Incorrect: She worked for the Christian “Brotherhood”, a subgroup of the Social Democratic movement. --A.B.*]

4. No, I didn't know her that well. I did talk to her a lot about the Cuban situation, and of course she always showed a social democratic view. However, when she was here, she didn't show what might be called a structured political or intellectual discourse—as it would almost invariably correspond to a radical member of any political tendency. She did appear to be a feminist, but a moderate one. One of those feminists who believe in their capability to take on any role, not the ones who dislike and are suspicious of men only for being men. In fact, at least a couple of times she came over with her boyfriend, a very serious and focused young man named Mathias, who we all found pleasant. **My impression was that she was a smart, energetic, dynamic young woman, a Nordic-style moderate feminist, but indeed arrogant, a psychologically disproportionate arrogance and overly Eurocentric, which caused inevitable friction.** Already in 2004 she caused some discomfort within the Social Democratic circles who work with us in Miami, and who put her up, at my request, whilst she was carrying out fieldwork for her thesis.

5. At first I thought her interest was easily understood as coming from the Swedish tradition of solidarity, which is shared by all political parties over there, but it is essentially a typically social democratic tradition. From Olof Palme himself, or Pierre

Schori (a prominent Swedish politician), to the Olof Palme Centre and Anna Ardin, any Cuban can see the natural Swedish natural tradition of showing concern for democracy, freedom and social justice outside Sweden. **Thus I understood her interest as natural and not as a personal matter, because it was shared by the whole group she was heading. Only later on, I did notice a certain desire for prominence in her interest in our case, which couldn't be explained by the political tradition she was coming from.** First, she appeared in the media a lot, talking about Cuba. Second, she tried to guide us on what she understood we had to do, and how to do it. Third, she didn't respect our institutional structure and the way we work, as she got into direct contact with people who were then part of our organization, without taking into account the specific context. **For me, it was a perfect example of someone with a very high opinion of herself, who wanted to make some kind of political career in Sweden at the expense of a group of people without a voice.**

6. Yes, I am co-chair. But in political terms, not in legal terms. Nowadays, our organization is going through a serious crisis—hoping for better times ahead. I am co-chair on behalf of Arco Progresista. We are not fully recognised as part of the Socialist International; we have “permanent guest” status only.

7. Well, as far as we know, she couldn't have been invited by C-EeP [Asociación Cuba-Europa en Progreso]. This is not true because it would be chronologically impossible. C-EeP dates from mid-2005, whereas all our contact with Ardin in Havana was prior to that date. It seems that, as some people are saying, she was in Cuba after 2007. I have no proof of that, but that doesn't mean it couldn't have happened. By that time we were not in contact anymore. Our contact ceased in 2006. Now, it is possible that, if she did come over after 2007, she could have been invited by the C-EeP—because the crisis around us included an attempt to seize our organisation and redirect it in vague directions—in that Eurocentric manner—so that it would encompass a wide range of people and organisations of Cuban dissidents. The affair was doomed before it started and had nothing to do with me being co-chair, but in order to fail they must attempt to succeed first. So, it is very likely she could have come to Cuba after 2007 under the false pretence of working for our organisation (as she was present when it was founded), but by then we had stopped all contact. When I welcomed her with open arms it was only on behalf of social democracy and Arco Progresista.

8. Her agenda in Havana was to channel the growing links between the Swedish Social Democrats and us. Her interests, as she presented them then, seemed to agree with her agenda, which determined that she would be in contact almost exclusively with members of Arco Progresista. I heard that she was also in touch with other compatriots, basically due to two interests: to get an idea of how other opposition groups regarded us, and to gather information for her thesis on political pluralism in Cuba.

9. I do not know if she went to see the Damas de Blanco. They denied it when the official Cuban media tried to implicate them. I tend to think that she did not see them. Otherwise, the government (taking advantage of the good political timing in their strong interest to discredit the Damas de Blanco) would have published a picture of them together, which so far has not happened.

10. This is what happened: after C-EeP was formed in mid-2005, a not particularly well-designed campaign to destroy Arco Progresista began. The C-EeP was an old project we had, which sought to connect socialists, social democrats and European progressive

Labour with Arco Progresista in a structured manner and for various purposes. The basic reason was that, unlike liberals and democrats, the democratic left (both in Europe and in Latin America) had serious political and historical difficulties providing open support and solidarity for Arco Progresista. The reasons are well known and have been discussed at length, and this was reflected in the behaviour of the Socialist International, which has barely granted us “permanent guest” status. So we saw C-EeP as the most productive way to boost our relationship with the democratic left in Europe and, at the same time, to build a solid path towards the Socialist International. We had forged some kind of structured relationship with the Party of European Socialists at the European Parliament, but it was necessary to strengthen those links: C-EeP was the natural product of this strategy. After that, we tried to do something similar in Latin America [strengthen links with the Latin American democratic left]. And that was when the the Cuban authorities got angry. For them, a project of this nature was unacceptable, as it would open a legitimate competition in what they saw was their natural sphere of international interaction. So they set their instruments and internal mechanisms to work in order to overthrow the Cuban social democratic alternative. And so an accusation of internal corruption arose, which wouldn't have had any major impact had it not been for Anna Ardin's support. Personally, I do not care much about unfounded accusations— even less about one which seems rather extravagant from my point of view— but it is clear that an allegation of this nature has an effect because of its socio-cultural context. When you look towards Latin America (with a few exceptions), any accusation of corruption is credible. If people don't have time for or aren't interested in giving it some consideration, then the damage is done. I must say that, luckily, not all of our comrades believed the story— but without doubt some damage was caused.

11. And, strangely for us, Anna supports that accusation. I say strangely because she was the person receiving the expense reports of the small cash assistance they were giving us. Two or three groups of young people linked to the group that she headed came to Cuba between 2003 and 2005, up to twice a year. They brought the economic aid and took the reports. Then they informed us by e-mail, or in their next visit, of their assessment: always positive. The last economic aid was brought over by Anna herself in mid-2005. Later on, other people came over, took the reports and everything went well. Suddenly, after having acknowledged that all the reports were fine, Anna seemed to forget this and jumped on a Cuban Government report about us [misinformation from the Cuban government, constructed to damage the reputation of the Cuban Social Democratic movement], which was poorly and hastily written, which could not stand up to serious analysis, where I appeared as the villain of the story. At this point I was surprised by two things: first, the lack of positive response to the institutional analysis we had convened — and which we carried out in the end— and second, her attempt to recruit other members of the European democratic left for her destroying venture— in which she succeeded to some extent. Her attitude was certainly an ironic setback for me, as I used to defend our relationship with the Swedish Social Democrats on the grounds that their political culture was exemplary; that is, based on strict adherence to the rules and on full respect for the word given. And behold, it was precisely a Swede who came to demolish these long-cherished theoretical certainties. But of course a philosopher amongst the Scythians cannot change the latter into philosophers. **So I do not claim that a particular Swede represents the whole of Sweden.** So my connection with her broke, if I remember correctly, in October 2006, following this rather odd behaviour.

12. Why would a Social Democrat do this? For the same reason that a person who sees others as platforms for the deployment of their psychological world and their personal ambitions would act. Anna Ardin is yet another proof of why one should never underestimate the psychological motivations behind people's actions. Every time we see a disproportionately reactive behaviour, we should stop to analyse the rationality (or lack thereof) they show in their behaviour. And that's the case with Ardin, not taking into account her constantly changing ideology.

Strictly rational motives are not always behind people's behaviour. I think her behaviour was the combined product of psychological projection, Eurocentric impulse, personal ambition and unrestrained desire for fame— also linked to the frustration generated by disappointments. When frustration cannot be **controlled, a desire to destroy the cherished object is activated. Assange's lawyer said something along those lines when asked his opinion on Ardin's motives in a recent interview with El País.**

In political terms, this means that she could not find a way to explain in Sweden that her work in Havana was in trouble, and at the same time she felt powerless to control what we were doing. I see her as a less ideologically-minded version of Alan Woods (the latest of Hugo Chávez's British neo-Marxist pseudo-advisors, who believes he knows better than Venezuelans themselves what suits them best— without leaving Europe). And as I come from a tradition that sees any attempt to dictate (coming from without or within) our aims and direction, like an unwanted old-fashioned oddity; Ardin could not comprehend the message and she burst whilst trying to bust us. She then proceeded on a strange itinerary: from a supposed Christian Socialism, she derived in a story of sexual explosion made public and morbidly exploited. A true revelation of personality inconsistencies.

I must say that I am only describing a behaviour without any animosity, because I understand and accept that coexistence— especially in politics— is not without its troubles, and these give strength to the mission each one believes they have in life. In this sense I think that sympathies, empathy and disputes are natural. If pushed to the limit, I would only ask my enemies for clarity, encouraging fair play if possible."

13. Well, that's not entirely accurate. Gainza was probably not aware that Ardin came to Cuba with a social democratic agenda several times. It is possible that, after her social democratic agenda and ground subsided, she sought other ways into Havana. *Misceláneas de Cuba* [a Cuban affairs publication based in Sweden] was and is a perfect entry to Cuba because it has links with lots of dissidents on the island, many of whom are (or have been at some point) the publication's correspondents. By the way, *Misceláneas* has the support of the Swedish liberals who, as far as I know, had nothing to do with the approach or the political background behind the Social Democrats Ardin belonged to. So, obviously, I never met Ardin at Gainza's request. My knowledge of and contact with Anna Ardin came only through the social democrats. In fact, I have had links with *Misceláneas*, as it is one of the few publications related to Cuba that publishes texts and documents by all the political sectors, because of (and in spite of) its liberal creed— in the narrow political sense of the term. I met Gainza in 2000 when I travelled to Sweden, invited by the Liberals first and then by the Social Democrats. Organically, however, I have no other contact with Gainza and his group apart from the contact expected of any Cuban democrat who respects and encourages the exchange of ideas.

14. I thought it was the typical story of a beautiful and intelligent woman looking for her 15 minutes of fame. Assange can and should think of conspirational low blows.

I see someone who is riding on the crest of a good media/political story which would catapult them to fame in order to continue ploughing their way up. So she feeds a story without creating it, coming from a psychological profile that explains this absurd behaviour of accusing a man wanted at the top for something that allegedly happened in the underworld.

15. Well, the WikiLeaks story is very interesting and it should be making Cuban authorities nervous. If someone in the United States could “sell” embarrassing information on the U.S. government, it stands to reason that something similar could happen with Cuba and its government. The impact for Cubans would be higher because, regarding the U.S., Assange only disclosed information that could be declassified one day. In the case of Cuba, we could be talking about information that by its own nature isn't meant to be declassified. In short, the mere existence of WikiLeaks, an enterprise that enjoys (unless proven otherwise) undisputed credibility, attacks the very basis of dictatorships: the classification of all the real information about power and societies. Issues have already been revealed about Cuba in Venezuela and about Venezuela in Cuba, which aren't making Cuban authorities very happy. Thus, the need for freedom of expression, its possibility, and its liberating effect is confirmed. WikiLeaks takes us a step forward on the path to freedom of expression— which in Cuba should be understood as the freedom to provide diverse and systematic information to all the citizens of the island.

16. In general, we social democrats share the foreign policy of Zapatero's government: critical dialogue and global inclusion of Cuba to facilitate a smooth and gradual transition to democracy on the island. The problem is that, once policies are announced and defended with all the possible and plausible theoretical coherence, they need to be transferred to reality. And it was this going live which, in our view, has gone wrong. Losing strategic aim is exactly what should not happen with any political plan. Spain failed in that. It is inconceivable that Moratinos [Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time] would talk about democracy and human rights, but would publicly act against democrats and human rights activists. I therefore agree with the statement released by Arco Progresista. The road to democracy is necessarily a public path that requires the public display of suitable gestures and the public visibility of the virtual and actual people going through it. Anything different is just typical of a conspirational game where nobody knows who will appear on the political arena tomorrow. And everyone knows that victory has many fathers. Having said that, I am not disappointed with PSOE's [Spanish party in office at the time] and the Spanish government's policies regarding Cuba. Talking from experience, and in certain circumstances, I tend to think that nobody has to oblige us. That affords me some control (with varying degrees of effectiveness) over what expectations one has of others. What does produce some kind of uneasiness in me is when words do not match actions. Otherwise, I tend to put more emphasis on what we must do to achieve democracy in domestic terms, aside from the importance of the international community, which I acknowledge anyway.

Finally, I hope you can excuse my lack of economy of words. Thank you for the interview.

*Manuel Cuesta Morua
Arco Progresista Spokesman
Nuevo Pais Project*

<http://marthamitchelleffect.org/#/assange-case-aa-cuba-2/4571327130>

Assange: Entire nations intercepted online, key turned to totalitarian rule

RT
30 November 2012

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange says all the necessary physical infrastructure for absolute totalitarianism through the internet is ready. He told RT that the question now is whether the turnkey process that already started will go all the way.

RT: So you've written this book 'Cypherpunks. Freedom and the Future of the Internet' based on one of the programs that you've made for RT. In it, you say that the internet can enslave us. I don't really get that, because the internet it's a thing, it's a soulless thing. Who are the actual enslavers behind it?

Julian Assange: The people who control the interception of the internet and, to some degree also, physically control the big data warehouses and the international fiber-optic lines. We all think of the internet as some kind of Platonic Realm where we can throw out ideas and communications and web pages and books and they exist somewhere out there. Actually, they exist on web servers in New York or Nairobi or Beijing, and information comes to us through satellite connections or through fiber-optic cables.

So whoever physically controls this controls the realm of our ideas and communications. And whoever is able to sit on those communications channels, can intercept entire nations, and that's the new game in town, as far as state spying is concerned— intercepting entire nations, not individuals.

RT: This sounds like a futuristic scenario, but you are saying that the future is already here.

JA: The US National Security Agency has been doing this for some 20-30 years. But it has now spread to mid-size nations, even Gaddafi's Libya was employing the EAGLE system, which is produced by French company AMESYS, pushed there in 2009, advertised in its international documentation as a nationwide interception system.

So what's happened over the last 10 years is the ever-decreasing cost of intercepting each individual now to the degree where it is cheaper to intercept every individual rather than it is to pick particular people to spy upon.

RT: And what's the alternative, the sort of utopian alternative that you would put forward?

JA: The utopian alternative is to try and gain independence for the internet, for it to sort of declare independence versus the rest of the world. And that's really quite important because if you think what is human civilization, what is it that makes it quintessentially human and civilized, it is our shared knowledge about how the world works, how we deal with each other, how we deal with the environment, which institutions are corrupt, which ones are good, what are the least dumb ways of doing things. And that intellectual knowledge is something that we are all putting on to the internet— and so if we can try and decouple that from the brute nature of states and their cronies, then I think we really have hope for a global civilization.

If, on the other hand, the mere security guards, you know, the people who control the guns, are able to take control of our intellectual life, take control of all the ways in

which we communicate to each other, then of course you can see how dreadful the outcome will be. Because it won't happen to just one nation, it will happen to every nation at once. It is happening to every nation at once as far as spying is concerned, because now every nation is merging its society with internet infrastructure.

RT: And in what way are we, as sort of naïve internet users, if you like (and I exclude you from that, obviously), kind of willingly collaborating with these collectors of personal data? You know, we all have a Facebook account, we all have telephones which can be tracked.

JA: Right. People think, well, yeah, I use Facebook, and maybe the FBI if they made a request, could come and get it, and everyone is much more aware of that because of Petraeus. But that's not the problem. **The problem is that all the time nearly everything people do on the internet is permanently recorded, every web search.**

Do you know what you were thinking one year, two days, three months ago? No, you don't know, but Google knows, it remembers. The National Security Agency who intercepts the request if it flowed over the US border, it knows.

So by just communicating to our friends, by emailing each other, by updating Facebook profiles, we are informing on our friends. And friends don't inform on friends. You know, the Stasi had a 10 per cent penetration of East German society, with up to

1 in 10 people being informants at some time in their life. Now in countries that have the highest internet penetration, like Iceland, more than 80 per cent of people are on Facebook, informing about their friends.

That information doesn't [simply] go nowhere. It's not kept in Iceland, it's sent back into the US where it IS accessed by US intelligence and where it is given out to any friends or cronies of US intelligence— hundreds of national security letters every day publicly declared and being issued by the US government.

RT: So do we risk kind of entering a scenario where there are almost two castes of people: a safe minority who are very savvy about the workings of the internet and the things that you described, and just people who go online for kicks?

JA: We have this position where as we know knowledge is power, and there's a mass transfer as a result of literally billions of interceptions per day going from everyone, the average person, into the data vaults of state spying agencies for the big countries, and their cronies— the corporations that help build them that infrastructure. Those groups are already powerful, that's why they are able to build this infrastructure to intercept on everyone. So they are growing more powerful, concentrating the power in the hands of smaller and smaller groups of people at once, which isn't necessarily bad, but it's extremely dangerous once there is any sort of corruption occurring in the power. Because absolute power corrupts, and when it becomes corrupt, it can affect a lot of people very quickly.

Bill Binney, National Security Agency whistleblower, who was the research head of the National Security Agency's Signals Intelligence Division, describes this as a 'turnkey totalitarianism', that all the infrastructure has been built for absolute totalitarianism. It's just the matter of turning the key. And actually the key has already been turned a little bit, and **it is now affecting people who are targeted for US drone strikes, organiza-tions like WikiLeaks, national security reporters who are having their sources investigated.** It is already partly turned, and the question is, will it go all the way?

RT: But has it been built really by corporations and kind of unwittingly subscribed to by people, in order to advertise products to make money, or has it been built deliberately by governments for the sole purpose of surveillance?

JA: **It's both.** I mean the surveillance infrastructure, the bulk surveillance infrastructure— there are hundreds of companies involved in that business. They have secret international conferences, they have prospectuses that they give to intelligence agencies that we have obtained and published this year together with Privacy International and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism. Also, The Wall Street Journal has done some good work on this. They are building devices that they advertise to **intercept entire nations, to install the data from those intercepts permanently—** strategic interception, because it's cheaper.

So it's a combined corporate / government amalgam. That's one of the problems, one of the reasons it's so unaccountable is that it crosses boundaries. Companies don't just sell to their home country, they sell to companies overseas. There are shareholdings held in BVI, and the company might be British-registered, like BIA, but actually a lot of research and development is done in Sweden, etc.

And then you also have Google and Facebook, who started up predominantly serving the public, but also have developed side projects to service the US intelligence complex. And individuals are constantly pushing their thoughts into Google as each thing that they want to research; it is pushed via emails, and on Facebook, through their social relationships. That's an undreamt of spy database. Facebook is completely undreamt of even by the worst spying nation, given the richness and sophistication of relationships expressed.

RT: And willingly contributed to.

JA: Well, no. But not with informed consent. People don't actually know. When on Facebook it says "share this to your friends," that's what it says. It doesn't say "share this to state agencies," **it doesn't say "share this to friends and cronies of state agencies."**

RT: Who do you think has the organized power to stop these things that you are talking about?

JA: If there is political will, everything is possible. So if we get the political will, then of course those agencies can be dismantled. Very aggressive legislation, policing can be pushed upon them. In some regions of the world, such as Latin America, perhaps that's a possibility. There is a certain democratic tendency, which Ecuador is part of that might do that. **But in general I think the prognosis is very grim.** And we really are at this moment where it can go one way or the other way.

To a degree, perhaps the best we can be sure, if we work, of achieving is that some of us are protected. It may only be a high-tech elite, hopefully expanded a bit more— people who can produce tools and information for others that they can use to protect themselves. It is not necessary that all of society is covered, all of society is protected. **What's necessary is that the critical accountability components of society that stop it from going down the tubes entirely, that those people are protected. Those include corruption investigators, journalists, activists, and political parties. These have got to be protected. If they are not protected, then it's all lost.**

RT: Is there a way that I can protect myself without knowing all about computers?

JA: Well, a little bit. But the first thing to be aware of is how much you are giving away. The first way to protect yourself is to go, "OK, I'll discuss that in person, and not over Facebook chat," or, "OK, I will discuss this using some forms of encrypted chat, like OTR, and not on a Facebook chat." You can go to torproject.org and download encrypted anonymizing software. It is slower than normal, but for things like internet chat it's fine, because you are not downloading very much at once. So there are ways of doing this.

What is really necessary, however, for those to be properly developed, there needs to be enough market demand. It's the same situation as soap and washing your hands. Once upon a time, before the bacterial theory of disease, before we understood that out there invisibly was all this bacteria that was trying to cause us harm— just like mass state surveillance is out there invisible and trying to cause society a large harm— no one bothered to wash their hands. First process was discovery; second process, education; third process, a market demand is created as a result of education, which means that experts can start to manufacture soap, and then people can buy and use it.

So this is where we are at now, which is we've got to create education amongst people, so there can be a market demand, **so that others can be encouraged to produce easy-to-use cryptographic technology that is capable of protecting not everyone, but a significant number of people from mass state spying.** And if we are not able to protect a significant number of people from mass state spying, then the basic democratic and civilian institutions that we are used to— not in the West, I am no glorifier of the West, but in all societies— are going to crumble away. They will crumble away, and they will do so all at once. And that's an extremely dangerous phenomenon. It's not often where all the world goes down the tube all at once. Usually you have a few countries that are OK, and you can bootstrap civilization again from there.

RT: We just passed the second anniversary of Cablegate, and since then this war on whistleblowers and this state surveillance seems to have got worse. Do you think something as large as Cablegate could ever happen again and it would have a similar impact?

JA: Yes, yes. Hopefully next year.

RT: What sort of time next year?

JA: I won't go into it, but hopefully earlier rather than later.

RT: Do you feel that when WikiLeaks is making these releases you're having as large an impact as you've had before?

JA: Well, Cablegate was extraordinary. It was published over a period of 12 months. It's the most significant leak. Our previous leak, on the Iraq war, was also 400,000 documents, showing precisely how over 100,000 people were killed. That was also very significant. But yes, no one has done anything as significant as that since, but yes, hopefully, that will continue.

The successes of WikiLeaks shouldn't be viewed merely as a demonstration of our organization's virility or the virility of the activist community on the internet. They are also a function of this hoarding of information by these national security [agencies]. The reason there was so much information to leak, the reason it could be leaked all at once is because they had hoarded so much. Why had they hoarded so much? Well, to gain extra power through knowledge. They wanted their own knowledge internally to

be easily accessible to their people, to be searchable, so as much power could be extracted from it as possible. WikiLeaks attempts to redress the imbalance of power. by taking what's inside these very powerful institutions and giving them to the commons, people in general, so we can understand how the world works and stop the takeover by these powerful institutions. But it's a function of how much knowledge these powerful institutions have accumulated.

RT: You've obviously written this book while you've been here in the embassy. But is it affecting your ability to work, this being cooped up constantly?

JA: It's affecting my ability to meet with other people in different countries and to proselytize and things like this. But we should keep it in perspective. There are others who have been in prison also in the past few years. I know that it is a much more serious condition than the one I'm in, and I am fortunately able to give interviews and so on. So at least I have a voice. Prisoners rarely even have a voice. Why is that? Well, because the prison system doesn't want to permit them to complain about their conditions.

RT: And what are you going to do, Julian? You said that you won't leave the Ecuadorian embassy until the US drops any charges and any investigation against you. Are you just going to stay here forever?

JA: Well, I hope that there is enough political pressure and that the US government sees that it is destroying any goodwill that remains towards it as a result of its persecution and investigation of WikiLeaks and its associates. I think it really does have to drop the investigation. And you know, over the past six months in particular you can see a sort of the arrow of history— and the US DoJ and Eric Holder are going to end up on the wrong side of history. I don't know that they want that on their record.

RT: I think there've been reports on the media that over the last day or so about your lung condition, but you've released a statement that it's actually not the case at all. But has it shown you what would potentially happen if you did have a health scare? Do you think you would be able to get treatment?

JA: You know, my particular personal condition is not very interesting. Obviously, this circumstance in the embassy is difficult. And over a longer term, I suppose, it could be very difficult. But, you know, I've had worse problems.

<http://rt.com/news/assange-internet-control-totalitarian-943/print/>

"Varför kan inte Julian Assange förhöras i London när en hel svensk domstol åker till Rwanda?"

*Daniel Claesson, jur.kand
Dagens Juridik
2012-11-30 08:34*

Det har nu gått mer än två år sedan Wikileaks-grundaren Julian Assange anhölls av svensk åklagare för påstådda brott mot två kvinnor sommaren 2010. De juridiska turerna har varit många och svårbegripliga för alla utomstående.

Idag har processen fastnat i ett dödläge. Assange lever instängd på Equadors ambassad i London, den diplomatiska krisen mellan Storbritannien och Sydamerika förvärras och Australien börjar resa frågor kring hanteringen av en av sina medborgare. Men i ärendet händer ingenting.

En kortfattad förklaring till det låsta läget är att flera länder har motstående krav. Svenska myndigheter håller på sin rätt att genomdriva den europeiska arresteringsordern, Ecuador värnar sin rätt att ge människor asyl på samma villkor som andra länder. Storbritannien sitter mitt i korselden och hävdar sin rätt att bestämma över brittiskt territorium.

Situationen är tveklöst värst för Storbritannien. De har i detta ärende tredubbla internationella lojaliteter att ta hänsyn till. EU-regler i förhållande till Sverige, Samväldesförpliktelser till Australien och Nato-hänsyn till USA. Dessutom måste man ta hänsyn till internationella rättsregler om skydd för ambassader.

Finns det någon lösning på det totala dödläge som uppstått?

Ett förslag som förts fram är att den svenska åklagaren Marianne Ny tar ett plan till London och genomför förhöret på Equadors ambassad. Detta har dock avvisats av svenska myndigheter.

Åklagaren menade först att det inte var tillåtet enligt svenska regler. När detta visade sig inte stämma blev förklaringen istället att den europeiska arresteringsordern förutsatte en viss hantering. När även detta visade sig felaktigt kom en vag hänvisning till utredningsskäl som motivering till att inte förhöra Assange i London.

Alla inser att det egentligen handlar om ovilja från åklagarens sida. En insikt som ytterligare stärkts i dagarna, när media rapporterar att en hel svensk tingsrätt flyger ner till Rwanda i Afrika.

Svenska myndigheter är fyrkantiga och det kan nog vara bra ibland. Uppsatta regler ska följas— fast ibland behöver man också backa ett steg, ta ett djupt andetag och ställa sig frågan om följderna verkligen är rimliga.

Vi kan idag konstatera att, indirekt, har den svenska attityden orsakat en diplomatisk kris mellan Storbritannien och halva Sydamerika. Utanför ambassaden vaktar mängder av poliser dygnet runt till en kostnad av åtskilliga miljoner för brittiska skattebetalare.

Detta har också fått till följd att svenskt rättsväsende ifrågasätts, rätt eller fel, i flera andra länder. Och sist men inte minst har det lett till att de två målsägande kvinnorna aldrig får sitt ärende prövat— dessa två kvinnor som nu har tvingats vänta i över två år på svar om deras ärenden ska leda till åtal eller inte. Detta kan inte betraktas som rimliga konsekvenser.

Den svenska åklagarmyndigheten borde släppa prestigen och visa lite god vilja. Ingen vinner på att Assange-ärendet fortsätter att tröskas. En flygtrip till London skulle lösa upp den komplicerade knuten. Därefter kan beslut tas om att väcka åtal eller lägga ner ärendet.

Det skulle vara en lättnad för alla inblandade. Ta nu den chansen! Om inte annat så för att visa att svenska myndigheter tar kvinnors rätt att få sin sak prövad på allvar.

Kommentarer på: <http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2012/11/varfor-kan-inte-julian-assange-forhoras-i-london-nar-en-hel-svensk-domstol-aker-till-rwanda>

Julian Assange: WikiLeaks will go ahead

*Stefania Maurizi
L'Espresso (Italy)
30 November 2012*

In the glittering Knightsbridge district, in the heart of London, just behind the famous Harrods department store, there is a red-brick building guarded day and night by Scotland Yard agents and by one or two large police vans equipped with cameras keeping a watchful eye. Refuge has been taken here at the Ecuadorian Embassy by the man who infuriated the White House and diplomats all around the world, by exposing war crimes and secret deals: Julian Assange. It is in this embassy that *L'Espresso* met the founder of WikiLeaks, who has been holed up in this building since the 19th of June. A hundred and sixty-five days, in addition to the eighteen months he spent under house arrest forced to wear an electronic manacle around his ankle.

In the last two years, Assange has been living as a prisoner. Although Ecuador has granted him asylum, no one knows if he will ever be able to leave this embassy as a free man and how this incredible story is going to end up. A 41-year-old man who used to travel around the world, rootless and free as the air, he is now buried inside a roughly 20 square meter room, under heavy surveillance. Following the release of the US diplomacy cables, the Gitmo files, the Afghan and Iraq War Logs, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks experienced virulent attacks. He was branded "a hi-tech terrorist" by the US vice president Joe Biden and "a criminal" by George W. Bush's top advisor, Karl Rove.

Over the last two years, his organisation has experienced an extra-judicial banking blockade, which should be a wake up call for media outlets and NGOs, as it sets a very dangerous precedent. Nonetheless, WikiLeaks has been left totally alone to try to beat this financial blockade, selling t-shirts and stickers for a few dollars each. Attacks did not come only from hostile US politicians and financial giants, but also from first-hour media collaborators like the Guardian and the New York Times, which even portrayed Assange as 'a nut job' and commented on his personal hygiene habits. Few people seem really interested in what he and his organisation actually represent: the main characters of the First World InfoWar. And Assange is "a charismatic figure precisely because of the way his contradictions magically seem to hold together," as the American magazine 'The New Yorker' wrote.

We meet him in the room of the embassy where he lives and works. He is paler than usual, looks like he has lost almost ten kilos since the last time we met in February and he has a persistent cough, as if something is wrong with his lungs. But as he speaks, he is the Julian Assange we know: strong as usual and very focused on his work. Physically affected by the long confinement, but in good mental shape. The Ecuadorian

Embassy is in one of the most exclusive areas of London, however it is just a small apartment with no garden or even a courtyard where one can enjoy some fresh air. A red Lilliputian kitchen: one meter and a half by one meter and a half. A small bathroom and a larger one, the diplomatic staff offices and Julian Assange's room: roughly 20 square meters. There is just one large window with heavy curtains shielding London's grey sky and preempting people from looking inside. The room is partitioned by a bookshelf where Assange puts books, notes and small suitcases. Behind the bookshelf there is just enough room for his bed, which is under the only available window. Access to this small bedroom is almost blocked by a running machine put at the end of the bookshelf: that treadmill is indeed the only way Assange can do any physical exercise. In the portion of the room where Assange works, there is a small round table with black leatherette chairs, a wall full of post-it notes about the WikiLeaks' strategy in the next few months, and a fireplace topped by a large TV. There is so much stuff. And the only light available in this area is artificial. The lack of sunlight and fresh air in this room is a bit shocking. The Embassy staff members seem to do all they can to make Assange's life as tolerable as possible. As we speak, a woman knocks on the door, delivering a list and asking him what he would like to have in the fridge. Basil and mozzarella cheese are two of his choices. However, how long can Assange live in these conditions? Leaning against the bookshelf is a small whiteboard outlining a medical protocol.

As we have dinner he opts for a healthy choice of fish and fresh vegetables, enjoying a glass of red wine from Argentina. He tells us he is confident that the Swedish case against him will collapse and he seems a bit unhappy about the DreamWorks' film apparently in the pipeline. The script is kept away from computers, he tells us with a smile, explaining that the DreamWorks drama could unleash a new smearing campaign against him and his organisation which, apparently, would be depicted as an obscure sect the former WikiLeaks' spokesman, Daniel Domscheit Berg, was able to escape from thanks to the help of his wife.

However, it is not the DreamWorks fiction what worries Assange most: his first concern is the Grand Jury investigation in the United States which could bring him and some other members of WikiLeaks to be charged with espionage for publishing US classified documents. This is the reason why he took refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy, as he is concerned that the extradition to Sweden could pave the way for one to the United States. Early in November, the American magazine 'Wired' revealed that the Grand Jury investigation is still ongoing, quoting U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady of Alexandria, Virginia.

We leave the embassy at midnight, while he remains vigil and lucid in front of his computer. When we first entered into the room, we had noticed five small laptops scattered between the table and the seats. It looks like outside the building there is just one Scotland Yard agent, but as Assange accompanies us on a small embassy tour, we can see another agent below the window of the bathroom and, as he opens the heavy curtains of his tiny bedroom, we notice another one in the building next door, who can be seen through a glass window. He is surrounded day and night. There is no way he can escape from this embassy. The day after, when we meet him again in his room, the number of laptops on the table have increased to seven. Julian Assange turns away from those machines that keep him in contact with his armies in Cyberspace and starts giving this interview.

Yesterday you mentioned that you are confident the Swedish case will collapse. How?
These last few months we have seen the unfolding of the most significant judicial scandal in Sweden since the end of the Cold War. The central participant in that scandal is the Social Democrat politician Claes Borgstrom. Borgstrom is also the lawyer who reactivated the Swedish investigation after it was dismissed by the chief prosecutor of Stockholm.

Why do you call him a politician? He established a law firm in partnership with the former Social Democratic Minister of Justice.

He is a politician for the Social Democratic party. He was the gender equality spokesperson for the Democrats. He is a senior figure in political circles. He is now under trial [*Not yet, as Assange presumably knows but in this case is misquoted. --A.B.*] by the Swedish bar council for his role in the false conviction of a man, Thomas Quick. This is another event that will occur in the new year I believe would result in greater scrutiny of what happened in Sweden and the investigation should be quickly dismissed.

[Thomas Quick hit the headlines as one of the most notorious Swedish serial killers. Convicted of 8 murders, he was sentenced to psychiatric confinement and confessed 30 murders, revealing shocking details, like how he ate the remains of his victims. In 2008 he withdrew his confessions, which were given under heavy medication. He has now been acquitted of 5 of the 8 murders. His case is currently under review and last August, victims' families asked for an independent investigation in this justice scandal. Thomas Quick's lawyer was Claes Borgstrom, who is currently the lawyer of the two Swedish women accusing Assange of rape].

In the United States you have the Grand Jury investigation...

In the US we have the Grand Jury, actions we have been taking against the Grand Jury, we have the Manning case, actions we have been taking in relation to rights violations in the Manning case, separately actions which the Manning lawyers are taking against those rights violations, plus actions against the banking blockade.

Apparently, during the Manning hearings journalists are not allowed to bring computers, is this true?

The US military has tried many different techniques to hamper the public understanding of that case and also to hamper our understanding of that case. Reporters who have reported on both cases, the Guantanamo case and the Manning case, say that the secrecy and military control to prevent public understanding of what is going on is **worse than in Guantanamo**. So there are secret arguments, secret judgements, none of the submissions or judgements are made public, are withheld.

In any case you did apply for a copy of the entire file, which is more than 40,000 pages.

No, the FBI file is, as of December 2011, 42,135 pages, according to testimony by US government officials in court. **Of that, less than 9,000 pages relates to the investigation into Bradley Manning, the rest relates to Wikileaks**. We applied for a copy of this FBI file some time ago through the Freedom of Information Act and it was rejected under the basis that there was an ongoing investigation.

This investigation is totally shrouded in secrecy.

Although the US investigation against us is formally secret, quite a lot of information has come out in unexpected ways. **For example, the Department of Justice this year**

put out a tender for a computer system to manage the documents from that investigation. That tender was for a value of 1 to 2 million dollars.

In some sense they seem quite desperate: they have subpoenaed the WikiLeaks Twitter account. How can they imagine that you used Twitter to communicate with your staff and sources while leaking very sensitive files, like the 'Collateral Murder' video?

They have subpoenaed all the records of the Wikileaks twitter account, those include what times particular tweets were sent and location. Through this method we believe they wish to try and establish who sent what, who sent the public tweets and establish that I or some other members of WikiLeaks had certain knowledge at particular times. And also some parts of the Espionage Act requires intent to do something, it is not enough to throw over a box of classified documents in the street, that's not espionage, one must intend to do such a thing. So certain attitudes which could be displayed by the WikiLeaks Twitter account in relation to war crimes committed by the United States may be used to establish intent that is critical of the United States military.

The strange thing is that Daniel Domscheit Berg is not among the people listed in that subpoena: at that time he was the only public face of WikiLeaks, a part from you. How do you interpret this? Of course we are speaking about opinions. Maybe there are secrets facts we don't know yet...

Other sources say that he has provided information to the FBI, however not during his time with the organisation, as far as I am aware. I suspended him in August 2010 for a variety of reasons.

Another strange story is that one concerning the documents which Domscheit Berg took with himself, roughly 3,000 files. Do you know whether it was valuable material?

Yes, it is our greatest loss. Fortunately, the way we were structured technically very deliberately, now the organisation is structured in a more robust manner, but even then rogue insiders, like Domscheit Berg and his German friend, were not able to access to source identity, where the material came from.

Last time we spoke you mentioned that among those files there were even the bank documents... The bank documents were in a different storage system. So this story is a bit different. The most significant was documentation, video documentation, of serious war crimes in Afghanistan where around 100 people were killed.

So a great damage for WikiLeaks.

That is correct, but it is the conflict with the United States that created intense pressure and a space for opportunists. Such a high intensity conflict: at a state level, intelligence level, political level, legal level, financial level and in the media. So it is an experience that it is impossible to learn in any other way than going through it. But now the organisation support is extremely robust as a result of having survived to this. Our people have survived all this: difficult financial circumstances, smear campaign, arrest, imprisonment.

What about very adversarial statements against WikiLeaks by AnonymousIRC? Is there a group of Anonymous which is still close to WikiLeaks?

We can see from public comments that there are many sympathetic. The suspicions about the AnonymousIRC account exist across the Anonymous community for a long time now.

How do you plan to develop WikiLeaks now that you are inside this Embassy?

I never developed WikiLeaks by walking into the forest and jumping down trees. It's intellectual work, a work of communities and engineering: all these things I can do in this embassy, but WikiLeaks is far more than just me, there are people involved in nearly every country.

So is there a network still working with you?

Yes. There has been an interesting phenomenon over the past year and a half. The supporter individuals have started to find each other and take the interactions offline to make them personal.

So you don't feel alone, even if you are here confined in this embassy.

Not in that sense, of course I feel alone in other ways.

In what ways?

They are not interesting.

But do you feel supported by this community?

Tremendously.

Do you feel betrayed by someone?

There are quite many betrayers, but they are also not interesting. What is interesting is the nature of the conflict we are involved in that leads to opportunistic behaviour.

For example?

Well, these twenty opportunistic journalists. This is a fact of the world that is important to know and to defend against.

Did you feel betrayed by the New York Times?

As a matter of fact, we were betrayed by the New York Times. More interesting was that the New York Times betrayed itself, betrayed its reputation, betrayed its position and diminished its power by acting in the way they did. That shows you the extraordinary constraints they are operating in, that is the difficult reality of operating in the powerful position the New York Times does in the US: on the one end extremely subservient to the US intelligence complex, on the other end it also sees itself as part of that establishment.

Did you expect a different approach?

I expected a smarter approach. I understand the constraints they are operating under within the United States, but they behaved foolishly in smearing Bradley Manning and in refusing to use the word 'torture' in relation of the tortures revealed in Iraq, as the other media of the world did. Even the US military records were using the word 'torture'.

Did you get support from people you would have never expected?

Let's say that I did expect it, but nonetheless it was heartening to receive support from libertarian Republicans of the United States. It is not limited to Ron Paul, it extends significantly beyond that.

Some people think it is very unlikely that WikiLeaks will get a new bombshell like the US diplomacy cables, because the way Bradley Manning was jailed and tortured for months sent a very clear message to future leakers: if you dare to leak very important documents, your life will be destroyed...

So are you saying that because one soldier has died in a war, there will never be another soldier who die in a war? Our sources are highly committed. What the Cablegate and other revelations show is that through courage, intelligence and diligence you can change the world as a source for WikiLeaks.

So you are confident in humankind.

Yes.

Going back to your last six years, is there anything you would change?

Of course, many little things I would do better. It is hard to refer to any specific decision, because most of them go down in the light of the strategic realities of the moment. There are some, for example the decision to come to the United Kingdom. **We didn't expect the Guardian newspaper to swap sides.** We expected that if we had the Guardian on our side, which they promised to be, and we had an extradition case from here or some other kind of attacks, we would do very well because of the existing treaties between the US and the UK plus the support of our English partner, the Guardian. But in the end I believe we charted this very difficult course rather well: the Pentagon and White House multiple times made public demands of us to destroy everything. We published everything successfully. **We faced down the threats made by the Pentagon, we took the heat and we won.**

You declared: 'If you believe something, you have to pay the price. And that is ok. My greatest regret is that it is a cost my children didn't agree to pay'.

That is true. [He speaks quietly]

When did you meet your children last time?

I do not comment details of my family for security reasons.

<http://espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio/julian-assange-wikileaks-will-go-ahead/2195773/25>

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SvD: 2012-12-01

Grova anklagelser från Julian Assange mot USA

I en BBC-intervju går Wikileaks-grundaren Julian Assange till hårt angrepp på USA som han menar har använt tortyr på Bradley Manning för att tvinga fram ett erkännande att han läckt hemliga dokument till Wikileaks. En mycket upprörd Assange angriper också den svenska regeringen i den tio minuter långa intervjun.

Brittiska BBC har lyckats få en exklusiv intervju med Julian Assange från den ecuadorianska ambassaden i London dit han tog sin tillflykt i juni. Intervjun är ganska rörig och hetsig och både Assange och reportern Zeinab Badawi pratar ofta i munnen på varandra.

Den grövsta attacken från Assange gäller den pågående rättegången mot Bradley Manning, den amerikanske militären som anklagas för att ha läckt hemliga dokument till Wikileaks. Inför en militärdomstol i Fort Meade har Manning vittnat om hur han första tiden stängdes in i en bur på 2,5 kvadratmeter och sedan hölls isolerad utan att veta vad han anklagades för.

-- Juan Méndez, FN:s särskilda rapportör om tortyr och annan förmedrande behandling, har granskat vad som hänt med Bradley Manning och funnit att USA behandlat honom på ett sådant sätt att han blivit torterad för att bryta ner honom och erkänna att han läckt dokument till mig och till Wikileaks-organisationen. Det är absurt att pressen i västvärlden inte rapporterar om detta, säger han.

Reportern säger då att Pentagon-advokater påtalat att isolering inte är att jämföra med tortyr enligt amerikanska armémanualer. [*Än sedan då? --A.B.*]

Julian Assange säger också att den svenska regeringen bryter mot normal EU-standard när man inte garanterar Assange att inte bli utlämnad till USA om han skulle gå med på att komma till Sverige för förhör.

-- En sådan begäran har den ecuadorianska regeringen gjort hos den svenska regeringen. Men vill den svenska regeringen inte göra och bruter därmed mot alla regler som tillämpas inom EU i sådana lägen när någon ska höras, säger Julian Assange.

• *Fredrik Mellgren*



Assange 'will surrender for extradition to Sweden', say Oz diplomats

*Big News Network
4th December 2012*

Australian government officials believe that Julian Assange has no alternative other than to surrender for extradition to Sweden to face sexual assault allegations, and that the whistle blowing website he founded is now 'broken'.

As the Australia-born activist nears six months' confinement in Ecuador's London embassy, security and diplomatic sources in Canberra have privately expressed confidence that WikiLeaks is "effectively moribund".

It is thought that the transparency group's dwindling financial support will "sooner or later dry up" leaving Assange "irrelevant and with little alternative other than to leave Ecuador's embassy".

"This is slowly playing itself out, over months, maybe more than a year, but there's only one likely outcome-- extradition to Sweden," the Sydney Morning Herald quoted a diplomatic source, as saying.

The paper also quoted a security official, as saying that WikiLeaks' "inner group" now comprised only "four to six people, including Assange" and that its website was "running on empty" financially.

"WikiLeaks doesn't have an electronic drop box any more; they haven't published anything of any great consequence for many months [???]. There's just a Twitter feed. This phenomenon has run its course," the official said.

In June, Assange sought asylum in Ecuador's embassy after Britain's highest court rejected his appeal against extradition to face sexual assault allegations in Sweden. (ANI)

<http://www.bignetwork.com/index.php/sid/211146759/scat/88176adfdf246af5>

Julian Assange, Erin Burnett and the Battle Over Press Freedom

Peter Hart

F.A.I.R.

2012-12-04

CNN host Erin Burnett had WikiLeaks' Julian Assange on her show late last week (11/28/12) to talk about his new book. But the conversation turned to the allegation of hypocrisy: How can a freedom of information champion like Assange square those principles with the press freedom record of Ecuador, the country that is allowing him to stay in its London embassy in order to avoid arrest?

BURNETT: But, you know, when you talk about this, you know governments clamping down on the right to speak, Ecuador is an unlikely champion of your call for free speech and I wanted to lay this out for you, because just this month, Human Rights Ecuador reports that the president of Ecuador, President Correa proposed—

ASSANGE: Look, look, look, seriously—

BURNETT: Let me finish for my viewers here, though, and then you can go ahead and rip it apart. He said freedom of expression should be a function of the state, where information—

ASSANGE: Look, look, I'm not here—I'm not here to talk about — all governments have their problems.

ASSANGE: I'm not here to talk about — I heard it.

ASSANGE: I'm not here to talk about these little things about Ecuador or whatever. Come on. Let's be realistic.

BURNETT: It's not a little thing. Suppressing journalists is not a little thing for someone who says that their job is to put out information that governments try to suppress.

ASSANGE: It is a big problem, the suppression of the freedom of speech all over the world, an extremely big problem. And so is the collapse in the rule of law.

Let's set aside the notion that a journalist who published a story about how the U.S. military killed journalists in Iraq, and whose outlet had its funding stream essentially frozen because of U.S. government pressure, needs to speak out about Ecuadoran press rights to prove he's concerned about press freedom.

Yes, there are some legitimate criticisms of Ecuador's press policies; the same is true for many countries. The Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders ranks Ecuador 104th in the world. Not a good score by any stretch, but **that's still ahead of Colombia and U.S. ally Jordan, and only slightly behind Israel. How often do you hear U.S. reporters asking interview subjects to condemn press policies in those countries?** *[Also, Reporters Without Borders has its own agenda. --A.B.]*

So what has Ecuador actually done? Like many countries, Ecuador has libel laws that are, when measured by the U.S. First Amendment, rather restrictive. As Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic & Policy Research pointed out (*Guardian*, 7/21/12), the details of the most often cited case against President Rafael Correa deserve a closer look:

Last February, the nation's highest court upheld a criminal libel conviction against the daily *El Universo*, with three directors and an opinion editor sentenced to three years in prison, and \$40 million in damages. President Correa announced a pardon for the convictions 13 days later—so no one was punished. As noted above, I am against criminal libel laws and would agree with criticism advocating the repeal of such laws. But to say that this case represents a "crackdown" on freedom of expression is more than an exaggeration. These people were convicted of libel because they told very big lies in print, falsely accusing Correa of crimes against humanity. Under Ecuadorian law, he can—like any other citizen—sue them for libel, and the court can and did find them guilty.

He added that what is really happening is more about a political struggle between private media powers and popular governments pursuing policies those owners don't care for:

Rather than being a heroic battle for freedom of expression against a government that is trying to "silence critics," it is a struggle between two political actors. One

political actor is the major media, whose unelected owners and their allies use their control of information to advance the interests of the wealth and power that used to rule the country; on the other side is a democratic government that is seeking to carry out its reform program, for which it was elected.

But it's not just Erin Burnett who takes the level of press freedom in countries with left-leaning governments seriously. This weekend, the New York Times (11/30/12) had a long piece about the political-press dispute in Argentina, pausing to note:

In other parts of Latin America, leaders have clashed vehemently with the news media. President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela incurred protests by forcing a critical broadcaster, RCTV, off public airwaves, while President Rafael Correa of Ecuador regularly disparages journalists, some of whom have faced debilitating libel lawsuits.

It is true that Chávez does not have an amicable relationship with the private media barons in his country. These are, after all, the people who agitated– and in some instances directly assisted– in the 2002 coup temporarily overthrowing his government. Ask yourself what would happen in this country to a national broadcaster who did the same thing.

It is understandable, given the threats to free expression around the world, that some stories will get more attention than others. In that regard, the patterns are what matter; which cases get more attention from media and political elites here?

As Glenn Greenwald observed (Guardian, 8/21/12), there seems to be an expectation in the Assange case that a dissident must take refuge with a government with a sterling human rights record. **This message is conveyed by people who live in a country that has routinely violated human rights around the globe, and it comes from reporters who rarely express any concerns for journalists detained, harassed and killed by their own government.**

So, yes: Isn't it time Julian Assange spoke out on freedom of expression?

Julian Assange: the fugitive

Julian Assange has been holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy for six months. In a rare interview, we ask the WikiLeaks founder about reports of illness, paranoia— and if he'll ever come out

*Decca Aitkenhead
The Guardian
7 December 2012*

The Ecuadorian embassy in Knightsbridge looks rather lavish from the street, but inside it's not much bigger than a family apartment. The armed police guard outside is reported to cost £12,000 a day, but I can see only three officers, all of whom look supremely bored. Christmas shoppers heading for Harrods next door bustle by, indifferent or oblivious to the fact that they pass within feet of one of the world's most famous fugitives.

It's almost six months since Julian Assange took refuge in the embassy, and a state of affairs that was at first sensational is slowly becoming surreal. Ecuador has granted its guest formal asylum, but the WikiLeaks founder can't get as far as Harrods, let alone to South America, because the moment he leaves the embassy, he will be arrested— even if he comes out in a diplomatic bag or handcuffed to the ambassador— and extradited to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault. Assange says he'll happily go to Stockholm, providing the Swedish government guarantees he won't then be extradited on to the US, where he fears he will be tried for espionage. Stockholm says no guarantee can be given, because that decision would lie with the courts. And so the weeks have stretched into months, and may yet stretch on into years.

Making the whole arrangement even stranger are the elements of normality. A receptionist buzzes me in and checks my ID, and then a businesslike young woman, Assange's assistant, leads me through into a standard-issue meeting room, where a young man who has something to do with publicity at Assange's publishers is sitting in front of a laptop. There are pieces of camera equipment and a tripod; someone suggests coffee. It all looks and feels like an ordinary interview.

But when Assange appears, he seems more like an in-patient than an interviewee, his opening words slow and hesitant, the voice so cracked as to be barely audible. If you have ever visited someone convalescing after a breakdown, his demeanour would be instantly recognisable. Admirers cast him as the new Jason Bourne, but in these first few minutes I worry he may be heading more towards Miss Havisham. [*The Guardian strikes again!* --A.B.]

Assange tells me he sees visitors most days, but I'm not sure how long it was since a stranger was here, so I ask if this feels uncomfortable. "No, I look forward to the company. **And, in some cases, the adversary.**" **His gaze flickers coolly.** **"We'll see which."** He shrugs off recent press reports of a chronic lung infection, but says: "I suppose it's quite nice, though, actually, that people are worried about me." Former hostages often talk about what it meant to hear their name on the radio and know the outside world was still thinking of them. Have the reports of his health held something similar for him? "Absolutely. Though I felt that much more keenly when I was in prison."

Assange spent 10 days in jail in December 2010, before being bailed to the stately home of a supporter in Suffolk. There, he was free to come and go in daylight hours, yet he says he felt more in captivity then than he does now. "During the period of house arrest, I had an electronic manacle around my leg for 24 hours a day, and for someone who has tried to give others liberty all their adult life, that is absolutely intolerable. And I had to go to the police at a specific time every day— every day— Christmas Day, New Year's Day— for over 550 days in a row." His voice is warming now, barbed with indignation. "One minute late would mean being placed into prison immediately." Despite being even more confined here, he's now the author of his own confinement, so he feels freer?

"Precisely."

And now he is the [co-]author of a new book, *Cypherpunks: Freedom And The Future Of The Internet*. Based on conversations and interviews with three other cypherpunks— internet activists fighting for online privacy— it warns that we are sleepwalking towards a "new transnational dystopia". Its tone is portentous— "The internet, our

greatest tool of emancipation, has been transformed into the most dangerous facilitator of totalitarianism we have ever seen"— and its target audience anyone who has ever gone online or used a mobile phone.

"The last 10 years have seen a revolution in interception technology, where we have gone from tactical interception to strategic interception," he explains. "Tactical interception is the one that we are all familiar with, where particular individuals become of interest to the state or its friends: activists, drug dealers, and so on. Their phones are intercepted, their email communication is intercepted, their friends are intercepted, and so on. We've gone from that situation to strategic interception, where everything flowing out of or into a country— and for some countries domestically as well— is intercepted and stored permanently. Permanently. It's more efficient to take and store everything than it is to work out who you want to intercept."

The change is partly down to economies of scale: interception costs have been halving every two years, whereas the human population has been doubling only every 20. "So we've now reached this critical juncture where it is possible to intercept everyone— every SMS, every email, every mobile phone call— and store it and search it for a nominal fee by governmental standards. A kit produced in South Africa can store and index all telecommunications traffic in and out of a medium-sized nation for \$10 m a year." And the public has no idea, due largely to a powerful lobby dedicated to keeping it in the dark, and partly to the legal and technological complexity. So we spend our days actively assisting the state's theft of private information about us, by putting it all online.

"The penetration of the Stasi in East Germany is reported to be up to 10% of the population— one in 10 at some stage acted as informers— but the penetration of Facebook in countries like Iceland is 88%, and those people are informing much more frequently and in much more detail than they ever were in the Stasi. And they're not even getting paid to do it! They're doing it because they feel they'll be excluded from social opportunities otherwise. So we're now in this unique position where we have all the ingredients for a turnkey totalitarian state."

In this dystopian future, Assange sees only one way to protect ourselves: cryptography. Just as handwashing was once a novelty that became part of everyday life, and crucial to protecting our health, so, too, will we have to get used to encrypting our online activity. "A well-defined mathematical algorithm can encrypt something quickly, but to decrypt it would take billions of years— or trillions of dollars' worth of electricity to drive the computer. So cryptography is the essential building block of independence for organisations on the internet, just like armies are the essential building blocks of states, because otherwise one state just takes over another. There is no other way for our intellectual life to gain proper independence from the security guards of the world, the people who control physical reality."

Assange talks in the manner of a man who has worked out that the Earth is round, while everyone else is lumbering on under the impression that it is flat. It makes you sit up and listen, but raises two doubts about how to judge his thesis. **There's no debate that Assange knows more about the subject than almost anyone alive**, and the case he makes is both compelling and scary. But there's a question mark over his own credentials as a crusader against abuses of power, and another over his frame of mind. After all the dramas of the last two and a half years, it's hard to read his book without wondering, is Assange a hypocrite— and is he a reliable witness?

Prodigiously gifted, he is often described as a genius, but he has the autodidact's tendency to come across as simultaneously credulous and a bit slapdash. He can leap from one country to another when characterising surveillance practices, as if all nations were analogous [*Assange's viewpoint, or the writer's?* --A.B.], and refers to the communications data bill currently before the UK parliament in such alarmist terms that I didn't even recognise the legislation and thought he must be talking about a bill I'd never heard of. "A bill promulgated by the Queen, no less!" he emphasises, as if the government could propose any other variety, before implying that it will give the state the right to read every email and listen in on every mobile phone call, which is simply not the case. It's the age-old dilemma: are we being warned by a uniquely clear-sighted Cassandra, or by a paranoid conspiracy theorist whose current circumstances only confirm all his suspicions of sinister secret state forces at work?

But first, the hypocrisy question. I say many readers will wonder why, if it's so outrageous for the state to read our emails, it is OK for WikiLeaks to publish confidential state correspondence.

"It's all about power," he replies. "And accountability. The greater the power, the more need there is for transparency, because if the power is abused, the result can be so enormous. On the other hand, those people who do not have power, we mustn't reduce their power even more by making them yet more transparent." [*This should be obvious even for a minion of The Guardian.* --A.B.]

Many people would say Assange himself is immensely powerful, and should be held to a higher standard of accountability and transparency. "I think that is correct," he agrees. So was WikiLeaks' decision to publish Afghan informers' names unredacted an abuse of power? Assange draws himself up and lets rip. "This is absurd propaganda. Basic kindergarten rhetoric. There has been no official accusation that any of our publications over a six-year period have resulted in the deaths of a single person— a single person— and this shows you the incredible political power of the Pentagon, that it is able to attempt to reframe the debate in that way."

Others have wondered how he could make a chatshow for a state-owned Moscow TV station. "I've never worked for a Russian state-owned television channel. That's just ridiculous— the usual propaganda rubbish." He spells it out slowly and deliberately. "I have a TV production company, wholly owned by me. We work in partnership with Dartmouth Films, a London production company, to produce a 12-part TV series about activists and thinkers from around the world. Russia Today was one of more than 20 different media organisations that purchased a licence. That is all." There is no one to whom he wouldn't sell a licence? "Absolutely not. In order to go to the hospital, we must put Shell in our car. In order to make the maximum possible impact for our sources, we have to deal with organisations like the New York Times and the Guardian." He pauses. "It doesn't mean we approve of these organisations."

I try twice to ask how a campaigner for free speech can condone Ecuador's record on press controls, but I'm not sure he hears, because he is off into a coldly furious tirade against the Guardian. The details of the dispute are of doubtful interest to a wider audience, but in brief: WikiLeaks worked closely with both the Guardian and the New York Times in 2010 to publish huge caches of confidential documents, before falling out

very badly with both. He maintains that the Guardian broke its word and behaved disgracefully, but he seems to have a habit of falling out with erstwhile allies. Leaving aside the two women in Sweden who were once his admirers and now allege rape and sexual assault, things also ended badly with Canongate, a small publisher that paid a large advance for his ghosted autobiography, only to have Assange pull out of the project after reading the first draft. It went ahead and published anyway, but lost an awful lot of money. Several staff walked out of WikiLeaks in 2010, including a close colleague, Daniel Domscheit-Berg, who complained that Assange was behaving "like some kind of emperor or slave trader". *[A grossly distorted recounting which perfectly illustrates why Assange might be inclined to indulge in "a coldly furious tirade against The Guardian". --A.B.]*

It clearly isn't news to Assange that even some of his supporters despair of an impossible personality, and blame his problems on hubris, but he isn't having any of it. I ask how he explains why so many relationships have soured. "They haven't." OK, let's go through them one by one. The relationship with Canongate...

"Oh my God!" he interrupts angrily, raising his voice. "These people, we told them not to do that. They were wrong to do it, to violate the author's copyright like that." Did he ever consider giving his advance back? "Canongate owes me money. I have not seen a single cent from this book. Canongate owes me hundreds of thousands of pounds." But if he hasn't seen any money, it's because the advance was deposited in Assange's lawyers' bank account, to go towards paying their fees. Then the lawyers complained that the advance didn't cover the fees, and Assange fell out with them, too. *[The fees demanded were exorbitant, and apparently in contradiction of a prior tacit agreement. --A.B.]*

"I was in a position last year where everybody thought they could have a free kick. They thought that because I was involved in an enormous conflict with the United States government. The law firm was another. But those days are gone."

What about the fracture with close colleagues at WikiLeaks? "No!" he practically shouts. But Domscheit-Berg got so fed up with Assange that he quit, didn't he? "No, no, no, no, no. Domscheit-Berg had a minor role within WikiLeaks, and he was suspended by me on 25 August 2010. Suspended." Well, that's my point— here was somebody else with whom Assange fell out. "Be serious here! Seriously— my God. What we are talking about here in our work is the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people— hundreds of thousands— that we have exposed and documented. And your question is about, did we suspend someone back in 2010?" My point was that there is a theme of his relationships turning sour. "There is not!" he shouts.

I don't blame Assange for getting angry. *[Nor do I. By this point it was evidently clear to Assange that The Guardian was up to its old tricks.. --A.B.]* As he sees it, he's working tirelessly to expose state secrecy and save us all from tyranny. He has paid for it with his freedom, and fears for his life. Isn't it obvious that shadowy security forces are trying to make him look either mad or bad, to discredit WikiLeaks? If that's true, then his flaws are either fabricated, or neither here nor there. But the messianic grandiosity of his self-justification is a little disconcerting. *[Expressing anger at The Guardian's falsehoods and insinuations does not constitute "messianic grandiosity" --A.B.]*

I ask if he has considered the possibility that he might live in this embassy for the rest of his life. "I've considered the possibility. But it sure beats supermax [maximum

security prison]." Does he worry about his mental health? "Only that it is nice to go for a walk in the woods, and it's important— because I have to look after so many people— that I am close to the peak of my performance at all times, because we are involved in an adversarial conflict and any misjudgment will be seized upon." Does he ever try to work out whether he is being paranoid? "Yes. I have a lot of experience. I mean, I have 22 years of experience." He'd rather not say to whom he turns for emotional support, "because we are in an adversarial conflict", but he misses his family the most. His voice slows and drops again.

"The situation is, er, the communication situation is difficult. Some of them have had to change their names, move location. Because they have suffered death threats, trying to get at me. There have been explicit proposals through US rightwing groups to target my son, for example, to get at me. The rest of the family, having seen that, has taken precautions in response." But it has all been worth it, he says, because of what he's achieved.

"Changes in electoral outcomes, contributions to revolutions in the Middle East, and the knowledge that we have contributed towards the Iraqi people and the Afghan people. And also the end of the Iraq war, which we had an important contribution towards. You can look that up. It's to do with the circumstances under which immunity was refused to US troops at the end of 2011. The documents we'd published directly were cited by Iraqis as a reason for discontinuing the immunity. And the US said it would refuse to stay without continued immunity."

Assange says he can't say anything about the allegations of rape and sexual assault for legal reasons, but he predicts that the extradition will be dropped. The grounds for his confidence are not clear, because in the next breath he adds: "Sweden refuses to behave like a reasonable state. It refuses to give a guarantee that I won't be extradited to the US." But Sweden says the decision lies with the courts, not the government. "That is not true," he snaps. "It is absolutely false. **The government has the final say.**" If he's right [*he is --A.B.*], and it really is as unequivocal as that, why all the legal confusion? "Because there are enormous powers at play," he says, heavy with exasperation. "Controversy is a result of people trying to shift political opinion one way or another."

And so his surreal fugitive existence continues, imprisoned in a tiny piece of Ecuador in Knightsbridge. He has a special ultraviolet lamp to compensate for the lack of sunlight, but uses it "with great trepidation", having burned himself the first time he tried it. His assistant, who may or may not be his girlfriend— she has been reported as such, but denies it when I check— is a constant presence, and **by his account WikiLeaks continues to thrive. Reports that it has basically imploded, undone by the dramas and rows surrounding its editor-in-chief, are dismissed as yet more smears. The organisation will have published more than a million leaks this year, he says, and will publish "considerably more" in 2013.** I'm pretty sure he has found a way to get rid of his electronic tag, because when I ask, he stares with a faint gnomish smile. "Umm... I'd prefer not to comment."

Assange has been called a lot of things— a terrorist, a visionary, a rapist, a freedom warrior. At moments he reminds me of a charismatic cult leader but, given his current predicament, it's hardly surprising if loyalty counts more than critical distance in his world. The only thing I could say with confidence is that he is a control freak. The persona he most frequently ascribes to himself is "gentleman", a curiously courtly term for a cypher-punk to choose, so I ask him to explain.

"What is a gentleman? I suppose it's, you know, a nice section of Australian culture that perhaps wouldn't be recognised in thieving metropolises like London. The importance of being honourable, and keeping your word, and acting like a gentleman. It's someone who has the courage of their convictions, who doesn't bow to pressure, who doesn't exploit people who are weaker than they are. Who acts in an honourable way."

Does that describe him? "No, but it describes an ideal I believe men should strive for."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2012/dec/07/julian-assange-fugitive-interview>

From Assange to Kejriwal: Understanding media hostility

Venky Vembu
First Post (India)
Dec 10, 2012

There was a time, not long ago, when Arvind Kejriwal was being billed as the 'Julian Assange of India'. Perhaps this was born of the sense that Kejriwal's record of launching high-decibel 'exposes' of alleged corruption, which were lapped up by the media, echoed Assange's periodic WikiLeaks exposes of US cables that chronicled in merciless detail the diplomats' observations on the ways of the world, and the shadowy side to American and foreign governments' dealings.

Today, however, for all their vastly different agendas, approaches and life circumstances, Assange and Kejriwal are united by other common strands: they have both become targets of political vendetta; and, somewhat paradoxically, they have both become victims of a creeping 'expose fatigue'. By another curious coincidence, although both Kejriwal and Assange still retain enormous goodwill among large sections of the people, their relationship with the media, which once soared on the strength of symbiosis, have become strained, even borderline hostile.

The hostility of the media is doubly curious because at one point the media fed off Assange's scoops and Kejriwal's recycled exposes, which worked to amplify the exposes and simultaneously profited from the relationship. The media also ostensibly shares Assange's and Kejriwal's commitment to transparency and freedom of information— and exposure of governmental wrongdoing; which is why their lack of sympathy for their causes is striking.

Today, Kejriwal has reinvented himself as a politician has floated his own party— and operates openly. In that sense, he is considerably better off than Assange, who has for six months now remains holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has sought refuge to escape likely arrest (on rape charges in Sweden) and possible extradition to Sweden, and then on to the US (where he is wanted on rather more serious charges of espionage).

WikiLeaks hasn't released any sensational documents in recent times, so it's been rather quiet on that front. But with Kejriwal, it's come to a stage where his breathless accounts of crony capitalism and political corruption have run out of media steam. In recent

days, Kejriwal has taken to brandishing a slip of paper and reading out what he says are the numbered Swiss bank accounts of the Ambani brothers, but the story hasn't gained much traction in the media.

How does one explain the change in the media narrative in respect of both Assange and Kejriwal, from a point where they were hailed as courageous whistleblowers to, in some cases, borderline media contempt for both of them?

Writing in *The Guardian* a while ago, columnist Glenn Greenwald flagged off several reasons to account for what he called the “bizarre, blinding media contempt” for Assange. More than a few of those could apply with the media's relationship with Kejriwal as well.

For instance, **Greenwald reckons that one obvious reason why the media turned against Assange was the consideration of competition: “the resentment generated by watching someone outside their profession generate more critical scoops... than all other media outlets combined.”**

In Kejriwal's case too, virtually every expose by Kejriwal has also exposed the media's failure to follow up on material that they themselves had, in some cases, first made available. While the media is right to point out that Kejriwal is merely reheating old charges and serving them, the fact is that in virtually every case, they had failed to connect the dots and trace them to their political roots.

Greenwald also cites other, subtler reason to account for why the media resents Assange. “Many journalists (and liberals) like to wear the costume of outsider-insurgent, but are, at their core, devoted institutionalists... and thus resent those (like Assange) who actually and deliberately place themselves outside of it. **By putting his own liberty and security at risk to oppose the world's most powerful factions, Assange has clearly demonstrated what happens to real adversarial dissidents and insurgents— they're persecuted, demonized, and threatened, not befriended by and invited to parties within the halls of imperial power— and he thus causes many journalists to stand revealed as posers, servants to power, and courtiers.”**

Those are searing sentiments that could apply with equal ferocity to the media in Kejriwal's case as well. The media, which ought, by its very nature, to keep its distance from power— and have an objective eye, and even play an adversarial role, as an outsider— has become too entrenched in the political system to be truly objective. And as was revealed most famously in the Niira Radia tapes, the media's proximity to power has, in some cases, caused them to become “players” themselves, so much so that even when they stumbled on the faultlines of political corruption, their combative, adversarial instincts had become so deadened from being “on the inside” that they failed to connect the dots.

Despite being a political insider today, Kejriwal's idiom and politics makes him a rank outsider; in contrast to him, savvy media stars seem like consummate political players. Which is why although he thrived on media attention for a while, Kejriwal has repeatedly questioned the media's affliction of short-term memory. And whenever he is asked why he doesn't follow-up on his exposes, he flings the question right back at the media: “But that's what your job was intended to be: to follow up.”

It's hard to see Assange change his life circumstances in any material way unless powerful governments that are out to get him ease up on their vendetta. For now, if he so much as steps outside the Ecuadorean embassy in London— much less go for that walk in the woods that he yearns for— he risks being arrested. In that sense, his contentious relationship with the media doesn't look like it will get any better.

With Kejriwal, though, one of two things could happen: the considerations of electoral politics could perhaps blunt his idealism over time, in which case, he too could become a “player”— and therefore non-threatening to the media. Alternatively, if his political movement fails, he could opt out and become the outsider once more, battering away at the citadels of power. In that case, the media which thrives in the hothouse of power politics, will continue to have an adversarial relationship with him.

<http://www.firstpost.com/politics/from-assange-to-kejriwal-understanding-media-hostility-552129.html>

Assange is still holed up...

Phillip Knightley
Khaleej Times
10 December 2012

It is necessary to return to the subject of Julian Assange. The main reason is that he is in danger of being forgotten.

For new readers beginning here, Julian, the founder of WikiLeaks, is holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London where he sought asylum to avoid extradition to Sweden where the authorities want to question him on allegations of a sexual nature.

I have not seen anywhere an adequate description of his living conditions in the embassy. The embassy is a small building in Knightsbridge, near the fashionable store of Harrods. Because of its high profile guest it has a police guard at every entrance and a police command post in a bus parked opposite. The British authorities have made it clear that if Assange sets so much as his foot outside the embassy he will be instantly arrested and packed off to Sweden under armed guard.

This is a small working embassy. It has managed to provide one room about 15 feet by twelve feet for Assange to live and work in. He eats and sleeps there. It has little natural light so he looks pale and thinner than he was a few months ago. He presents a confident, optimistic front to visitors but the strain of constant confinement must be telling on him. There have been reports that he has a chronic breathing problem. He keeps busy running WikiLeaks, fighting legal actions and planning for his and WikiLeaks's future. In one way it is worse than imprisonment, for there is no telling when it will end.

All right then. Why doesn't Assange end it himself? Why doesn't he hand himself over to the Swedish authorities and return to Sweden and fight the allegations against him. Not so simple. Assange has every reason to fear that once they got their hands on him,

Swedish authorities would turn him over to the US. The evidence that the US seeks to extradite and prosecute Assange is substantial.

The US Justice Department has convened an active grand jury to see whether Assange has violated the Espionage Act of 1917. Key senators have publicly called for his prosecution under that Act. Prominent figures from both parties have called Assange a terrorist, called for his imprisonment for life and even his assassination.

Sweden's own reputation is not too good. In 2006, a UN ruling found Sweden in violation of the global ban on torture for helping the CIA render two suspected terrorists to Egypt where they were tortured. The men, both asylum-seekers in Sweden, were eventually found to be innocent of any terrorist connection and received compensation from the Swedish government.

Somehow or another the British government has to be persuaded to use its common sense and end this useless confrontation. Assange has suffered enough.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorschoice&xfile=/data/editorschoice/2012/December/editorschoice_December8.xml

Assange looks to contest Senate election

*Philip Dorling
The Age
December 13, 2012*

WIKILEAKS publisher Julian Assange has confirmed his intention to run as a Senate candidate in the 2013 federal election and will announce the formation of a WikiLeaks political party early next year.

Nearly six months after he sought political asylum in Ecuador's London embassy, Mr Assange doesn't expect his circumstances to change soon. Although he thinks it "inevitable" that the United States government will eventually drop its espionage investigation into WikiLeaks, he fears such an outcome may be "several years away".

In an interview with Fairfax Media, Mr Assange suggested the court martial of alleged WikiLeaks source, US Army Private Bradley Manning, now scheduled for March, would reveal "details ... about how [US prosecutors] may have framed a case for conspiracy between ... Manning and myself."

Mr Assange said plans to register an Australian WikiLeaks party were "significantly advanced". He indicated he would be a Senate candidate, and added that "a number of very worthy people admired by the Australian public" have indicated their availability to stand for election on a party ticket.

Mr Assange said he is able to fulfil the requirements to register as an overseas elector in either New South Wales or Victoria and that he will shortly take a "strategic decision" about which state he would be a Senate candidate for.

Mr Assange's biological father, John Shipton, has co-ordinated preparations for the formation of a WikiLeaks party, and a draft of the party's constitution has been subjected to legal review.

Registration of the party with the Australian Electoral Commission would require confirmation of 500 members who are listed on the electoral roll. Mr Assange hopes that WikiLeaks' internet presence, which includes a Twitter account with nearly 1.7 million followers and a Facebook page with more than 2.1 million "likes", and the formation of "friends of WikiLeaks" groups would mobilise Australian supporters.

He said a WikiLeaks party would advance WikiLeaks' objectives of promoting openness in government and politics, and it would combat growing intrusions on individual privacy.

If Mr Assange were elected but he was unable to return to Australia to take up his position, a nominee would occupy a Senate seat.

Mr Assange said he had been "quite encouraged" by series of published polls through the past two years that showed support for WikiLeaks had remained "consistently high".

Opinion polls this year by UMR Research, the company the Labor Party uses for its internal polling, have suggested that Mr Assange could be a competitive Senate candidate in either NSW or Victoria, most likely fighting it out with the Australian Greens for the last of six seats up for grabs in each state in a half-Senate election.

It is understood Mr Assange has consulted WikiLeaks supporters, including several prominent journalists and legal figures, since he indicated his intention to explore a Senate candidacy eight months ago.

Mr Assange believes "the building of political opposition to the persecution of a media organisation" will lead the US Department of Justice to drop its espionage investigation.

www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/assange-looks-to-contest-senate-election-20121212-2ba43.html

Julian Assange: The Fugitive

*Philip Dorling
The Age
December 13, 2012*

JULIAN Assange remains holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy in London. By any assessment his circumstances are extraordinary.

He has been granted diplomatic asylum on the grounds he is at risk of extradition to the US to face conspiracy or other charges arising from WikiLeaks obtaining thousands

of secret US military and diplomatic reports leaked by US Army soldier Bradley Manning.

But Assange can't leave the embassy. British police are waiting outside to arrest him on the spot so he can be extradited to Sweden to face questioning about allegations of sexual assault. He remains convinced extradition to Sweden would facilitate his eventual extradition to the US.

So Assange has been cooped up in the embassy for six months. It's a Mexican, or rather an Ecuadorean stand-off and he doesn't envisage going anywhere soon. When interviewed by Fairfax Media this week, Assange was fairly nonchalant about his circumstances, saying "one gets used to things, **other people are in much harsher conditions than I am**" and it was "**certainly preferable to solitary confinement in Sweden or the United States**".

But Assange clearly finds his circumstances oppressive. He complains about the British police's close surveillance of the embassy and their practice of seeking names and addresses of people who visit him. "**They're squatting on the front door demanding the identity of everyone who comes in; it's an outrageous violation of diplomatic practice,**" he says.

He also acknowledges he has to take "great precaution and diligence" preserving the confidentiality of his work in a very confined and probably quite transparent environment.

All this is very different from the expansive and optimistic atmosphere in Stockholm, from where he e-mailed me on the evening of Sunday, August 22, 2010, the day after the Australian federal election.

Australian politics was hanging in the balance. Julia Gillard's Labor government had endured a severe reversal, suffering a 5 per cent swing in the primary vote and losing 11 seats, although Tony Abbott's Coalition looked like it would fall short of a parliamentary majority. Both sides were already contemplating negotiations with the clutch of independents to determine who would sit on the Treasury benches in the new parliament.

In this context, Assange's e-mail read: "I'm not sure how this can be conveyed, gently, but we are sitting on documents of significant moment pertaining to the activities of Labor leaders, their cronies and their security staff; behaviour that would be perceived by the public to be close to, or actually, treasonous. We would like to hear clear signals about why we should or should not release these now. Which government will protect the free press and whistle-blowers more?"

In the previous month WikiLeaks had attracted huge international attention as it published tens of thousands of secret US military reports on the war in Afghanistan, winning public plaudits but also attracting strident condemnation from the US government.

During the Australian election campaign both the Labor government and Coalition opposition attacked WikiLeaks as "grossly irresponsible" and openly canvassed revoking Assange's Australian passport on national security grounds.

It was rumoured WikiLeaks had more material, possibly thousands of classified US diplomatic cables that could be more politically significant, indeed explosive, than the so-called Afghan war logs.

Assange's e-mail on that Sunday evening suggested he might drop a bombshell into the finely balanced Australian political scene. Then near the peak of his global fame, he was keen to be a player in Australian politics. However, he was also thinking hard about what the effect would be. What would the consequences be of damaging the standing of the battered Labor government? Would that advance his own political agenda of campaigning against official secrecy and for increased government transparency?

As it happens, Assange decided against jump-starting the WikiLeaks' "Cablegate" release by dumping some 1400 secret US embassy reports on Australian politics, and foreign policy.

The reasons for this hesitation are not clear, although Assange's embroilment in sexual assault allegations in Sweden and his increasingly tense relations with his primary European media partner, The Guardian newspaper, were probably the main factors.

Whatever the reasoning, the Australian component of Cablegate was not released and published by Fairfax Media until early December 2010, some seven weeks after Prime Minister Gillard had negotiated the parliamentary majority that keeps her government in office.

Nonetheless, it's an interesting historical "what if" to consider what might have been the political impact if WikiLeaks had released the US embassy cables during the tightly contested 2010 election campaign or the negotiations that followed the poll.

Two years on, Assange is still keenly interested in Australian politics and perhaps more determined than ever— despite his complex and problematic circumstances— to advance his political agenda, this time by direct entry into electoral politics. Of course, many would argue the WikiLeaks publisher is in no position to contemplate running for public office.

In Canberra, senior government officials are openly dismissive of WikiLeaks, saying the transparency group is "broken" and "effectively moribund" and Assange has no alternative other than to eventually surrender himself and be put on a plane to Stockholm.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr publicly insists Assange is entitled to the same "consular assistance" available to other Australians in legal difficulties overseas. **Privately, however, at least two senior federal Labor ministers have bluntly dismissed Assange as "an alleged rapist trying to avoid justice".**

But the WikiLeaks chief advances a much more positive assessment of his circumstances, dismissing critics including Carr as "self-interested apologists for the US" and arguing WikiLeaks' and his own "trajectory over the past four months [have] been increasingly positive".

In defence of WikiLeaks' continuing relevance he points out his group continues to publish confidential material, with **more than 1 million e-mails and documents in the course of this year, including major disclosures from the private intelligence company Stratfor and confidential Syrian government emails.**

He also argues that considerable resources have been devoted to, and progress made in working around, the financial embargo imposed on WikiLeaks by major credit card and money transfer corporations.

However, it's Assange's continuing interest in playing a political role in Australia that may prove to be the main focus for him and WikiLeaks in 2013....

In an interview in October, Shipton hinted Assange may run for a Senate seat in NSW, saying his son would make a particularly good foil for Foreign Minister Carr, who will also be contesting the 2013 election. "I think Julian shows considerable skill in putting together a diplomatic sentence and would be a good opponent for Mr Carr," Shipton said.

Such a contest may provide interesting theatre, and Assange has indicated he'd be keen to debate with Gillard or Carr.

However, the practical reality is Assange would most likely be in direct competition with the Australian Greens for the last of six seats up for grabs in either NSW or Victoria in a half-Senate election. His real opponents may be Greens Senate candidates Cate Faehrmann in NSW or Janet Rice in Victoria.

Former SBS journalist Mary Kostakidis, a strong WikiLeaks supporter not directly involved in preparations to form the new party, says Assange could contribute much to the debate in a federal election campaign. "A Senate campaign could highlight the issues— after all, scrutiny, transparency and accountability are the remit of the Senate," she says.

"I think he would have widespread support in the cyber community, which is not just populated by the young. **He has a forensic mind, is driven by a passion for truth and justice and attracts people around him who are similarly motivated. He is resourceful and resilient. He doesn't lack perseverance.**"

That said, there will also be a close focus on whoever is selected as the No. 2 WikiLeaks candidate on a Senate ticket, because that person would presumably be the most likely nominee if Assange did secure a Senate quota but was unable to take his seat.

The other potential wild card is whether Assange and WikiLeaks are able to publish any new revelations that would have a political impact on the election campaign.

Assange says he anticipates publishing more confidential material next year than the 1 million e-mails and documents released by WikiLeaks in 2012. He may well be keeping some powder dry for the electoral contest ahead and may yet deliver another bombshell.

Most political commentators will no doubt dismiss Assange's Senate campaign as another quixotic stunt by a figure on the margins of Australian politics. But it may be that he will have a significant impact on the future make-up of the Australian Senate. After all, there can be no doubt that Julian Assange continues to surprise.

www.theage.com.au/world/julian-assange-the-fugitive-20121212-2b9r4.html#ixzz2ExSgPc7j

French political leader J.L. Mélenchon on J. Assange

*Posted by Irien
WL Press
December 14, 2012*

After visiting Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy on December 6th, J.L. Mélenchon has posted his feelings on his blog. Here is a summary of what he writes (a summary, not a full translation).

About the issue between Ecuador and UK:

The British have abandoned the idea of going into the embassy to take J. Assange by force, a silly thing that would have dishonored them. More, this would have been a dangerous precedent for all the other embassies in the world. Mr. Mélenchon explains that he is here to support the Ecuadorians, who have to withstand a big shock, while those who pretend usually protect human rights and freedom of press remain this time indifferent. The Ecuadorians have a reasonable position, and don't seek the arm wrestling at the contrary of the other.

About the reaction of traditional press:

Mr Mélenchon is surprised by the silence of Main Stream Media like «Le Monde» on this issue. Le Monde took advantage of the publication of the cables, and now, they carefully avoid to write about the Assange case. The protection of the sources in this kind of media means nothing. But, in this case, it is also possible that US has put pressure on them. No help will come from them: They will not investigate at all on the alleged rape case, it would imply to do serious work and extensive research. Just forget it. But, at least, they could say that Assange is still not charged of anything. That he has gone from Sweden with the authorization of authorities. That he is agree to return to Sweden to face charges if Swedish government assures that they will not extradite him to US.

About Sweden and US:

Mr Assange is perfectly right to be mistrustful, as Sweden has already allowed US to arrest on its soil an Egyptian who was then given to his country and tortured. US themselves commit torture, as in the Manning case. Those who don't believe that possible by the US should wonder why Guantanamo is still active. The situation could unblock if Sweden accepted to give the assurance that they will not extradite Assange to the US. Refusing to do that, it proves that the alleged rape is not the real problem.
It looks like if Sweden wanted to draw him into a trap.

About Julian Assange himself:

Jean Luc Mélenchon says that Assange seems in good health, at least in the better health possible according to the difficult circumstances. He insists on the feeling of empathy and sympathy between him and J. Assange. He explains that perhaps he was looking at him too intensely, whereas he didn't want to be intrusive, because he didn't know how to express, without words and without being too melodramatic, all the human solidarity that he felt. **He says that he is impressed by the difference between the single man that he sees and the enormity of the challenge that the man has launched with his actions. The US will never let him in peace.** Mr Assange must not be forgotten, because oblivion would give impunity to those who want to defeat him.

He needs to be protected by the people, by us all, and being candidate to Australian elections can be one of the ways to obtain this protection.

Read more in French: <http://www.jean-luc-melenchon.fr/2012/12/11/outrage-en-depit-des-esperances-mediaticques-le-pen-fait-pschitt/#article3>

<http://wikileaks-press.org/support-french-political-leader-jl-melenchon-about-j-assange/>



Nobel Peace Prize Mairead Maguire joins the vigil in support of Julian Assange, London 13 December 2012

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/64728140@N02/8270107197/in/photostream>

WikiLeaks founder eyes window of opportunity in Australian Senate bid

*Philip Dorling
The Age
December 20, 2012*

JULIAN Assange lives in his own little bit of Ecuador. For the past six months he has been confined to that country's London embassy where he has been granted political asylum.

He has sought refuge in this building just a stone's throw from Harrods because he is at risk of extradition to the United States to face conspiracy or other charges arising from WikiLeaks obtaining thousands of secret US military and diplomatic reports leaked by US Army soldier Bradley Manning.

Inside the embassy, which is little more than a small apartment in the central London suburb of Knightsbridge, the WikiLeaks chief spends his days in a small room of about 20 square metres.

The furnishing is not luxurious: a small conference table, a few chairs, a television, a notice board covered in Post-it notes, a bookshelf, a bed, an exercise treadmill, a sun lamp and, of course, several laptops. There is just one large window with heavy curtains preventing people from peering inside. Mr Assange shares a kitchen with the embassy staff, and has made progress in Spanish.

There is no inclination to venture outside the embassy as British police are on guard 24 hours a day, waiting to arrest him so he can be extradited to Sweden to face questioning about sexual assault allegations.

Mr Assange is convinced extradition to Sweden would facilitate his extradition to the US but is confident the Swedish police inquiry will be dropped. "The matters in Sweden are not serious," he said. "However, the US case, the grand jury espionage investigation, is a very serious matter. **Getting the US investigation dropped, that is our number-one priority. Otherwise I'll be watching my back for the next 30 years.**"

Mr Assange dismissed reports that he was suffering from health problems due to his confinement, telling Fairfax he had "no pressing health issues".

However, Geoffrey Robertson, barrister and Assange's former legal representative, told ABC TV that after visiting him he thought Mr Assange had "lost a bit of weight... [and] could do with some sunlight".

Speaking to Fairfax, Mr Assange highlighted WikiLeaks' efforts to "work around" the financial embargo imposed on the transparency group by major credit card companies and electronic funds transfer agencies over the past two years.

He said the refusal of Visa, MasterCard, American Express and other companies to process direct donations amounted to an "extraterritorial, extrajudicial financial death penalty" that had robbed WikiLeaks of 95 per cent of the revenue stream it had enjoyed in late 2010. **Mr Assange pointed out that some 40 per cent of the transparency group's funding still came from the US despite the hostility of the US government.**

"We're fighting back, we've had some recent victories including in regard to tax deductibility for donations in the European Union," he said. "We hope that new initiatives in the US will enable us to raise \$1 million to cover our 2013 expenses."

This week a new US media advocacy group, the Freedom of the Press Foundation, announced it would process credit card donations to WikiLeaks, the long established National Security Archive and two other groups devoted to "journalism ... dedicated to transparency and accountability."

Mr Assange said he hoped to raise \$US 1 million (\$A948,900) in a new fund-raising campaign.

Speaking in advance of a planned public address from the balcony of Ecuador's London embassy on Thursday evening (6am Friday, Melbourne time), Mr Assange expressed confidence that his transparency group's stocks were improving as he anticipates a run for a Senate seat in Australia's 2013 federal election. "In Australia our support base has continued to grow, our supporters have been increasingly active. I hope that increasing organisational strength will flow into the election campaign."

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/wikileaks-founder-eyes-window-of-opportunity-in-australian-senate-bid-20121219-2bn8s.html>

SvD. 20 december 2012



[Note the facial expression. --A.B.]

Assange hyllade Pirate Bay-grundare

Julian Assange har åter framträtt från balkongen på Ecuadors ambassad i London. I kväll höll han tal inför sina anhängare.

Soldaten Bradley Manning, som läckt material om amerikanska övergrepp i Irak, var en av de "samvetsfångar" som nämndes när Wikileaks grundare Julian Assange på torsdagskvällen höll tal från Ecuadors ambassad i London.

Han hyllade också Pirate Bays grundare Gottfrid Svartholm Warg, dömd för upphovsrättsbrott i Sverige och misstänkt för bland annat dataintrång.

Assange-anhängare skanderade hyllningar utanför.

Assange har beviljats asyl i Ecuador, men kan inte lämna beskickningen utan att riskera att gripas. Han är misstänkt för sexövergrepp i Sverige och flydde till Ecuadors ambassad för att slippa bli utlämnad.

Condon's WikiLeaks Movie Gets New Title, 'Downton Abbey' Actor

Angie Han
Slash Film
December 20th, 2012

It seems like every studio in Hollywood is rushing to get a Julian Assange/WikiLeaks movie out there, but one of the first out of the gate will be from Bill Condon. As the film hurtles toward a January start date, it's picked up a new title and a new star.

Downton Abbey actor Dan Stevens has just signed on for the film, which is now going by the title *The Man Who Sold the World*. Stevens joins a hot cast that also includes Alicia Vikander (Anna Karenina), Daniel Brühl (Inglourious Basterds), and Benedict Cumberbatch as Assange.

The Film Stage got the scoop on the title from unnamed sources. Music lovers will recognize *The Man Who Sold the World* as the name of a David Bowie tune, although the two don't seem to have much to do with each other.

The script by Josh Singer (*The West Wing*) draws from two primary sources: *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War On Secrecy* by journalists David Leigh and Luke Harding, and *Inside WikiLeaks: My Time With Julian Assange at the World's Most Dangerous Website*, by Assange's former right-hand [Assange denies that --A.B.] man Daniel Domscheit-Berg. **The film will reportedly portray Assange as an idealist who becomes corrupted by power** — so probably not a character assassination piece, but not exactly a love letter, either.

According to *Variety*, Stevens will play a hacker pal of Domscheit-Berg's (Brühl) who joins the WikiLeaks team. While Stevens is best known for his role on ITV's *Downton Abbey*, he recently revealed that he'd be sitting out the upcoming fourth season. Perhaps he has enough keeping him busy already. He currently stars opposite Jessica Chastain and David Strathairn in Broadway's *The Heiress*, and is producing and starring in the indie drama *Summer in February* next year.

The Man Who Sold the World has not announced a release date, but we can probably look for it to hit around the end of 2013 or sometime in 2014.

www.slashfilm.com/bill-condons-wikileaks-movie-gets-new-title-downton-abbey-actor

Swedish military reportedly shuts down pro-WikiLeaks transparency websites

Submitted by GMason
WL Central
2012-12-22

Earlier this month, the pro-WikiLeaks Swedish transparency websites Under Mattan and Corruptio were shut down by their web host, allegedly at the request of Sweden's armed forces. Without prior warning or explanation, the ISP Blog.com pulled the plug on Under Mattan (translation: "Under the Rug") **soon after the site posted documents that indicated Swedish military involvement in the Assange case, and that also showed possible allegiances between Sweden's media and armed forces in connection with the Assange investigation.**

One source apparently affiliated with Under Mattan stated that, when the site's owners tried to contact Blog.com after the shutdown, "The people at the ISP Blog.com refuse[d] to take our calls or reply to our inquiries." However, Crikey now reports that, according to Under Mattan, the ISP has stated that it took down the site at the behest of the Swedish Army's Special Intelligence unit.

Active for 15 months, the website Under Mattan published copious amounts of Swedish government documents obtained via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Recently, many of the published files addressed Sweden's handling of the investigation of WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange. Under Mattan released communications supporting the Assange legal team's assertions that Swedish prosecutors had repeatedly refused attempts by Assange's lawyers to have the WikiLeaks publisher interviewed in Sweden regarding sexual assault allegations. The site had also published the police interrogations relating to the investigation, as well as numerous files that were unavailable elsewhere on the internet. According to Rixstep, Under Mattan had recently published "transcripts of SMS messages to and from the office of {Swedish prosecutor} Marianne Ny that might have been the last straw".

Moreover, before the takedown, the website allegedly revealed "suspicious and possible criminal activity by Swedish intelligence and the Swedish... foreign affairs department". Rixstep's source at Under Mattan stated that those at the site had discovered that the Swedish government had censored it "for at least a half year through Swedish intel. Our estimation is that throttling access to the site eliminated between 50% and 90% of all traffic. The site was shut down a couple of days after this information was made public." This source concluded that the Swedish government—including its military intelligence agency and its foreign office—had the site closed, as these agencies "were... exposed in the documents uploaded immediately prior to the shutdown." A web tool that Under Mattan used to track its site traffic revealed that Sweden's parliament, military, national police, and court authority ranked among the transparency website's most frequent visitors.

In a press release after the shutdown, Under Mattan pointed out: "When websites and blogs in China, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are shut down by totalitarian regimes, the media often react with revulsion at such undemocratic measures...

"As we all know, censorship is common when dictatorships want to keep 'dangerous' information from the people— information that the dictatorships feel threatened by. The opposite of censorship is freedom of information. And many people believe we have freedom of information in Sweden.

"But our site Undermattan.com has just demonstrated that we have censorship in Sweden. Swedish authorities shut down our site and refuse to say why— just like they do in China."

This month Blog.com also reportedly closed down the Swedish leaks site Corruptio. Both Corruptio and Under Mattan published files on Sweden's military and on the country's engagement in Afghanistan.

Under Mattan has issued the following statement:

"Press Statement from 'Under Mattan'

"Swedish Government Behind Shutdown of Pro-Assange Undermattan.com

"Blog.com International shut down the famous Swedish free political investigative website and blog <http://undermattan.com> without any explanation or prior notice.

"The site went dark shortly after it revealed the Swedish army's involvement and their possible connection to the Swedish media in the Julian Assange case.

"The shutdown came as the above topic was being discussed at the Flashback forum. Independent sources say the shutdown was carried out at the behest of Swedish authorities acting on behalf of the government.

"Similar behaviour by Swedish authorities had been observed and documented in both 2011 and 2012.

"The shutdown was carried out in a manner normally associated with Middle Eastern regimes— without prior notice and in the middle of the night. Now no one is willing to answer questions or to reveal the reasons for the action.

"So far there have been no arrests.

"Under Mattan hosts a large amount of public information obtained through freedom of information requests regarding the Swedish government's handling of the Julian Assange case. The site had amongst other things published documents related to Anna Ardin, Julian Assange, Björn Hurtig, Erika Leijnefors, Marianne Ny and Sofia Wilén, many of which had not been found elsewhere on the web.

"Before the shutdown, the website also revealed some suspicious and possibly criminal activity by Swedish intelligence and the Swedish foreign office where minister for foreign affairs Carl Bildt is in charge."

Rixstep reported that the individuals affiliated with Under Mattan "continue to work behind the scenes".

<http://wlccentral.org/node/2801>

Timeline: the Australian government's betrayal of Julian #Assange

Support Assange & WikiLeaks Coalition (Australia)
22 December, 2012

The existence of a US criminal investigation into the activities of WikiLeaks and its founder, Australian citizen Julian Assange, has been a matter of public record since December 2010, and has been the source of global public outrage.

As well as punishing a pioneering journalist who has revealed evidence of war crimes, corruption and human rights abuses, a US prosecution of Assange would potentially criminalise all journalists who routinely publish leaked, accurate government documents.

However, the Australian government's standard response to concerns raised by fellow Australians has been to deny all knowledge of US intentions towards Assange. By claiming to have provided "consular assistance" in relation to the Swedish allegations against him, our government avoids answering questions about its failure to challenge the threat posed by the United States.

This deception and obfuscation is designed to conceal the betrayal of an Australian citizen whom our government has a duty to protect, along with a total disregard for the values of free speech and democracy which it purports to uphold.

The timeline on this page details our government's shameful conduct in relation to Assange, along with the evidence which refutes its position.

Please note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all the aspects of the legal case....

This timeline will be updated as the events unfold. Feel free to suggest amendments and additions via the comments box below.

28 November 2010: WikiLeaks began releasing over 251,000 US diplomatic cables. The cables reveal the extent to which Australian politics is influenced by the United States. Australian Labour Party (ALP) powerbrokers, Mark Arbib and Paul Howes, who were instrumental in the decision to oust Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, were revealed to be "protected" sources of US intelligence. A cable from the US Embassy in Canberra from June 2009, when Julia Gillard was still Deputy Prime Minister states, "Gillard recognizes that to become Prime Minister, she must move to the Center, and show her support for the Alliance with the United States."

29 November 2010: US Attorney-General, Eric Holder, announced "an active, ongoing criminal investigation" into WikiLeaks. The existence of a secret grand jury convened in Virginia, USA, for the purpose of indicting Julian Assange has been confirmed by the publication of subpoenas compelling witnesses to testify before it.

30 November 2010: Interpol issued a Red Notice for Assange in relation to sexual offences alleged to have taken place in Sweden. The Red Notice was issued despite UK police knowing of Assange's whereabouts.

2 December 2010: When US politicians and commentators were calling for Assange to be harmed and killed, Prime Minister Julia Gillard falsely claimed that Assange had acted illegally.

4 December 2010: Then Attorney-General, Robert McLelland, said that the Australian government had considered revoking Assange's passport, but decided to let him keep it so that he could be more easily monitored. McLelland said "We have also indicated that we will provide every assistance to United States law-enforcement authorities."

6 December 2010: A European arrest warrant was issued for Assange in relations to the Swedish allegations. The warrant was issued in order to extradite Assange to Sweden for questioning, not charge. To date, Assange has not been charged with any offence in any country.

7 December 2010: Assange voluntarily attended a police station in England and was arrested and taken into custody. He spent a week in solitary confinement before being released on bail.

26 January 2011: Fred Burton, the vice president of Stratfor, a private US intelligence-gathering company, wrote in an email which was subsequently leaked in February

2012: "Text Not for Pub. We have a sealed indictment on Assange. Pls protect." Burton is a former deputy chief of the counterterrorism division of the US State Department's Diplomatic Security Service, with close connections to Washington.

24 February 2011: After a legal challenge from Assange's lawyers, a UK Magistrates Court upheld Sweden's extradition warrant.

2 March 2011: Assange's lawyers lodged papers at the High Court of England and Wales challenging the Magistrates Court's ruling. After a hearing on 12 and 13 July 2011, the High Court reserved its judgment until 2 November 2011.

2 March 2011: Assange's lawyer, Jennifer Robinson, briefed Australian politicians in Canberra on the injustices inherent in the Swedish case against Assange, and the threat of US extradition.

2 November 2011: The High Court of England and Wales rejected Assange's appeal against extradition. Assange was released on bail pending a further appeal.

24 November 2011: Foreign Minister Rudd responded to a series of questions about the government's handling of Assange's case from Greens Senator Scott Ludlam. The responses suggested the Australian government had sought assurances from Sweden that Assange be accorded "due process" in December 2010 and January and February 2011, but that no further contact with the Swedish government had been made since. Rudd also said that the Australian government had "no formal advice of any grand jury investigation" against Assange.

3 December 2011: Cables released under FOI and reported in the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) showed that US officials had told the Australian Embassy in Washington that the investigation into WikiLeaks is "unprecedented in both its scale and nature". The cables showed that the Australian government did not object in principle to Assange's extradition to the US, they just asked to be forewarned of US plans.

5 December 2011: Assange was granted permission to appeal to the UK Supreme Court as his case was deemed to involve a point of law of general public importance.

19 December 2011: Seventy-three public figures including Phillip Adams AO, Mike Carlton, Andrew Denton, Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser AC CH and Professor Stuart Rees AM, wrote an open letter to then Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, conveying their concerns about US intentions towards Assange. The letter noted that a US prosecution of Assange would amount to "a serious assault on freedom of speech and the need for an unfettered, independent media", and urged Rudd to "convey clearly to the United States government Australia's concerns about any effort to manufacture charges against Mr Assange, or to use an unrelated criminal investigation as the basis for what may effectively be rendition".

29 February 2012: The Gillard government passed the Extradition and Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation Amendment Act which makes it easier for foreign governments to extradite people from Australia, and enables Australians to be prosecuted in Australia for crimes alleged to have been committed overseas. This means the Australian government could prosecute Assange if he was living in Australia and had been charged with a crime in the US. Before this Act, extradition for political offences was prohibited. Now extradition is possible for "any offence prescribed by regulations". This means Australians can be extradited for offences the

government has placed on a list contained in regulations, which are subject to far less Parliamentary oversight than provisions of Acts.

16 April 2012: Attorney-General, Nicola Roxon, appeared on ABC's Q&A and was asked how Australia could protect Assange from the United States. Roxon attempted to narrow the subsequent debate down to the question of whether Australia would extradite Assange if he returned to Australia, in order to avoid addressing the immediate threat of US extradition from Sweden. In relation to US intentions to prosecute Assange, Roxon said "so far all we have is assertions" and "there is nothing that is currently on foot". Roxon also claimed, "we have made our views very clearly known to the Americans", but would not reveal what those views were. However, her comment that "we have made very clear that we want all the proper process to apply", suggested her government is not opposed in principle to a US extradition.

28 May 2012: Roxon's claims on Q&A about making representations to the US were contradicted by cables from the US Embassy in Washington published under FOI, sent between 1 November 2010 and 31 January 2012. The SMH reported that the cables "do not contain any references to representations made by Australian diplomats to US officials concerning 'proper' extradition processes; only a request in December 2010 that Australia be forewarned of any extradition moves so as to better manage the public relations and media aspects ...". The SMH further reported that Roxon did have discussions with US Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and US Deputy Attorney-General James Cole, but these appear to have taken place after her appearance on Q&A to have made. The same cables report that "a broad range of possible charges are under consideration, including espionage and conspiracy".

30 May 2012 Foreign Minister Carr told a Senate estimates committee hearing: "We have no advice that the US has an intention to extradite Mr Assange ... nothing we have been told suggests that the US has such an intention."

30 May 2012: The UK Supreme Court dismissed Assange's appeal against extradition. However, Assange was granted two weeks to make an application to reopen the appeal after his counsel argued the judgments of the majority relied on an interpretation of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties which was not argued during the hearing.

May 2012: Roxon claimed in a letter to Assange's lawyer, Jennifer Robinson, that the Australian Government has "no information from the United States to indicate that it has laid, or is about to lay, any charges against Mr Assange". The same letter confirmed that the Australian government would not intervene if the US sought to extradite Assange from Sweden or the UK: "Australia would not expect to be a party to any extradition discussions that may take place between the United States and the United Kingdom or the United States and Sweden, as extradition is a matter of bilateral law enforcement cooperation."

30 May 2012: Foreign Minister Carr claimed "there has been no Australian who has received more consular assistance in a comparable period than Mr Assange".

31 May 2012: WikiLeaks issued a statement via Twitter responding to Foreign Minister Carr's claims about "consular assistance":

"Bob Carr hopes to manipulate the Australian public. In the last 12 months the

Australian government has provided no legal, financial or logistical assistance or advice to Mr. Assange, whatsoever. There is a reason that Bob Carr will not explain what he means by 'consular assistance'.

"In the last year it has meant sending DFAT minders to Assange's hearings the minders do not communicate their observations to Mr. Assange or his legal team. They do not even say hello. Their job is to provide the Minister of Foreign Affairs with a heads up, so he can better spin to the Australian public.

"Similarly, according to the SMH, when DFAT asked Washington for info on US extradition plans, it was only within the explicitly stated context of knowing prior to the media. Not knowing in time to assist Mr. Assange or with a view to assist Mr. Assange. But knowing with a view on how to manipulate the Australian public."

6 June 2012: A transcribed record of courtroom proceedings for alleged whistleblower, Private Bradley Manning, revealed that the FBI currently has a file on WikiLeaks that is "42,135 pages or 3,475 documents", excluding grand jury testimony. According to Michael Ratner, Assange's US lawyer, this is what the number allocated to the WikiLeaks Grand Jury means: "There's a Grand Jury currently sitting in Alexandria, Virginia and the Grand Jury's number— and its interesting the Grand Jury's number is 10 standing for the year it began, GJ which is Grand Jury and then 3793. Three is the Conspiracy Statute in the United States. 793 is the Espionage Statute. So what they're investigating is 3793: conspiracy to commit espionage."

14 June 2012: The UK Supreme Court rejected Assange's application to reopen the case making extradition to Sweden a near certainty.

18 June 2012: Foreign Minister Carr visited Libya to personally lobby for the release of Australian lawyer, Melinda Taylor, who had been detained there with three of her International Criminal Court Colleagues on accusations of spying and breaching Libyan national security.

19 June 2012: Ecuadorian foreign minister, Ricardo Patino, announced that Assange had entered the Ecuadorian Embassy in London seeking political asylum on the basis of his fear of persecution by the US government.

21 June 2012 A motion was passed in the Australian Senate calling on the Prime Minister to "[r]etract prejudicial statements regarding the illegality of Wikileaks publishing endeavours, found to be groundless by the Australian Federal Police, which have the potential to seriously jeopardise the potential for any fair trial or hearing for Mr. Assange". Prime Minister Gillard has so far failed to act on this motion.

20 June 2012: Foreign Minister Carr gave an interview on Lateline where he claimed "There has been no hint of an American interest" in prosecuting Assange. Asked whether he considers Assange to be a journalist, Carr replied: "I have not a view on that, I'd need to get a lawyer's advice on whether journalists have that immunity or whether we would stand ... subject to espionage legislation."

24 June 2012 Appearing on The Insiders, Carr claimed to have asked a "senior US official" if the US has plans to prosecute Assange. Carr said: "They haven't said they have plans to extradite him. They haven't been able to rule out that one corner of the American administration might not be considering it ...". Given this admission, the interviewer asked Carr why he could not just say to the US government: "this guy is an

Australian citizen, so keep your hands of him"? Carr replied, "That would be a position we'd take when we heard that the US had the remotest interest in touching him." Asked about whether Assange had acted illegally, as falsely claimed by PM Gillard, Carr said: "that's between the United States and Assange."

1 July 2012 The chairwoman of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Dianne Feinstein, renewed US calls for Julian Assange to be prosecuted for espionage in a written statement to the SMH Feinstein said: "I believe Mr Assange has knowingly obtained and disseminated classified information which could cause injury to the United States ... He has caused serious harm to US national security, and he should be prosecuted accordingly."

3 July 2012: Australian Lawyer Melinda Taylor was released from detention in Libya. Foreign Minister Carr welcomed "a swift end to Melinda Taylor's detention and the resolution of what has been a protracted diplomatic negotiation".

19 July 2012: the Australian government replied to a letter of 29 May 2012 from Assange's solicitor, Gareth Peirce, rejecting all of Ms Peirce's requests in relation to Assange. The Australian government refused to:

- seek an undertaking that Assange not be extradited to the US from Sweden;
- inquire why Sweden has not used the Mutual Legal Assistance program to question Assange in the UK;
- ask the Sweden authorities to grant Assange bail instead of holding him in custody;
- obtain undertakings from Sweden concerning prison detention, including undertakings in relation to access to visitors, computer etc;
- seek an undertaking from Sweden in relation to Assange serving any potential sentence in Australia under normal prisoner treaty transfer arrangements;
- object to continual adverse public comments from senior members of the Swedish government which prejudice Assange's chance of a fair trial;
- negotiate safe passage for Assange to Australia after leaving Sweden, should he be sent there;
- ask the US not to prosecute Assange, saying this would be interference in the legal processes of the US;
- seek an undertaking from the US that if Assange was extradited, he would be granted bail;
- ask the US that, in the event of extradition trial and conviction in the USA, Assange could serve the sentence in Australia under normal prisoner treaty transfer arrangements;
- ask the US for an undertaking that Assange not be placed under special administrative measures, and be permitted free confidential access to his lawyers and visitors pending trial, as well as to a computer and necessary work/case requirements;
- ask the US for prejudicial statements by US officials, including the Vice-President, to be retracted;
- ask the US for an undertaking that individuals associated with WikiLeaks or Assange not be further targeted or harassed by FBI agents;
- seek an undertaking from the UK that Assange would not be surrendered to the US from the UK;
- seek an undertaking from the UK that if extradited to another country, the UK would gain diplomatic assurances that Assange would be returned to Australia and not be surrendered to any other country;
- seek an undertaking that the UK government provide safe passage to Australia, should Assange be able to leave the UK.

15 August 2012: UK authorities threatened to breach international law and violate the sovereignty of Ecuador by threatening to invade the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in order to arrest Assange.

16 August 2012: The government of Ecuador found that Assange has a well-founded fear of political persecution and he became the first Australian to be granted political asylum by another state. Foreign Minister, Ricardo Patino, delivered a statement which noted: "That there is strong evidence of retaliation by the country or countries that produced the information disclosed by Mr. Assange, retaliation that may endanger his safety, integrity, and even his life; ... That Ecuadorian authorities are certain of the possibility that Mr. Assange could be extradited to a third country outside the European Union without proper guarantees for their safety and personal integrity", and in relation to Australia, "Ecuador has observed that Mr. Assange lacks the protection and assistance that should be received from the State of which he is a citizen".

17 August 2012 The SMH described how cables from the Australian Embassy in Washington, published under FOI, "reported the existence of the grand jury as a matter of fact" and show that "Australian diplomats expect that any charges against Assange would be carefully drawn in an effort to avoid conflict with the First Amendment free speech provisions of the US constitution ...". The SMH reported, "The cables also show that the Australian government considers the prospect of extradition sufficiently likely that, on direction from Canberra, Mr Beazley sought high-level US advice on 'the direction and likely outcome of the investigation' and 'reiterated our request for early advice of any decision to indict or seek extradition of Mr Assange'." US responses to Australian representations were redacted from the cables on the grounds that publication would "cause damage to the international relations of the Commonwealth".

18 August 2012 Trade Minister Craig Emerson confirmed that the Australian embassy in Washington had been "getting prepared for the possibility of an extradition" of Assange, whilst claiming that "there's no evidence, no evidence that the United States is seeking to extradite Julian Assange".

20 August 2012: Foreign Minister Carr met with Ambassador of Egypt Omar Metwally in Canberra and personally raised the issue of Australian journalist, Austin G Mackell's, who had been charged with inciting illegal protests and effectively detained in Egypt since February 2012.

23 August 2012: Responding to criticism in the wake of Ecuador's decision to grant Assange asylum, Foreign Minister Carr again claimed "No other Australian has had more assistance than Mr Assange in a comparable time".

29 August 2012: The charges against Austin G Mackell were dropped, only a week after Foreign Minister Carr raised the issue with the Egyptian Ambassador.

31 August 2012: Austin G Mackell wrote, "If Carr wanted to help Assange, he could". Mackell took issue with Foreign Minister Carr's claims about the amount of consular assistance provided to Assange, citing the 52 separate representations to Egyptian authorities that were apparently made by the Australian Embassy in Egypt on

Mackell's behalf. Mackell commented, "When Carr really wanted a result, he took action himself rather than leaving it to consular staff, who toil admirably but lack the clout to get a result, even in a relatively minor case like mine. If he really wants a result in the Assange case, he will do the same. It is unlikely he has the courage. The forces at play in Julian Assange's case are far greater than those which were at play in mine."

27 September 2012: The SMH reported on declassified US Air Force counter-intelligence documents which showed that Assange has been designated an "enemy of the state" by the US military.

28 September 2012: While denying that Assange had been designated a military enemy, Pentagon spokesman, George Little, suggested that the very existence of WikiLeaks is an ongoing crime: "it is our view that continued possession by WikiLeaks of classified information belonging to the United States government represents a continuing violation of law... We regard this as a law enforcement matter."

22 October 2012: Annette Willing, Assistant Secretary, Security Law branch, Attorney-General's Department, wrote to her colleagues in preparation for a Four Corners interview with Attorney-General Nicola Roxon: "... What is your response to the fact that there is now evidence in the form of a published subpoena that a US grand jury is examining Wikileaks activities with a view to issuing indictments." The official response to this question confirms Australian government knowledge of an ongoing investigation: "We are aware of reports that a US Justice Department spokesperson has said there continues to be an investigation into Wikileaks."

7 November 2012: US federal judge in Virginia ruled in a hearing that documents relating to WikiLeaks associates' twitter accounts could not be unsealed, as they "would damage an ongoing criminal investigation". This was the first official US confirmation that the grand jury investigation is continuing since Assange was granted political asylum by Ecuador.

11 October 2012: DFAT replied to lawyer and human rights activist, Kellie Tranter's letter, which highlighted Australia's failure to abide by its international obligations to protect free speech, and asked a number of questions in relation to Assange. DFAT's reply ignored Kellie's request to provide a "direct and genuine response" to each of her questions, and repeated the claim that "we have no advice that the US Government intends to take legal action against Mr Assange".

4 December 2012: Documents published under FOI showed DFAT "sought clarification" from the Pentagon about the designation of Assange and WikiLeaks as an "enemy of the state". In other cables reported in the SMH, Australian officials described WikiLeaks as "broken" and said that Assange would have no choice but to go to Sweden eventually.

16 December 2012: A Washington Post article about Neil H MacBride, US attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, confirmed the ongoing criminal investigation into Assange and WikiLeaks. The Post reported that: "Federal prosecutors working for MacBride are ... handling a critical aspect of the biggest leak case in U.S. history. The investigation is focused on whether the anti-secrecy Web site WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange, violated U.S. laws in posting hundreds of thousands of military and diplomatic cables on the group's Web site and sharing them with mainstream news organizations."

Please contact your MP and relevant government members asking them to take action to defend Assange. You can use one of our template letters or write your own:

Addresses:

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Attorney-General's Department
Central Office
3-5 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

Senator The Hon Bob Carr
Minister of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Contact details for all Australian MPs and Senators here:
<http://australia.gov.au/directories/contact-parliament>

<http://stopwarcoalition.org/timeline-the-australian-governments-betrayal-of-julian-assange/>

Nobel Peace Laureate Accuses Governments of Complicity in Mental Torture of Assange

Mairead Maguire
War Is A Crime.org
23 December 2012

On Thursday 13th December, 2012, I visited Julian Assange, Editor-in-chief of Wikileaks, in the Ecuadorian embassy, Knightsbridge, London. It is six months now since Julian Assange entered the Ecuadorian embassy and was given political asylum. He entered the embassy after the British Courts shamefully refused his appeal against extradition to Sweden where he is wanted for questioning accused of sexual molestation (no criminal charges have been made against him).

Julian Assange has said, he is willing to answer questions in the UK relating to accusations against him, or alternatively to go to Sweden provided the Swedish government guarantee he will not be extradited to the US where plans are ready for him to be tried for conspiracy to commit espionage. The Swedish Government refuse to give such assurance.

Mr. Assange is right to be concerned about the dangers of extradition to USA. American media has reported that the US Justice Department and the Pentagon have been conducting a criminal investigation into 'whether wikileaks founder Julian Assange violated criminal laws in the groups release of government documents including possible charges under the espionage act'.

Mr. Assange's only crime is that he embarrassed the USA and powerful governments with Wikileaks release of thousands of US state department cables and of the video footage from an apache helicopter of a 2007 incident in which the US military appears to have deliberately killed civilians, including two Reuters employees, revealing USA's Crimes against humanity. For this truth-telling he has inherited the wrath of the US government, and has been targeted in a most vindictive way— as has American soldier, Pt. Bradley Manning, currently undergoing a military Court hearing for allegedly leaking classified documents to Wikileaks. Pt. Bradley Manning has been subjected, according to formal UN investigation, to 'cruel and inhuman' treatment whilst held in solitary confinement in US prison for nine months. The American government has admitted to the torture of Pt. Bradley Manning, one of their own soldiers.

However, even if the charges are dropped against Assange by the Swedish authorities, the USA will probably demand that the British government extradite Assange from Britain to the USA, to face a US Grand Jury indictment. (The US Grand Jury has been sitting for 16 months and it is believed to have reached a verdict to indict Julian Assange and has a sealed indictment ready to unseal at the most beneficial time to the US. **The grand jury is a flawed, unjust legal process, consisting of four Prosecutors but no defence evidence is allowed. There is no judge and a jury pool is drawn from Alexandria, Virginia, which has the highest percentage of military contractor families in the US.**)

On meeting with Julian Assange I was struck by his intelligent, bright and compassionate mind, and glad to see that in spite of all the abuse of his human rights and persecution he is in good spirits and good health. In spite of the fact that for six months he has been confined indoors with no possibility of even 5 minutes in the fresh air, a basic right for all political prisoners, as if he tries to go outside he will be immediately arrested by the police outside the embassy, and be extradited to Sweden or USA. Unlike most political prisoners he has no idea how long his virtual imprisonment in the embassy, will last, 6 more months or 6 years, whilst this diplomatic standoff continues. This is indeed cruel, inhumane and mental torture, of a man, whose only crime was to tell the truth and bring transparency to the illegal acts of the US Government and its allies around the world. (the cost to police this man of peace is £11,000 per day).

I believe the UK/Swedish/USA governments are all complicit in this mental torture of Julian Assange, and I appeal to the Australian government, Human rights defenders, brave media, and people who love freedom and truth to break the 'silence' and stand up for the rights of Julian Assange to assurance he will get the chance to answer all accusations against him in UK or Sweden and the assurance he will not be extradited to USA where he could meet the same 'cruel and inhuman' treatment as Pt. Bradley Manning. The least we can do is raise our voices to protect Julian Assange (and Bradley Manning) who made such brave attempts, at the cost of their own freedom, to try to protect all our freedoms and democracy.

• *Mairead Maguire was awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her actions to help end the deep ethnic/political conflict in her native Northern Ireland.*

RT recalls 2012: Assange's ordeal

RT

27 December, 2012

In 2012 Julian Assange was fighting against extradition in the UK courts. He lost and ended up in the Ecuadorian embassy: granted asylum, but unable to leave. Yet he managed to host his own show on RT, write a book and talk about freedom of speech.

Ecuador granted political asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on August 16. The decision came almost two months after the world-famous whistleblower came to the country's embassy in London seeking protection in an effort to avoid extradition to Sweden.

"We have decided to grant political asylum to Mr. Assange," said Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino. "We believe that his fears are legitimate and there are the threats that he could face political persecution."

Swedish authorities want to question Assange over allegations of "unlawful coercion and sexual misconduct." He is not charged with any crime. The UK Supreme court ruled WikiLeaks founder should be extradited to Sweden. Assange remains convinced this would lead to his eventual extradition to the US, where he would face charges of espionage following the publication of thousands of classified documents, including secret cables of the US State Department.

While waiting for the outcome of his trial and under house arrest, Assange hosted the talk show *The World Tomorrow*, aired exclusively by RT. His guests included Malaysia's opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, Hezbollah leader Sayyid Nasrallah and Ecuador's President Raphael Correa. The show gained over a million views on RT's YouTube channel, with hundreds of thousands visiting the show's page.

After losing his case, the WikiLeaks founder went to the Ecuadorian embassy, where he has now been living for more than six months. It is still not clear how Assange would travel to Ecuador. British police are forbidden from entering the embassy without Ecuador's approval, but Assange has no way of boarding a plane to Ecuador without traveling across London and exposing himself to arrest for violating his bail terms. Living in closed space with little fresh air has complicated Assange's chronic lung condition that requires constant medical treatment.

Despite being cooped up in the Ecuadorian embassy, Assange remained vocal on the issue of openness and democracy. He co-authored a book arguing that the world is at a pivotal decision: Whether the internet will free us or enslave us. He also gave speeches, including one to the UN, in which he called upon the United States to move from words to actions, and put an end to its persecution of WikiLeaks, its people and its sources.

WikiLeaks founder summed up the year with his Christmas speech from the balcony of the embassy. In the speech, Assange vowed to publish some 1,000,000 new documents in the coming year and has called upon people to continue fighting for democracy "from Tahrir to London."

Assange also announced that he intends to run for a seat in the Australian Senate in next year's federal election and form a WikiLeaks party.

He remains positive, saying things could be worse. "One gets used to things. Other people are in much harsher conditions than I am...[the embassy] is certainly preferable to solitary confinement in Sweden or the United States."

Video & pic at: <http://rt.com/news/assange-rt-recalls-2012-919>

Oxford students to protest at Assange 'visit'

A row has erupted on campus over an invitation to Julian Assange to address the Oxford Union via video link

*Alexander Rankine
The Guardian
10 January 2013*

Outraged Oxford students are planning demonstrations following news that Julian Assange, the controversial Wikileaks founder, has been invited to speak at the 189-year-old Oxford Union debating society. The union plans to include Assange in an event celebrating prominent whistleblowers on 23 January. He is scheduled to speak via video link from the Ecuadorian embassy, where he sought sanctuary last June from a European arrest warrant for extradition to Sweden over rape allegations.

As news of the invitation broke, criticism of the decision to give a platform to such a controversial figure came swiftly. Tom Rutland (@tomrutland), president-elect of the Oxford University students' union, tweeted: "Someone facing a European arrest warrant in relation to being wanted for questioning regarding sexual offences should not be platformed." **The student's union is not affiliated with the Oxford Union, a politically neutral debating society.**

Opposition to the invitation is focused primarily upon Assange's status as an alleged sex offender resisting arrest. Simone Webb, who has instigated a Facebook campaign to protest outside the union on the night itself, says: "The protest is objecting primarily to Julian Assange's continued unwillingness to face the Swedish justice system over rape allegations. It is particularly ironic that he's been asked to speak at an awards event which supposedly celebrates integrity and the search for truth, when he is himself blocking the search for truth."

Others, however, are keen for Assange to speak, after a planned appearance at the Cambridge Union was cancelled last year.

"The central principle is that a debate must not merely provide a platform for the guest speaker. There must be the opportunity for the speaker's views to be tested through questioning and debate," says a former president of the union, Izzy Westbury.

"Inviting someone controversial— be it in a political sense, a religious one or, in the case of Assange, a legal one— is the best way of showing them for what they really are.

When Assange is video-linked to the union, I would expect and encourage questions that challenge both his views and his actions. We should put him in an uncomfortable position— that is the condition of the invite."

In a press release, the union also emphasised that there would be an opportunity to question Assange. "Mr Assange is clearly a figure who generates controversy for reasons ranging from the charges made against him in Sweden, to the perceived recklessness of some Wikileaks activities. We would therefore encourage those who disagree with him, or with any of our other speakers, to participate in the Q&A session."

Westbury says that untenable views are often shown up at the union: "In February 2011, Zakir Naik addressed the Oxford Union via video link, despite an exclusion order imposed by home secretary, Theresa May, in June that year. There was a fair bit of fuss at the time and a few Tory MPs were a bit rankled by the decision, but frankly, he didn't come out all that well."

The protesters have rejected a charge of being anti-free speech, and question whether the Wikileaks founder will be subjected to any serious cross-examination at the union. "Assange is being invited to speak at an award ceremony, where he will be lauded for the work that he has done," says Abigail Burman, equal opportunities president at Corpus Christi college.

She argues that an invitation to someone accused of rape "sends the message that rape is no big deal, apologies will be made for perpetrators, and survivors won't be heard. I completely support his right to free speech, but I think he needs to find another place to exercise it. **Oxford should be a place where sexual assault is never okay.**"

With the women's campaign at the student's union due to meet soon to discuss the matter, and the numbers planning to join the protest already at 86 on the Facebook group, the controversy looks unlikely to abate.

Tom Beardsworth, a deputy editor on the student newspaper Cherwell, notes: "Protest is fairly common, but it's normally small scale. There were only about 10 for George Galloway last term, whereas it looks like the turnout against Assange could top 100, which certainly hasn't been seen in my memory."

Comments [selection]

10 January 2013 1:27 p.m.

Did someone from the Oxford Union really say: "Someone facing a European arrest warrant in relation to being wanted for questioning regarding sexual offences should not be platformed."

Apart from inventing the new word "platformed", I haven't seen a more miserable sentence in many a long year. Not "facing a European Arrest Warrant". Not "Wanted for questioning", not "Wanted for sexual offences", but "facing a European arrest warrant in relation to being wanted for questioning regarding sexual offences".

It reminds me of the Iraq "Weapons of Mass Destruction" becoming "Weapons of Mass Destruction Programmes" and then "Weapons of Mass Destruction-Related Programmes".

— *MostPeopleAreGood*

10 January 2013 5:23 p.m.

Most women who are genuinely reporting a rape do not subsequently hand in a torn, used-looking condom with no DNA on it (tested twice by Sweden's National Forensic laboratory) as evidence...

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/missing-dna-evidence-in-assange-case-20120916-260t0.html>

— *DougL*

10 January 2013 5:45 p.m.

... I am sure he would willingly go to Sweden if it were not for his reasonable concern that the USA will grab him and stick him in Gitmo at the first opportunity. The full situation is so loaded with hazards— why just focus on the Swedish allegation!

— *kowloony*

10 January 2013 2:54 p.m.

My understanding is that he has not been charged with anything, he's only wanted for questioning, which he's happy to submit to if they come to him, as they have in for others in other cases. Also he has gone and faced the charges. They said that they were happy there was no case to answer and sent him on his way. It was months later when he'd pissed the US government off that they suddenly changed their minds. Relying on judicial integrity in such circumstances would make anyone nervous....

— *lamuella*

10 January 2013 5:18 p.m.

... It is illegal under Swedish law for a prosecutor to make a decision on whether or not to prosecute until a preliminary investigation has been completed.

Of course, the preliminary investigation cannot be completed until Assange has been questioned for the first time on three out of the four allegations. So Ny cannot legally make a decision to prosecute yet. Which is why her statement to the UK court was so carefully worded. Furthermore, should she come to the UK to question Assange in the Ecuadorian embassy using the entirely routine protocols of Mutual Legal Assistance and then decide she will charge him under Swedish law she has to hand over the entire police evidence file to him immediately. The court case then follows approximately 10 days later. That's the real problem she has with questioning him— it forces her to either hand over the 'evidence' that she really hasn't got, or drop the case.

Tell me, would you approve of a prosecutor who decides to prosecute in a case involving allegations of a sexual nature (in a classic he said / she said scenario to boot) before even hearing one side's story, their version of events? Don't you think that betrays more than a little bias?

This, by the way, is the woman who has publicly stated that she thinks it is good that all men accused of sexual crimes in Sweden are incarcerated immediately with no bail, even if they are later found in court to be innocent. She's also baldly stated that she's the type who would not change their mind about something even if they were wrong. I kid you not. Here she is saying precisely that:

She also confirms... that she issued the European Arrest Warrant before it had been seen by a Swedish law court.

— *ptah*

10 January 2013 2:26 p.m.

So they allow Thatcher, Cherie Blair, Malcom X, Michael Jackson, David Blaine, Ron Jeremy, Psy, and Kermit the motherfucking Frog to speak. OK with all that. But given that list, you cannot seriously suggest banning Assange from it. — *vorpalcynic*

10 January 2013 3:33 p.m.

The issue is simple. If Assange leaves the Embassy he will be extradited to the US.

— *alastairbin*

10 January 2013 2:37 p.m.

Assange invited to address the Union on the subject of whistle blowing and all up in arms because of unproven allegations— not even charges— against him which have nothing to do with that subject. Do people also need reminding that the EAW is a human rights catastrophe?

— *Ticketiboo*

10 January 2013 4:03 p.m.

Sexual Assault is never OK but Julian has not been found Gulty of it and would not if it was not Julian Assange facing the accusation. The truth his America wants his blood for spilling the beans and giving the rest of the World the truth, which America finds it very hard to be truthfully honest, hence the CIA etc.... Sweden's Government is playing Puppet to America just as Tony Blair's and now this Government is doing.

— *Andrew1200*

10 January 2013 3:03 p.m.

Why do people keep raising the old chestnut of Assange being "an alleged sex offender resisting arrest." The guy hasn't even been charged with anything and is just wanted for questioning, which the Swedish police can do in the Ecuadorian Embassy. The Swedish government have only to promise not to extradite him to the US to resolve this issue once and for all. Why don't they do so?

— *CS1976*

10 January 2013 3:38 p.m.

Would you want to face 'justice' in Sweden without any guarantees against extradition to the United States, where you might be stripped naked and put in "cruel, inhuman and degrading" confinement in a US jail?

— *Daenelle*

10 January 2013 3:38 p.m.

I'd actually be very curious to hear what he has to say. I know very little of him from sources that I am happy trusting and i'd genuinly like to find out which side of the media pegged him correctly. Vile beast, sociopath, arrogant man with a god-complex or maybe just a normal guy, in a rarified position, trying to do the right thing with the pressure of the world's media and legal forces against him.

Maybe there are people with greater insight or those with better access to the facts, but I am not one. I'd like to make my own judgement and I don't want it to be blocked by those who, for whatever reason, don't think he should be allowed to put his side across.

— *thesistersofmercy*

10 January 2013 3:53 p.m.

Any Oxford University student seeking to deny Assange his right to speak does not belong at Oxford University. They have not understood what their university is about.

— *vorpalcynic*

10 January 2013 4:02 p.m.

I am a woman and, when working with mentally ill, encountered many women who had, indeed, been raped— often without any action being taken by the police or the legal system. Even if I believe every word Assange's two accusers have uttered— and, at this point, I can neither believe or disbelieve— Assange did not commit rape in the legal sense as understood in this country. Yes, he may well well have been sexually bad mannered— but few men haven't at some point..

If you look at all the evidence available (although not in the British media), it is hard to quash the suspicion that this whole action has been politically motivated. And the tactic worked: nobody cares about the information revealed by Wikileaks (and the Guardian, before it got cold feet), but the meme seems to be that Assange is a violent rapist.

Having observed the low level of capability displayed by our public school-Oxbridge Cabinet, I don't expect much in the way of rational argument from Oxford students, but perhaps the rest of us could try a little harder than them.

— *alastairbin*

10 January 2013 4:44 p.m.

... What the English court decided was that the allegations as written on the face of the EAW warrant by the prosecutor would amount to rape in this country.

The fact that the prosecutor described the women's testimony on the arrest warrant in a way which bears little relation to what the women actually said in their witness statements is what you should really be concentrating on.

— *alastairbin*

10 January 2013 4:51 p.m.

All the available evidence surrounding the 'rape' accusations appears to point to the fact that they were nothing of the kind. So many horrific rapes go unpunished, but here we have two women who were clearly not harmed by whatever happened, fronting an attempt to silence most important champion of free speech and information.

Julian Assange led a necessary and highly successful campaign to reveal information that should have been available to all, and he deserves the protection of asylum in Britain. If the US were to obtain his extradition from Sweden, there would follow a massive miscarriage of justice, because we all know what would happen to him there.

The Oxford Union has a tradition of giving a platform to mavericks of all persuasions, and I hope it stands by the invitation to Assange.

— *shibbolith*

10 January 2013 5:28 p.m.

Could it be that some people are overreacting in a big way? Could it be that there is a novel trend to create mass hysteria in situations where there is little understanding of the case in question?

The Oxford Union have invited Julian Assange to speak to the Oxford Union. They have made it conditional that he will be cross-questioned on all the vulnerable points and he has accepted. That is democracy.

Moreover, aren't some people trying to create an unwarranted mass hysteria over this? Isn't a man or woman innocent until proven guilty?

Could it be that, in reality, the accusation of sexual impropriety is not true? Could it be that he has been set up? By whom?

Well, could it be that his Wikileaks manoeuvres have so angered certain guilty sections of the Ultra Capitalist World, that they wish to see him dead?

Wouldn't it be fair to hear a public scrutiny of the man's alleged misdemeanours?
Assange could well be a miserable bastard who cheats on his wife and so on, and so on.
None of that is to be condoned but he is not the first and few men might throw the first stone.

Could it be that the girls who allegedly had voluntary sex with him might have been paid by greater powers to lie about Julian Assange? If the Swedes are out to get him in connivance with the US, shouldn't we according to our democratic traditions, first allow him to make his case public?

Could it be that the Swedish authorities, in connivance with US ultra capitalists, wish to wipe him off the map? In that case SHAME on the Swedes, the Americans and all those institutions we hold dear....in error, obviously.

Just playing the Devil's Advocate! Let's all hear him out.

— *Leviathan212*

10 January 2013 5:35 p.m.

Yes, the rape charges are serious and nobody should dismiss them lightly. Sexual assault should never be taken lightly.

But, also important to realise that, to date, Assange has only exercised completely LEGAL options available to him under international law. He has not run away or tried to flee. He is only seeking to exercise his right to seek asylum, which is legal and available to him by law.

By criticising someone for exploring all of his legal options, people are implying as if seeking asylum is a bad thing. It is not. It is a legal right that everyone has.

— *jakboot*

10 January 2013 5:58 p.m.

As I have always said: julian assange is a pretentious twat. and he has to face charges. AND he's no hero. can't stand the guy sorry.

— *Jaspergreen*

Julian Assange will be speaking at the Oxford Union on January 23 via videolink from the Ecuadorian Embassy. Some Oxford students are planning protests at both the University and Embassy, falsely claiming that Mr Assange is "fleeing rape allegations", despite his continued offers to be questioned and his asylum being awarded for fear of U.S. persecution.

s <http://www.thisdayinwikileaks.org/>

Fact Sheet: Julian Assange, his asylum, and the Swedish investigation

January 10, 2013

This is a fact sheet which was designed to inform those attending or protesting Julian Assange's January 23, 2013 appearance at the Oxford Union....

Why did Ecuador grant asylum to Julian Assange?

Ecuador fulfilled Julian Assange's asylum request due to the risk of persecution by the U.S. Government. U.S. officials have confirmed an ongoing investigation into

WikiLeaks, with continued calls for the prosecution of Mr Assange. He has also faced multiple calls for his assassination. It is apparent from Bradley Manning's hearings that the U.S. is attempting to implicate Mr Assange.

Is Ecuador interfering in the Swedish investigation?

The Government of Ecuador officially extended an offer for Sweden to question Julian Assange in the Embassy, which was rejected. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa has reiterated that Ecuador has no means to hinder the investigation, but only wishes to protect Mr Assange from U.S. persecution.

Is Julian Assange avoiding questioning by the Swedish prosecution?

Julian Assange has offered to be questioned in London for over two years, and continues to offer such to this day. Questioning someone in another country is a standard EU legal procedure, which Sweden used just last year for an alleged murderer. The Swedish prosecutor offers no reason as to why she will not question Mr Assange in London.

If Julian Assange is innocent, why doesn't he just go to Sweden?

If extradited to Sweden, Julian Assange will be immediately placed in solitary confinement, incommunicado, despite the fact that he has yet to be charged with a crime. This treatment can be seen in the recent case of Pirate Bay co-founder Gottfrid Svartholm. Mr Assange would not have had the ability to seek asylum were he to be extradited, therefore being unable to protect himself from U.S. persecution.

What else should I know?

The Swedish investigation against Julian Assange has been very unusual. The case was initially closed, then reopened by another prosecutor. The interview of one complainant was not recorded, despite the fact that interviews with all other persons were recorded. A condom submitted as evidence by the other complainant contained no DNA from Mr Assange. These are just a few examples of the peculiar conduct of the investigation.

For more information please see the following websites... Links at:
<http://wikileaksblogspot.blogspot.ch/2013/01/fact-sheet-julian-assange-his-asylumand.html>

This flyer was put together by M Cetera.

She can be contacted via Twitter at @m_cetera or via email at mcetera[at]mail[dot]be.

Studentprotester i Oxford mot "besök" från Assange

Journalisten
10 januari, 2013

Ilkna studenter vid Oxfords universitet protesterar mot att Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange inbjudits att tala hos den anrika debattklubben Oxford Union.

Det 189 år gamla debattsällskapet är i första hand öppet för studenter som är inskrivna på universitetet i Oxford.

Oxford Union har inbjudit Assange att tala vid en tillställning den 23 januari då framstående "Whistleblowers" ska hyllas.

Assange ska tala via en videolänk från Ecuadors ambassad i London där han sökt en fristad för att undgå att bli utlämnad till Sverige och ställas till svars för anklagelser om bland annat våldtäkt.

När nyheten blev känd kom genast starka protester från studenter vid Oxford.

Tom Rutland, ordförande i Oxfords studentkår skriver på Twitter: "Någon som är föremål för en europeisk arresteringsorder, efterlyst för att sexuella övergrepp borde inte ges en plattform.

Ett planerat framträdande för Assange vid motsvarande debattforum i Cambridge ställdes in.

Kommentar

Al Burke: Detta är ett minst sagt selektivt referat av artikeln i The Guardian, som noterar att det även finns starkt stöd för Assanges "besök" bland studentkåren. Intresserade bör läsa själva artikeln, och inte minst kommentarerna, på:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/jan/10/oxford-students-to-protest-at-assange-talk>

Senator Ludlam to Foreign Minister Carr 14 January 2013

WL Central
2013-01-17

Senator the Hon Bob Carr
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

14 January 2013

Dear Minister,

Please find below a series of statements made by members of the Swedish Executive and government officials on the Assange case.

Such executive commentary in Sweden, or indeed Australia, compromises the democratic principle of separation of the executive from judicial processes and is prejudicial and therefore jeopardises the potential for a fair trial.

For these reasons I respectfully request that representations be made to the Swedish government noting and regretting the potential damaging nature of these statements made about an Australian citizen, requesting their retraction or at the very least cessation.

11 February 2011— The Swedish Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt mistakenly stated that Assange had been charged. The statement was never officially retracted.
<https://ccwlja.wordpress.com/2011/05/16/reinfeldts-statement-published-r...>

25 January 2012— Swedish Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, criticised Assange on Swedish national radio one week before Assange's Supreme Court case was heard in the UK. Reinfeldt stated that Julian Assange's criticisms of abuses by the Swedish system in his case were not legitimate and were a strategy to avoid extradition. The full interview is available at this link:
<https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1637&artikel=4928323>

February 2012— Foreign Minister Carl Bildt makes statements on Assange via Twitter
<https://twitter.com/#!/carlbildt/statuses/172214367121707008>
<https://twitter.com/carlbildt/status/173160965926428673>

8 February 2012— In a parliamentary address the Prime Minister Reinfeldt said that "we do not accept sexual abuse or rape" and said that Assange and his lawyers had little regard for women's rights. Mr Assange's barrister, Geoffrey Robertson QC, said Mr Reinfeldt had also "accused Mr Assange of claiming women's rights are worthless".

15 August 2012— Swedish Minister of Social Affairs Göran Hägglund issued a series of tweets: "Sick. A coward who does not dare to have his case tried by the court. If the accusations against him are true, he is a lowlife." None of these statements have been retracted.

<https://twitter.com/goranhagglund/status/235462124435025921>

For a longer version of the entire Twitter conversation:

<http://rixstep.com/1/1/20120815,00.shtml>

In a statement given to Expressen later that week, The Minister called Assange a "coward" and a "pitiful wretch" for taking refuge at the Ecuadorian Embassy. "Assange is a very cowardly person who does not dare confront the charges against him."
<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/hagglund-om-asyl-for-assange-fegis/>

18 August 2012— the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a tweet, presumably arguing why Assange cannot be questioned in London: "You do not dictate the terms if you are a suspect. Get it?"
<https://twitter.com/Utrikesdep/status/236792222937399296>

While the comments of journalists, particularly those writing for Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Expressen and Aftonbladet are beyond the control of the government, statements made by senior officials have contributed to providing a permissive environment for blatantly offensive aggression towards Assange in the Swedish press, a few examples of which are also provided below.

22 February 2012— Expressen publishes a story— entirely false as it turns out— that Wikileaks threatens to publish an internal memo that will reveal Carl Bildt as an informant for the US. This causes Bildt to make hostile public statements on his blog. Wikileaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson puts the matter to rest but not before a great deal of destructive and malicious commentary is made in the Swedish press.
<http://www.expressen.se/tv/nyheter/inrikes/bildt-svarar-expressen-om-wik...>
<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/wikileaks-carl-bildt-ar-usa-informator/>
<https://carlbildt.wordpress.com/2012/02/22/smutskastningskampanj/>
<http://wikileaks.org/Kristinn-Hrafnsson-The-Great.html>

29 February 2012— Sweden's largest daily, Dagens Nyheter, called Assange "paranoid", and a "querulant".

<http://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/riddare-i-solkad-rustning-1>

14 March 2012— Aftonbladet's prominent journalist Martin Aagård called Assange an "Australian pig". "There are many good reasons to criticize Assange. One of them is that he's a repugnant swine."

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/article14519491.ab>

24 April 2011— Jan Guillou stated in Aftonbladet that regardless of "whether Assange is guilty or not— he's still an unprincipled disgusting little creep", adding "and now I'm holding back".

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/kolumnister/janguillou/article12926443.ab>

16 August 2012— Aftonbladet columnist Oisín Cantwell characterised Assange as a "coward", a "creep", a "white-haired crackpot" and an "asshole" because he would rather request asylum from Ecuador than face extradition to Sweden.

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/kolumnister/oisincantwell/article15270...>

18 August 2012— TV journalist Jenny Strömstedt stated in Expressen that Assange should be put on display in a glass cage at Ecuador's London embassy for the next fifteen years "so that anyone willing to pay entrance can watch his aging struggles".

<http://www.expressen.se/kronikor/jenny-stromstedt/mindre-snack-och-mer...>

Minister, I look forward to discussing these issues with you in the near future and request that you raise these matters with your Swedish counterparts.

Sincerely,
Senator Scott Ludlam

Cc: Senator Doug Cameron

Senator Ludlam to Foreign Minister Carr 28 November 2012

WL Central
2013-01-17

Senator the Hon Bob Carr
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

28 November 2012

Dear Minister,

Please find below a series of links to evidence relating to the existence of a criminal grand jury investigation into Wikileaks.

As you know, the 2010 diplomatic cable from Australia's Ambassador in Washington released to Fairfax under FOI states that the investigation into Wikileaks and Assange is "unprecedented in scale and nature" and that media reports that a grand jury has been convened in Alexandria, Virginia were "likely true."

This sensible and credible assumption on the part of Australian diplomats was presumably derived from multiple statements made by US Attorney General Eric Holder referring to "an active, ongoing criminal investigation" and "significant things" that he "personally authorized", and statements such as, "I authorized just last week a number of things to be done so that we can hopefully get to the bottom of this and hold people accountable, as they should be". These statements can be found at the following links:

28 July 2010

<http://www.mainjustice.com/2010/07/28/doj-probing-wikileaks-disclosure>

29 November 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/9383387>

6 December 2010

<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/FraudOp>

As you know, the US Department of Justice claims "Full Denial" on FOIA requests for "Any and all records pertaining to WikiLeaks Organization," citing exemption (b)(7)(A) saying, "Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, the release of which **could reasonably be expected to interfere with law enforcement proceedings**". (<http://www.justice.gov/oip/docs/closed-foia-log-jan2012.pdf>)

Documents arising from the Twitter case refer to investigations underway. On December 14, 2010 Theresa Buchanan, a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, ordered Twitter to turn over to the U.S. Government, the non-content communication information of Julian Assange; WikiLeaks; Bradley Manning; Jacob Appelbaum, who is a developer for the Tor project; Rop Gonggrijp, described in court papers as a Dutch activist and businessman; and Birgitta Jonsdottir, a member of the Icelandic Parliament. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20110112061516>)

On January 5, 2011, the Court ordered that the original December 14, 2010 Court Order be unsealed, thereby authorizing Twitter to disclose its existence to its subscribers. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20110123041606>)

On January 4, 2012, District Judge Liam O'Grady denied the petitioners' motion to stay the original December 14, 2010 Court Order and ruled that Twitter hand over the information. The docket and public filings for the Appelbaum (Case No. 1:11-dm-00003-TCB—LO-1), Gonggrijp (Case No. 1:11-dm-00003-TCB—LO-2), Jonsdottir (Case No. 1:11-dm-00003-TCB—LO-3), and Twitter (Case No. 1:11-dm-00003-TCB—LO-4) motion to vacate the December 14, 2010 2703(d) Court Order can be found here. (<http://ia600403.us.archive.org/11/items/gov.uscourts.vaed.262289/gov.usc...>)

Within those filings is included another docket of secret 2703d orders still under seal in the WikiLeaks Grand Jury investigation. (http://www.alexao'Brien.com/second sight/wikileaks/grand_jury/2703d_orders...)

The US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, Neil MacBride, whose office is responsible for the Grand Jury empaneled in Alexandria, Virginia, and two of its US assistant attorney prosecutors, including Andrew Peterson, argue against unsealing certain documents in the case of a Grand Jury and write in footnote number two on page six of the February 4, 2011, "Government's Response in Opposition to the Real Parties in Interest Motion For Immediate Unsealing of Motions and Upcoming Hearing": "The Attorney General publicly confirmed the existence of an investigation into disclosures of classified information made by WikiLeaks on November 29, 2010. See page 6— footnote 2 at this link (https://www.eff.org/sites/default/files/filenode/dorders_twitter/19%20Re...)

At an April 6, 2011 hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee entitled, entitled "The Electronic Communications Privacy Act: Government Perspectives on Protecting Privacy in the Digital Age" with Department of Justice, James A. Baker, Esq. cites Judge Buchanan's WikiLeaks Grand Jury 2703(d) order regarding the probable cause standard for early "criminal" and "national security" investigations:

In considering the standard for issuing 2703(d) orders, it is important to consider the role they play in early stages of criminal and national security investigations. In the Wikileaks investigation, for example, this point was recently emphasized by Magistrate Judge Buchanan in the Eastern District of Virginia. In denying a motion to vacate a 2703(d) order directed to Twitter, Judge Buchanan explained that "at an early stage, the requirement of a higher probable cause standard for non-content information voluntarily released to a third party would needlessly hamper an investigation." In re 2703(d), 2011 WL 900120, at *4 (E.D. Va. March 11, 2011). (http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2011_hr/ecpa.pdf)

On 11 May 2011 the Guardian reported on the existence of the Grand Jury after revelations from people subpoenaed to appear before it. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/may/11/us-opens-wikileaks-grand-jur...>)

As you know from the Australian Ambassador in Washington DC, there are two publicly reported subpoenas compelling witness testimony— one for David House and the second for an unnamed Cambridge resident.

David House made his subpoena public: (http://www.alexao'Brien.com/secondsite/wikileaks/grand_jury/legal_docket...)

The unnamed Cambridge resident did also: (http://www.alexao'Brien.com/secondsite/wikileaks/grand_jury/legal_docket...)

According to these documents signed by Neil MacBride US Attorney Eastern District of Virginia, Tracy Doherty-McCormick Assistant US Attorney and Andrew Peterson Assistant US Attorney, the Grand Jury in Alexandria, VA is investigating, "possible violations of federal criminal law involving, but not necessarily limited to conspiracy to communicate or transmit national defense information in violation of 18 U.S.C. 793(g) and conspiracy to violate the laws of the United States, in violation of 18 U.S.C. 371 to wit; knowingly accessing a computer without authorization or exceeding authorized access and having obtained information protected from disclosure for reasons of national defense or foreign relations in violation of 18 U.S.C. 1030(a) and knowingly stealing or converting any record of thing of value of the United States or any department or agency thereof in violation of 18 U.S.C. 641"

On 12 July 2012 the Stratfor emails were released, with one dated 26 January 2011 indicating that a sealed indictment existed:
(http://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/375123_fw-ct-assange-manning-link-not-...)

You will note in a number of court records pertaining to the Twitter case references to cases that are assigned a GJ number such as references in this document:
(https://www.eff.org/sites/default/files/filenode/dorders_twitter/Publicd...)

A "GJ" number is assigned by the United States Attorney's Office to identify documents related to a grand jury investigation. "GJ" numbers are created by U.S. Attorney's Office staff, and are used to ensure that subpoenas and other documents related to various investigations are appropriately handled and filed. An investigation assigned a "gj" number may become a criminal case, or it may not.

According to the 4 Corners piece conducted by Mr. Andrew Fowler, the docket number for the Grand Jury criminal investigation of WikiLeaks case is 10GJ3793, with 10 standing for the year it began, GJ which is Grand Jury and then 3793. **3 is the Conspiracy Statute in the United States. 793 is the Espionage Statute.**

Multiple references to the Grand Jury investigation have been made in evidence given under oath in the Manning trial, at which Australian diplomats have been present. Your representatives will have noted that Judge Lind, Prosecution Fein and the Defence Counsel Coombs have made multiple references.

On 21 June 2012 one reporter present at the hearing stated, **"When the defense provided the Court with a two portions of unclassified grand jury testimony that the Government had provided them, consisting of 30 pages of running black redactions, the lead counsel for the Government, jumped up, interrupted the Judge, instructed the Court that the unclassified black portions were under seal.** The following unofficial transcript is just one example

"...its grand jury testimony... information protected. And, we will provide the Court the protective order that Mr. Coombs and the whole defense counsel had signed based on off your previous order on the Grand Jury testimony. The Assistant US Attorneys went to a Federal Judge to have it approved to be turned over for limited purposes. So, that should at least in our Court be filed under seal."

Defence Counsel Coombs requested that certain witnesses recuse themselves due to their involvement in Grand Jury Process.
(http://www.alexao'Brien.com/second sight/wikileaks/bradley_manning/transcr...)

Mark Mander, US Army Computer Crime Investigative Unit special agent, told the pre-trial hearings that the FBI was targeting seven civilians, including "the founders, owners or managers of WikiLeaks," for criminal activity and espionage. He said a US military investigation into WikiLeaks began in early June 2010, a few days after Manning was arrested. Mander revealed that the investigation was receiving legal advice from Neil McBride, who is the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia that has signed the subpoenas to appear at the Grand Jury empanelled in Alexandria.

Minister, I look forward to discussing these issues with you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Senator Scott Ludlam

The WACA responds to The Tab on behalf of Christine Assange

*Jessica Hudson
The Oxford Tab
January 19, 2013*

A women's university group have organized to protest Julian's speech at the Sam Adam's awards, with one key organizer stating that his inclusion is 'inappropriate' and contributes to the 'casualness with which rape allegations and accusations are treated in our society'.

As co-founders of WACA (WikiLeaks Australian Citizens Alliance), as women, mothers and feminists we respect the right of all to protest but urge those considering attending this protest to not be blinded by statements that are, in the light of clear and indisputable facts, inflammatory and inaccurate.

Here are just a few of those facts for people to consider: Julian Assange and his organization WikiLeaks have revealed myriad war crimes, human rights abuses, corporate and government collusion and corruption that ultimately impacts millions of women and children around the world on a daily basis and this is why Julian Assange has been asked to speak this year.

There is nothing inappropriate in this choice. It is important to note, as did the Supreme Court in the UK that Julian Assange has not been charged with any crime in any country and the presumption of innocence is still a fundamental tenant of any democratic judicial system.

Julian is not 'holed up' in the Ecuadorian Embassy. Mr Assange has exercised his rights and been granted political asylum by the sovereign nation of Ecuador because of the threat posed to his life and liberty by the United States.

This decision was not taken lightly but reached after careful consideration of the mounting evidence of the US pursuit of Mr Assange and Sweden's record of acquiescence to the US. Julian Assange is not 'evading the Swedish justice system'.

Julian initially made himself available to fly back to Sweden to be interviewed which the Swedish Prosecutor declined. Julian has also made a continuous offer over the last two years to be interviewed by Swedish authorities in person, via phone or video link at the Swedish Embassy in London, Scotland Yard and since his asylum was granted—at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

Sweden has refused all offers, without explanation and has declined to utilize the standard mutual assistance protocol to interview him in London, despite using it to recently interview an alleged murderer in Serbia and on countless other occasions.

It is also important to note that because sexual misconduct allegations are covered under public prosecution law the Swedish Government is mounting this investigation into Mr Assange and do not require the consent or specific allegation of the women involved.

Both women have repeatedly stated the sex was non-violent and consensual and they only approached the police to ascertain if Mr Assange could be compelled to take a HIV test.

The Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm Eva Finne, who first assessed the prosecutorial case dismissed the concern of 'minor rape' as "baseless".

Due to these compelling facts, and many others which can be studied and verified at justice4assange.com we stand with other organizations such as Women Against Rape in the UK and leading feminists and writers such as Helene Bergman of Sweden and Naomi Wolf in America who have clearly identified the ways in which the Swedish case against Assange is politically motivated.

When one looks at the clear abuse of Sweden's own procedures and protocols and the political motivations behind this case, it could be claimed that this case is in fact an abuse or use of these two women.

If those organizing this protest are truly interested in achieving justice for the women involved in these allegations then they would be using their energy and time more wisely.

They would be protesting out the front of the Swedish Embassy to demand that Sweden put an end to this charade of pursuing justice and interview Julian Assange in London as quickly as possible. If the Swedish Authorities then have enough evidence to charge Mr Assange, they should do so or drop their extradition request.

Divide and conquer is one of the oldest strategies in the patriarchy's handbook and those that dive blindly into supporting causes are susceptible to being used to do the work of the powerful, often to the detriment of their own cause and at the expense of truth and justice for all involved. We suggest you go to the source and don't be afraid to make up your own mind.

Words by Sam Castro and Kaz Cochrane of the Wikileaks Australian Citizens Alliance

<http://oxford.tab.co.uk/2013/01/19/christines-compelling-comeback/>

Related item:

<http://wikileaksetc.blogspot.se/2013/01/fact-sheet-julian-assange-his-asylumand.html>

WikiLeaks Legal Adviser: "We Steal Secrets" Overlooks Key Facets of Julian Assange's Persecution

Democracy Now!
January 23, 2013

Alex Gibney's new documentary, "We Steal Secrets," bills itself as "the Story of WikiLeaks," but our guest Jennifer Robinson, a legal adviser to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, claims it misses key facts. "This is, of course, a film about WikiLeaks, about the largest leak in history," Robinson says. "It touches on incredibly important issues about journalism and whistleblowing. But unfortunately, I do not think that this film does justice to those issues. ... This film does not recognize the threats that

WikiLeaks faces in terms of potential U.S. prosecution." [includes rush transcript].
Guest: Jennifer Robinson, London-based legal adviser for Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks. She is also director of legal advocacy at the Bertha Foundation.

AMY GOODMAN: We're broadcasting from Park City, Utah, from the Sundance Film Festival. To talk more about the documentary *We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks*, we're joined by Jennifer Robinson, legal adviser for Julian Assange. We welcome you to Democracy Now!, Jennifer.

JENNIFER ROBINSON: Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: You watched the film. What were your thoughts?

JENNIFER ROBINSON: Well, I think this is a film that touches upon an incredibly important subject matter. This is, of course, a film about WikiLeaks, about the largest leak in history. It touches on incredibly important issues about journalism and whistleblowing. But unfortunately, I do not think that this film does justice to those issues.

AMY GOODMAN: Why?

JENNIFER ROBINSON: In particular, I think— look, filmmaking is— of course, has its challenges. I think Alex Gibney is an incredible filmmaker and has made some very important films. But filmmakers have to make choices. And **what I think are interesting about the choices here is that this film does not recognize the threats that WikiLeaks faces in terms of potential U.S. prosecution. It does not reference the grand jury. It seeks to present Julian Assange as a fantasist and a paranoid fantasist, while not recognizing the threats that he faces.**

In particular, the film states specifically that Ecuador granted asylum without evidence. Now, we know it doesn't refer— the film doesn't refer to the grand jury. These are objectively available facts that are on the public record. There is a grand jury in existence. There is an active, ongoing criminal investigation against Julian Assange. It was discovered through diplomatic cables from the Australian government that the criminal investigation is of unprecedented size and scale. Now, **this film does not reference that in any shape or form, and I think that's an incredible oversight.**

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to play a clip of Julian Assange. When we interviewed him, he was speaking inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London. And this is the clip where I ask him why he believes that if he were sent to Sweden, he could be extradited to the United States, and if he's actually negotiating with the Swedish government right now.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, Amy, Ecuador has really stepped up to the plate and must be congratulated. I have been found to be, through a formal process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a political refugee and have been granted political asylum, in relation to what has been happening in the United States and allied countries and their behavior— Sweden and the United Kingdom. The situation for me now is that I have been here for five months in this embassy; prior to that, 18 months under house arrest; prior to that, being chased around the world for about six months by U.S. intelligence and its allies.

Now, I must correct an earlier statement that you made— this has become common in the press— saying that I was here in relation to Sweden. The reason I am here is essentially in relation to the United States. But the Swedish govern-

ment said publicly that it would imprison me without charge. And in such a situation, I'd not be able to apply for asylum. Now, the Ecuadorean government has asked the Swedish government to give a guarantee that I would not be extradited to the United States. We have asked for a long time for such a guarantee. That has been refused. All the regular processes have been refused in this case. You know, it's an extremely odd and bizarre case, and I encourage everyone to go and look at that aspect of the case at justice4assange.com. And you can see report after report. You can see all the material that the police claim to be true and all the things that have occurred, the Cambridge International & Comparative Law Journal condemning the decisions that were made here in the British courts.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Julian Assange speaking to us from inside the Ecuadorean embassy, where he's been holed up for something like eight months now, not clear when he will come out. But, Jennifer Robinson, our guest now, the legal adviser to Julian Assange, your response to filmmaker Alex Gibney saying that why should he be above the law? Why should he get an assurance from the Swedish government he won't be extradited to the United States? Because the Swedish government would take that in turn, if the request came in.

JENNIFER ROBINSON: Well, of course, he's— we're not suggesting that he's above the law. This film fails to recognize the reason that he sought asylum. It is not with respect to the allegations in Sweden. He has offered his testimony with respect to Sweden. The Swedish prosecutor has, in other cases, interviewed suspects outside of the country....

On 2013-01-24 08.27, L.Q. wrote [to Al Burke]:

... On yesterday's broadcast of Democracy Now, Amy Goodman interviewed the director of *We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks*, a documentary. Here is an excerpt:

Goodman: But they cannot get an assurance from the Swedish government that they will not extradite him to the United States.

Director: But I don't think any government would give any individual that assurance. I mean, Julian Assange wants to be above the law. The fact is, any government, if they receive an extradition request from another government, has to process it through their courts to determine whether it's legitimate. Julian Assange can't expect to be the only person who's not treated according to the rules of law.

How would you respond to the director? I am really curious.

(Response)

... Assange has previously demonstrated his willingness to submit to Swedish law and has repeatedly indicated his readiness to continue doing so, despite the extremely suspicious behavior of the prosecution and the open hostility expressed by leading Swedish politicians, journalists, etc.

What he is trying to avoid is deliverance to an increasingly lawless superpower whose murderous president has declared him guilty in advance, where the vice-president and leading members of Congress have threatened him with arbitrary long-term imprisonment, torture, rape and even murder.

In extradition matters, the Swedish government — not the court system — is the final instance, and there is nothing to prevent it from seeking assurance from the U.S. that it has no interest in Assange. In doing so, it must of course demand an explanation of all the threats and condemnations referred to above. Under international law, it is required to do so: Governments are obligated to protect foreign nationals in their care from the kinds of abuse with which Assange has been threatened. It is worrying, to say the least, that the Swedish government has demonstrated a tendency to fail in that obligation out of deference to the U.S., and not only in the notorious case of the two Egyptians (see <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/assange-usa.pdf>).

This is obviously a political case, and the film director's apparent unwillingness to consider these issues is a clear indication of bias — a luxury that he can afford, since it is not his life and liberty on the line.

Best regards,
Al Burke

Assange attacks Wikileaks movie

Roy Greenslade
The Guardian
24 January 2013

Julian Assange doesn't like the movie that is being made about Wikileaks, called *The Fifth Estate*.

"It is a lie upon lie," he told Oxford university students by videolink from the Ecuadorian embassy. "The movie is a massive propaganda attack on WikiLeaks and the character of my staff."

Assange, who will be portrayed in the film by Benedict Cumberbatch, read from a copy of the script as he accused the movie's maker, Dreamworks, of "fanning the flames" of war against Iran.

He told the Oxford Union that the opening scene was set inside a military complex in Iran with documents containing nuclear symbols and asked: "How does this have anything to do with us?"

In a publicity picture released this week, Cumberbatch was shown in character, sporting long blonde hair. A press release said *The Fifth Estate* would trace the early days of WikiLeaks, which culminated in the release of a series of information leaks. It is due to be released in the US in November....

Julian Assange finds no allies and tough queries in Oxford University talk

Speaking by video link from Ecuadorean embassy, WikiLeaks founder rebuffs questions about not returning to Sweden

*Amelia Hill
The Guardian
24 January 2013*

His critics were reasoned, those who queued for over an hour in the snow to hear him speak were thoughtful. It was Julian Assange—the man at the centre of controversy—who refused to be gracious.

Speaking by video link from his refuge at the Ecuadorean embassy to undergraduates at Oxford University as part of an awards ceremony celebrating whistleblowers, Assange gave an impassioned defence of WikiLeaks and against censorship of all kinds.

But in the Q and A session that came afterwards, the former winner of the Sam Adams award repeatedly refused to answer questions about his decision not to return to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault.

"How much longer are you going to stay in the Ecuadorean embassy?" asked one undergraduate. "We will see," Assange said, then smiling: "Who knows?"

The next student fared no better. "Sweden is a free country with an independent judiciary. Why do you resist being questioned in that country?"

Assange's smile faded. "I have answered these questions extensively in the past," he replied sharply and referred the student to a website.

A question about cyber terrorism was greeted with verbose warmth. Rachel Savage, a 22-year-old PPE student then asked: "What would you say to the protesters outside who say your appearance tonight diminishes the seriousness of rape and sexual assault?"

Assange half closed his eyes and sighed. "I heard there was a protest but we sent our cameras out there before joining you tonight and there were 28 supporters of me and of no one else."

Before the event, however, there had been at least 50 protesters and no supporters of Assange to be seen. After the ceremony, security staff confirmed they had not seen anyone defending the WikiLeaks founder all evening.

Waving her anti-Assange banner while around 400 undergraduates queued to get into the hall, Simone Webb, the protest organiser, insisted the demonstration was not a stand against free speech.

"I don't think that by saying the Oxford Union should not have invited Assange I am in any way questioning their right or freedom to do so," she said. "Nor do I think Assange should be censored. I'm not necessarily advocating a blanket no platform policy: I would feel somewhat differently were he speaking at a debate where there would be more opportunity for him to be challenged and held to account."

"The motivation for this protest is twofold. Primarily that Assange's continued evasion of justice makes it hugely ironic that he's speaking at an awards ceremony about truth, justice, integrity and courage. And, secondly, protesting to challenge the marginalisation of rape allegations in society as a whole and also by the union in particular."

Driven by a determination to see Assange, around 400 students had waited for over an hour in the driving snow to get a seat. "I'm conflicted about being here," said David, who refused to give his full name, "because I'm struggling to figure out where I stand on this Assange issue. I believe he should be on trial but he's an important figurehead and I'm interested in what he has to say."

As she stood waiting to enter the hall, Savage said: "I'm glad the protesters are demonstrating about the evasion of the rape allegations but I'm not standing with them because I don't oppose him speaking."

After Assange's response to her question however, Savage was left sanguine. "This has confirmed to me that he's evading justice," she said. "He didn't even answer my question, he just made a disparaging comment about the protesters. He showed no respect at all for victims of the types of crime that he has been accused of."

Assange's allies

*Letter to the Editor
The Guardian
29 January 2013*

If the Guardian could "find no allies" of Julian Assange (Report, 24 January), it did not look very hard. They could be found among the appreciative audience at the Oxford Union, and in our group seated at the front: the Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence.

Many in our group, which co-sponsored the event, had travelled considerable distances to confer the 10th annual Sam Adams award on Dr Thomas Fingar for his work overseeing the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that revealed the absence of an Iranian nuclear weaponisation programme since 2003. Many of us spoke about the need for integrity in intelligence, describing the ethical dilemma that confronts government employees who witness illegal activity, including serious threats to public safety. However, none of this, nor any aspect of Dr Fingar's acceptance speech, made it into your article.

*Ann Wright Retired US army colonel and foreign service officer of US state dept. Ray
McGovern Retired CIA analyst
Elizabeth Murray Retired CIA analyst
Coleen Rowley Retired FBI agent, Annie Machon Former MI5 intelligence officer
Thomas Drake Former National Security Agency official
Craig Murray Former British ambassador
David MacMichael Retired CIA analyst
Brady Kiesling Former foreign service officer, US department of state
Todd Pierce Retired US army major, judge advocate, Guantánamo defence counsel*

The Guardian's obsession with sullyng the reputation of Julian Assange

WikiLeaks
January 29, 2013

After Julian Assange gave a speech at the Oxford Union on January 23, 2012, The Guardian published an article criticizing his appearance, saying "he refused to be gracious". At the time, video had not been uploaded of the event, so it was impossible to contradict The Guardian's claims. Now that the Oxford Union has uploaded the full speech and Q&A session (albeit only after editing out footage of "Collateral Murder" due to copyright fears), The Guardian's blatant smear tactics can be revealed.

It should first be noted that The Guardian chooses to focus on Julian Assange, rather than the event which he was speaking at: the Sam Adams Award ceremony. Thomas Fingar, the recipient of the award who authored a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate which asserted that Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, is not even mentioned in The Guardian's article.

The Guardian describes Mr Assange's talk as "an impassioned defence of WikiLeaks and against censorship of all kinds", but **foregoes any actual discussion of his 21-minute speech, instead focusing on the Q&A session. The article states that Mr Assange "repeatedly refused to answer questions about his decision not to return to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault". This is false as Mr Assange did not "refuse" to answer any questions, but indeed answered all that were asked of him.**

The first question The Guardian mentions is a student asking how long Mr Assange will stay in the Embassy. He responds, "We will see. Hopefully not much longer, but who knows". As Mr Assange and the Ecuadorian Government are attempting to arrange a diplomatic solution with Britain, this can be viewed as an honest, straightforward answer. **But The Guardian implies that his answer was insufficient, stating that "the next student fared no better".**

The following question is about Julian Assange's refusal to return to Sweden. The Guardian describes his answer stating: "Assange's smile faded. "I have answered these questions extensively in the past," he replied sharply and referred the student to a website."

First off, The Guardian implies that the question altered Julian Assange's mood, something which can be concluded to be false upon seeing the video. He receives and answers the question in the same manner. Secondly, it is true that he has "answered these questions extensively", and it is also detailed in Ecuador's statement on the acceptance of his asylum. Furthermore, after referring the student to the Justice for Assange website, he goes on to give a brief explanation of how Sweden refuses to guarantee against his extradition to the U.S. Again, answering the question.

Mr Assange is then asked, "What would you say to the protesters outside who say that your appearance here and you being in the Ecuadorian Embassy is dismissing victims of rape and the seriousness of the crime of rape?"

The Guardian states, "Assange half closed his eyes and sighed", neither of which happen. Again, we see The Guardian attempting to paint Mr Assange as someone who is annoyed by these questions, when he is actually answering them in an even, straightforward manner.

The Guardian continues: "[Assange speaking:] 'I heard there was a protest but we sent our cameras out there before joining you tonight and there were 28 supporters of me and of no one else. Before the event, however, there had been at least 50 protesters and no supporters of Assange to be seen. After the ceremony, security staff confirmed they had not seen anyone defending the WikiLeaks founder all evening.'"

If you listen to Mr Assange's actual response, you will notice that he is implicitly referring to the planned protest outside the Ecuadorian Embassy: "Well, I'm here at the Embassy. I heard there was going to be a protest, repeated *ad infinitum* in The Guardian by PPE students who somehow have roles writing for The Guardian. But actually, we count 28 supporters of ours out there— we just sent out the cameraman—and no one else."

As he suggests, there were plans to protest both outside the Oxford Union and the Ecuadorian Embassy, arranged by the same person.

The second half of The Guardian's article contains quotes from the protesters outside, as if to frame Mr Assange as a liar based on the previous claims they make. **All other questions he is asked go unreported**— namely, all the ones not about the Swedish allegations, but about a government's right to keep secrets, Mr Assange's asylee status, the publication of unredacted cables, WikiLeaks' decision process of what to publish, and cyberterrorism.

It is clear from The Guardian's article that they have an obsession with Julian Assange and are incredibly selective of their quotations in order to frame him as an ungrateful liar. But if one reviews the actual source material, it is evident that The Guardian's claims hold no truth.

All videos of Julian Assange's speech at the Oxford Union can be seen at its YouTube Channel.

Videos at: <http://wikileaksetc.blogspot.dk/2013/01/the-guardians-obsession-with-sullyng.html>

Amelia Hill is a Dirty Liar

Craig Murray
January 30, 2013

The Guardian hit a new low in Amelia Hill's report on Julian Assange's appearance at the Oxford Union. Hill moved beyond propaganda to downright lies.

This is easy to show. Read through Hill's "report". Then zip to 20 minutes and 55 seconds of the recording of Assange speaking at the event Hill misreports, and simply listen to the applause from the Oxford Union after Assange stops speaking.

Just that hearty applause is sufficient to show that the entire thrust and argument of Amelia Hill's article moves beyond distortion or misrepresentation— in themselves dreadful sins in a journalist— and into the field of outright lies. Her entire piece is intended to give the impression that the event was a failure and the audience were hostile to Assange. That is completely untrue.

Much of what Hill wrote is not journalism at all. What does this actually mean? "His critics were reasoned, those who queued for over an hour in the snow to hear him speak were thoughtful. It was Julian Assange— the man at the centre of controversy— who refused to be gracious."

Hill manages to quote five full sentences of the organiser of the anti-Assange demonstration (which I counted at 37 people) while giving us not one single sentence of Assange's twenty minute address. Nor a single sentence of Tom Fingar, the senior US security official who was receiving the Sam Adams award.

Even more remarkably, all three students Hill could find to interview were hostile to Assange. In a hall of 450 students who applauded Assange enthusiastically and many of whom crowded round to shake my hand after the event, Hill was apparently unable to find a single person who did not share the Rusbridger line on Julian Assange. Hill is not a journalist— she is a pathetic grovelling lickspittle who should be deeply, deeply ashamed.

Here is the answer to the question about cyber-terrorism of which Amelia Hill writes: "A question about cyber-terrorism was greeted with verbose warmth"

As you can see, Assange's answer is serious, detailed, thoughtful and not patronising to the student. Hill's characterisation— again without giving a word of Assange's actual answer— is not one that could genuinely be maintained. Can anybody— and I mean this as a real question— can anybody look at that answer and believe that "Verbose warmth" is a fair and reasonable way to communicate what had been said to an audience who had not seen it? Or is it just an appalling piece of hostile propaganda by Hill?

The night before Assange's contribution at the union, John Bolton had been there as guest speaker. **John Bolton is a war criminal whose actions deliberately and directly contributed to the launching of an illegal war which killed hundreds of thousands of people. Yet there had not been one single Oxford student picketing the hosting of John Bolton, and Amelia Hill did not turn up to vilify him.** My main contribution to the Sam Adams event was to point to this as an example of the way people are manipulated by the mainstream media into adopting seriously warped moral values.

Amelia Hill is one of the warpers, the distorters of reality. The Guardian calls her a "Special Investigative Correspondent." She is actually a degraded purveyor of lies on behalf of the establishment. Sickening.

<http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2013/01/amelia-hill-is-a-dirty-liar/>

Swartz slogs för vår skull

Maria-Pia Boëthius

Etc.

Januari 26, 2013

Fredagen den 14:e januari 2013 tog den unga hackeraktivisten Aaron Swartz livet av sig i sin lägenhet i New York, endast 26 år gammal, några veckor innan rättegången mot honom skulle starta. Hans "brott" skulle ha kunnat innebära 35 års fängelse och en miljon dollar i böter. Aaron var en ljuvlig människa. 14 år gammal var han redan ett datorgeni. Men till skillnad från Jobs, Zuckerberg och Gates använde han sina talanger till det allmänna bästa och struntade fullständigt i att göra pengar. Han kunde ha varit miljardär; istället använde han sin begåvning för att göra världen lite bättre.

I Chicago sitter Jeremy Hammond, 27 år, som kallas "elektronikens Robin Hood" sen tio månader i fängelse utan rättegång; han riskerar livstid, säger man. I en annan cell i USA sitter Bradley Manning, 25 år, mannen som anses ha läckt den fasansfulla videon av de amerikanska helikoptermorden i Bagdad och annat hemligt material till Wikileaks. Han har nu varit fängslad i över tre år utan rättegång och behandlats så illa av militären att en domare beslutat att man ska dra av 900 dagar från hans eventuella straff. Konservativa krafter yrkar på att han ska dömas till döden.

På Ecuadors ambassad i London uppehåller sig Julian Assange, grundaren av Wikileaks på flykt undan utlämning till Sverige.

Aaron Swartz, vars insatser är så många att de inte går att räkna upp, Aavaz, Reddit bland allt annat (hans föreläsningar finns på nätet) hade hackat sig in på JSTOR och gjort mängder av forskningsmaterial tillgängligt för alla; enligt tanken att forskningsresultat från amerikanska universitet och college tillhör allmänheten. De ska inte till hög kostnad endast vara tillgängliga för dem som har råd, de är allas egendom, finansierade som de oftast är av det allmänna. För detta beundransvärda tilltag riskerade Swartz alltså 35 års fängelse och drakoniska böter. Och nu har han hängt sig.

Jeremy Hammond hackade sig in på Strategic Forecasting, en privat och global underrättelsetjänst. Han gjorde också en massa kontokortsuppgifter tillgängliga enligt idén att man ska ta lite från de rika för att finansiera aktivism. För detta riskerar han livstid. Han har, säger hans mamma, 167 i IQ, intelligenskvot, han är, säger hon ett geni men besitter tyvärr inte visdom. Inte det?

De här aktivisterna leder en avant garde-strid, som handlar om vår framtid, om nätets möjligheter att tjäna allmänheten och demokratin istället för att bli ännu ett verktyg i maktens och kapitalets tjänst. De slåss— för vår skull— om makten över nätet. Jag fattar inte alla deras aktioner men det skulle inte falla mig in att fördöma dem. Jag har levt tillräckligt länge för att se att det som gestaltas som "brott" i dag ofta visar sig ha varit absolut nödvändiga tilltag för att förändra världen till det bättre i morgon. Och ingen av dem, inte en enda, sysslar med våld. Det handlar om civil, elektronisk olydnad.

Makten däremot verkar ta till vilka medel som helst för att stoppa dem. Och etablerade medier, går med på att gestalta dessa icke-våldsamma frihetskämpar som kriminella.

Wikileaks var ett stort hot mot den etablerade journalistiken; de tydliggjorde en hel värld av medietystnad, av etablerade mediers pakt med makten, vilket journalister, som lever med idén att de speglar verkligheten och granskar makten har svårt att förlåta Wikileaks. **Journalistikens svek blev alltför uppenbart.**

Det finns få känsligare ämnen inom svensk vänster eller feminism än Julian Assange. Idén tycks vara att eftersom han är anklagad för sexuella övergrepp i Sverige ska man över huvud taget inte ställa sig på hans sida i andra frågor; han är körd över hela linjen.

Så tycker inte jag. När jag läser om de två svenskarna, som under mycket oklara omständigheter utlämnats till USA från Djibouti tycker jag att Assanges rädsla för att komma till Sverige och hederligt ställa upp på en rättmätig undersökning av anklagelserna om vad han gjort sig skyldig till förvandlas från paranoia till begriplig.

Spottet och späet från svenska medier blir obehagliga; deras idé tycks ännu vara att "Sverige är annorlunda". Men om man betraktar vad makten är beredd att tillfoga Jeremy Hammond och Bradley Manning, vad de tänkte sig göra med Aaron Swartz innan han hängde sig, hur FBI köpte näaktivisten Sabu, hans rätta namn är Hector Xavier Monsegur, som var rädd för det hemska straff som väntade honom och istället gick med på att bli informatör och skvallra, vilket ledde till att sex näaktivister arresterades, bland dem Jeremy Hammond **och när man känner till Carl Bildts nära band till USA (vi har världens hittills enda, i en demokratisk stat, privatiserad utrikespolitik) kan man inte längre förvåna sig.**

Jag skulle inte heller ha rest till Sverige om jag vore Julian Assange och misstänkte att jag skulle bli utlämnad till USA där människor, utan att många i världen klagar, blir utsatta för svåra rättsövergrepp därför att de är näaktivister.

Aaron Swartz påminner mig om Jan Palach, 20 år, som brände sig till döds i protest mot den sovjetiska invasionen av Tjeckoslovakien 1989 eller Mohamed Bouazizi, 28 år, i Tunisien som tog livet av sig därför att övermakten förödmjukat honom bortom varje gräns. Aarons professor på Harvard respekterade sin elev enormt och skriver att han nu är en ikon. Förr hette det martyr. Strunt samma vad det heter; jag kommer inte att glömma Aaron Swartz och försöka verka i hans anda.

'Assange effectively denied opportunity to enjoy asylum'— Ecuadorian FM

*RT
27 January 2013*

By not allowing passage to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange from London to Latin America, where he was granted asylum, Britain infringes same international documents it vigorously lobbied for, Ecuador's Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino tells RT.

Patino says London's pressure, which forces Assange to live in the Ecuadorian embassy in Britain, is a serious infringement of his rights. The WikiLeaks frontman applied for and was eventually granted asylum by Ecuador in August 2012 to avoid UK extradition to Sweden, where police want to question him over sex crime allegations.

Assange believes extradition would result in his being turned over to the US and prosecuted for disclosing thousands of classified US documents.

RT: Minister, I'd like to ask you about the situation with Julian Assange. President Correa said that the solution depends entirely on Europe. What is the Ecuadorian Embassy's stand on the British authorities' unwavering refusal to let the founder of WikiLeaks leave the country?

Ricardo Patino: It does concern us, and we bring up this issue every day, emphasizing that denying Assange the freedom to leave the UK is a serious infringement on his rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights— and I'd like to stress the word “universal”— an individual is entitled not only to request asylum, but also to be granted it.

At the time the declaration was penned, the British diplomats insisted that it didn't read “everyone has the right to seek and to be granted asylum”; the Latin American countries suggested this wording: “seek and be granted asylum”. They insisted that it read “to seek and to enjoy asylum”. Meanwhile, Julian Assange is effectively being denied an opportunity to enjoy asylum.

There are plenty of legal reasons and international regulations that validate Ecuador's decision to grant asylum to Julian Assange, including the international treaties that our country signed, along with the UK, more than a hundred years ago. We sincerely regret the British government's failure to make the right decision, but we are not authorized to demand something from them. The UK is independent in its decisions.

Nevertheless, we believe this case concerns the human rights of a specific individual. And it goes back a long time, because Mr. Assange has faced persecution before, and this was also one of the reasons behind Ecuador's decision. Julian Assange's life was at risk at the time because of his activities as he exercised his freedom of expression. And we believe that Britain's refusal to let Mr. Assange leave the country is an encroachment on his rights.

To be sure, we cannot force the UK to let him go, so we have decided to wait for a reasonable period of time. If we fail to find a diplomatic solution within that timeframe— and we keep looking for one; I had requested a meeting with Mr. William Hague for several months before we finally met last September during a UN summit; later, we sent them a communication requesting another meeting, but haven't received a response as yet— then we will be left with no alternative but to seek legal remedies, which will definitely prove time-consuming, and altogether won't be the best possible option. A diplomatic solution would be the best option.

The only thing I am empowered to do is courteously request the British government to consider the legal reasons for letting Mr. Assange leave the United Kingdom (which we have laid out for them in detail), and to end this day-to-day practice of disregarding Mr. Assange's rights, whereby he is being deprived of the opportunity to take up asylum, although a sovereign nation has granted him one a month ago....

'There is a drone with Assange's name on it'— William Blum

*John Robles
Voice of Russia
Jan. 28, 2013*

Assange will be assassinated if freed, expert says. In an exclusive interview with the Voice of Russia, William Blum, an American author, historian, and critic of United States foreign policy spoke about CIA assassinations (one of his areas of expertise) and some of his past work. Mr. Blum is candid in his assessment of CIA assassination plots against such people as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa. He also has some surprising things to say about Julian Assange and Osama Bin Laden.

Robles: Hello Mr. Blum, nice to be speaking with you. You have a very long and interesting history... a lot of things you have written. You wrote a book about the CIA. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Blum: Well, American interventions carried out via the CIA and all the U.S. military have been my specialty for many-many years. My books emphasize those things. As does my monthly newsletters "The Anti-Empire Report".

As far as the backlash: the U.S. government doesn't bother American authors that much, because they know we don't have that much influence, **they can afford to have us write things and point to that as proof of freedom of speech in America.** So they don't care.

Robles: I see. They said that you had exposed more than 200 CIA employees.

Blum: That was in 1969 when I was working for the "Underground Press" in Washington D.C. and I and a colleague we parked our car outside the CIA headquarters in Virginia and for a couple of hours or so, we recorded the license plate numbers of all the cars going into the CIA. And with that information we were able to compile a list of names and addresses of these people, which we published in our underground newspaper.

Robles: That sounds very interesting! You talked about CIA assassination plots, you're pretty much an expert on that. Can you tell us a little bit about what you know about the plot to remove Hugo Chavez?

Blum: Assassination attempts? That was in 2004, the U.S. government met with the coup plotters both in Venezuela and Washington and these people then carried out a military coup which overthrew Chavez and the people took him to custody, but he was freed after about two days, because of a combination of public outcry and pressure from the remaining members of the military who were not part of the coup. So then he actually had and still has a lot of support in the military. He, himself was a member of it. So a combination of the military and a public outcry forced the coup plotters to abandon their plans and after two days Chavez was released.

Robles: Can you tell us about your book "Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower"? And could you comment on an endorsement you received, at the time, in 2006 by Osama bin Laden?

Blum: It was supposed to be a mini-encyclopedia of all the nefarious things done by the U.S. foreign policy. There's a chapter on assassination, a chapter on bombings and so on. There are many chapters covering the gross and illegal aspects of U.S. foreign policy. It's compiled together many things which most Americans, and most people in the world are not aware of.

Individual elements of each of these compilations one could find in some public area or other but to put it together into long tables of information was my contribution and that came out in about 2000. And then in 2006 the Arabic version of the book, the book had many foreign translations, there were two in Arabic and one of those two was read by Osama bin Laden and he, in one of his periodic audio recordings, mentioned that Americans would be well served if they read my book and get a better understanding of their enemy.

And I can only guess that the theme in that book *Rogue State* which most caught his attention and his sympathy was one chapter dealing with the motivations of anti-American terrorists. Contrary to what we were being taught, and still now to a large extent, were that these people were: just hated America, or they hated Christianity, or they were just crazy, or they were just envious of democracy and our wealth, all of these reasons, but never even a hint that they were acting out of retribution for the decades of very serious military and other infringements upon people in the Middle East. All kinds of bombings and overthrows of governments, supporting dictatorships, supporting Israel, all kinds of things I gave a long list of the American actions which created all these anti-American terrorists, and that is what I am assuming most appealed to Bin Laden.

Robles: What do you know about the assassination plot to kill Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa? Before the elections, he is supposed to be assassinated.

Blum: This month you are speaking about?

Robles: Yes sir. Correa made this statement that they had uncovered a plot to assassinate him before...

Blum: I wouldn't doubt that. I would be surprised if the CIA did not attempt to assassinate him. I mean among other reasons, he's sheltering Assange! That by itself is reason to assassinate him.

Robles: Are you saying that just the fact that he's given asylum to Assange, that's enough for the CIA to assassinate him?

Blum: The CIA attempts to assassinate people for much less reasons than that. **Assange is the public enemy #1 in America.** The U.S. is obsessed with him and they are afraid that he will be issuing the release of more classified documents so they'd really like to put him out of the way, if they can.

They were all set to invade the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, when the British government was finally talked out of it by their own people: That it would set a terrible precedent, that the U.K. Embassies all over the world would not be safe then. That was the reason that they called off the invasion plan.

They're very serious about Assange. I mean he has to go. He's the most marked man in the world.

Robles: You think so? You said he's enemy number one of the United States.

Blum: As far as being put out of the way? Yeah. I would say that if the US had a choice it would get him out of the way before anyone else.

Robles: So you think it's pretty credible his fears of being assassinated by the CIA? Yeah?

Blum: There is a drone somewhere with his name on it, and if he walks around in the world and he is not in the midst of a big city, he's a marked man. There's a rocket with his name on it inside of a drone with his name on it. So I can not imagine that would not be the case. The CIA has, if you delve as much as I have into the history of assassinations and so on, that is totally expected.

Robles: So as an expert you are saying that it is totally expected?! Wow! Okay

Blum: If he's walking around free somewhere. Yeah.

Robles: Sure. I see. I see. Hey Bill thank you very much! I really appreciate you speaking with me!

Stand Up for Julian Assange

*Mairead Maguire
Common Dreams
January 29, 2013*

It's been seven months now since Julian Assange entered the Ecuadorian embassy and was given political asylum. He entered the embassy after the British Courts shamefully refused his appeal against extradition to Sweden where he is wanted for questioning about sexual molestation (no criminal charges have been made against him). Julian Assange has said he is willing to answer questions in the U.K. relating to accusations against him, or alternatively, to go to Sweden, provided that the Swedish government guarantee he will not be extradited to the U.S. where plans are being made to try him for conspiracy to commit espionage. The Swedish Government refuses to give such assurances.

Mr. Assange is right to be concerned about the dangers of extradition to U.S. The American media has reported that the U.S. Justice Department and the Pentagon have been conducting a criminal investigation into "whether WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange violated criminal laws in the group's release of government documents, and should face charges under the espionage act."

Mr. Assange's only crime is that he embarrassed the U.S. and other powerful governments with WikiLeaks' release of thousands of U.S. state department cables and video footage of the 2007 incident with an apache helicopter in which the U.S. military appear to have deliberately killed civilians, including two Reuters employees. **These revelations demonstrate crimes against humanity by the United States.**

For this truth-telling, he has inherited the wrath of the U.S. government, and has been targeted in a most vindictive way— as has American soldier, Pt. Bradley Manning, currently undergoing a military Court hearing for allegedly leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks. Pt. Bradley Manning has been subjected, according to formal

U.N. investigation, to “cruel and inhuman treatment” while being held in solitary confinement in a U.S. prison. In effect, the American government has admitted to the torture of Pt. Bradley Manning, one of their own soldiers.

However, even if the Swedish authorities decide not to charge Julian Assange, the U.S. will probably demand that the British government extradite Assange from Britain to the U.S., to face a Grand Jury indictment. (The U.S. Grand Jury has been sitting for 16 months and it is believed to have reached a verdict to indict Julian Assange and has a sealed indictment ready to unseal at the most beneficial time to the US. The U.S. Grand Jury system is a flawed, unjust legal process, consisting of four prosecutors with defense evidence is allowed. There is no judge and a jury pool is drawn from Alexandria, Virginia, which has the highest percentage of military contractor families in the U.S.)

When I met Julian Assange, I was struck by his bright, intelligent and compassionate mind, and glad to see that in spite of all the persecution and abuse of his human rights, he is in good spirits and good health. For seven months now, he has been confined indoors with no possibility of even five minutes outside in the fresh air, which is a basic right for all political prisoners. If he tried to go outside, he would be immediately arrested by the many British police outside the embassy, and extradited to Sweden or the U.S. (The cost to maintain this police force outside the Embassy is some £11,000 per day).

Unlike most political prisoners, he has no idea how long his virtual imprisonment in the embassy will last--6 more months or 6 years. The diplomatic standoff continues. This is indeed cruel, inhumane and mental torture. His only crime was to tell the truth and bring transparency to the illegal acts of the U.S. Government and its allies around the world.

I believe the U.K., Swedish and U.S. governments are all complicit in the mental torture of Julian Assange, and I appeal to the Australian government, human rights defenders, brave media, and people who love truth and freedom around the world to stand up for Julian Assange and his human rights, and the assurance that he get the chance to answer all accusations against him in the U.K. or Sweden without being extradited to U.S., where he could meet the same “cruel and inhuman treatment” as Pt. Bradley Manning has suffered.

The least we can do is raise our voices to protect Julian Assange-- and Bradley Manning-- who have made such brave attempts, at the cost of their own freedom, to expose war crimes and defend freedom and democracy.

• *Mairead Corrigan Maguire won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her work for peace in Northern Ireland. Her book, The Vision of Peace (edited by John Dear, with a foreword by Desmond Tutu and a preface by the Dalai Lama) is available from www.wipfandstock.com. She lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland. See: www.peacepeople.com*

Confirmed: Assange will run for Australian Senate in 2013

WikiLeaks representative Kristinn Hrafnsson confirmed to RT that Julian Assange will run for a seat in the Australian Senate.

RT

30 January, 2013

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange plans to run for a seat in the Australian Senate in 2013, it has been confirmed on Wednesday. It is not yet clear how he will escape from London's Ecuadorean embassy.

A native of Australia's Queensland state, Assange said in March last year that he wanted to "bring liberty back to the center of Australian politics." His Senate candidacy will help him defend free speech and the "right of citizens... to live their lives free from state interference," he explained.

After taking political asylum in Ecuador's embassy in London in June, Assange expressed interest in the senate seat in December, when he said that he would run as a candidate as part of a yet-to-be-formed WikiLeaks party. He also called on to his supporters to stand with him.

Assange is expected to run on a WikiLeaks party ticket; If he cannot physically make it to the Senate, his seat will be taken by his running mate, the WikiLeaks wrote on Twitter on Wednesday.

Assange's mother Christine has confirmed her son's senate candidacy: "He will be awesome," she told AAP News. **She added that currently, Australians can only choose between the two major parties in the country's legislature, which she called "US lackey party number one and US lackey party number two."**

"It will be great to 'Assange' the senate for some Aussie oversight," Christine Assange said.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced earlier in the day that the country's national elections will be held on September 14.

Assange may not be able to be physically present at the Australian senate as he remains holed up in London's Ecuadorean embassy in order to avoid extradition to Sweden. Stockholm has called for Assange to be questioned in the presence of those who made the sex crime allegations. This has raised concerns from Assange's lawyers that the WikiLeaks found could then be extradited again to the US upon arriving in Sweden.

If extradited to the US, Assange will likely face trial for the release of thousands of classified US diplomatic cables. It was revealed in September last year that US authorities had declared Assange and WikiLeaks to be enemies of the state.

Kristinn Hrafnsson: FBI Came to Investigate Wikileaks in Iceland

*Posted by Irien
WikiLeaks Press
January 31, 2013*

A group of FBI agents arrived in Iceland in August 2011, requesting collaboration with Icelandic police authorities to investigate Wikileaks, as revealed by Wikileaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson on RÚV's news magazine Kastljós last night.

"The FBI came here in a private jet and landed at Reykjavík Airport. According to my information— which is very solid and I have had it confirmed— Minister of the Interior Ögmundur Jónasson was notified of their arrival and reacted angrily because it is unbelievably presumptuous to come here this way," Kristinn stated.

"According to my information, he demanded that these agents pack their bags, embark the plane and leave the country," Kristinn added. "I know that this was later discussed within the government, which formally objected to U.S. authorities."

Ögmundur confirmed Kristinn's statement to RÚV, saying a group of foreign agents came to the country in August 2011, requesting assistance to investigate a certain affair. Their request was rejected as it is unnatural for foreign police forces to carry out investigations in Iceland, the minister reasoned.

Read here:
http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/FBI_Came_to_Investigate_Wikileaks_in_Iceland_0_397397.news.aspx

<http://wikileaks-press.org/kristinn-hrafnsson-fbi-came-to-investigate-wikileaks-in-iceland/>

With Assange in Diplomatic Limbo, Sweden in No Rush to Press Rape Charges

*Alissa Bohling
Truthout
1 February 2013*

With Julian Assange remaining in diplomatic limbo in London, Sweden refuses his offer for an interview, leading some to suspect they are not anxious to pursue allegations of rape that have been lodged against him.

About 50 people protesting Julian Assange's January 23 video appearance at Oxford Union debate hall made clear that the months the founder of the government transparency web site WikiLeaks has spent confined to the Ecuadorian Embassy in London have not dulled the public memory of sex crime accusations against him.

The protest organizer told The Guardian she opposed what she says is the "marginalization" of the claims of two women who say Assange sexually assaulted them in Sweden in 2010.

Assange was arrested in London in December 2010 under the authority of the European Arrest Warrant, a legal instrument promoted as a counterterrorism tool that allows any EU country to detain suspects wanted in another member country, including for acts not classified as crimes under the detaining country's laws. The arrest warrant says he is suspected of rape, sexual molestation and illegal use of force. Assange has invited Sweden to interview him by remote communication or in person at the embassy. Sweden has so far not expressed interest in doing so. Formal charges have not been filed in Sweden, where suspects must undergo two rounds of questioning before that stage of the legal process.

Assange and his attorneys in the United States and Europe could not be reached for comment for this article. In an October 2012 letter to US Attorney General Eric Holder, they asked the Department of Justice to give its word that Assange will not be extradited, subject to indefinite detention or prosecution under the Espionage Act for the activities of WikiLeaks, but with no response, he and his Swedish accusers remain in legal limbo, calling into question whether Assange's civil liberties and the women's right to take their accusations through the criminal justice process can both be upheld.

Government Tactic of Smearing Whistleblowers

Jesselyn Radack of the Government Accountability Project represented high-profile whistleblowers Thomas Drake, who outed an illegal surveillance program at the National Security Agency, and former CIA official John Kiriakou, who shared information about torture with the press.

"If Sweden really gave a damn about [the accusations], they would take up Mr. Assange on his offers to be interviewed," said Radack.

Radack said she worked in a battered women's clinic during law school and still volunteers at rape crisis centers. "I know rape victims are held to almost impossible standards," to establish their credibility, she said. For the two Swedish women, "Their own state delegitimizes their claims by not aggressively pursuing them."

The accusations against the leader whose organization released millions of official secrets to the embarrassment of governments around the world have raised more than a few eyebrows. "Certainly sex charges and sex has been an issue that has been used to undermine the credibility" of other whistleblowers, said Radack.

The tactic has been used to discredit not only whistleblowers but also their supporters. According to Radack, "In every single high-profile case I've had," including Kiriakou's and Drake's, "I've been accused of sleeping with my clients."

While it remains unknown whether such a strategy plays a role in Assange's case, widespread suspicions have been enough to raise concerns about using accusations of rape, a crime that disproportionately affects women, as a smear tactic against whistleblowers.

"It really speaks to how little respect and value is placed on women and women's lives," said Claudia Garcia-Rojas, a journalist who spent three years at the Chicago Task Force on Violence Against Girls and Young Women.

Much of the argument for Assange hinges on his attorneys' claim that the acts described in the allegations against him by the women are not criminal under UK law. While the truth of that assertion remains unclear, rape laws do vary widely in countries throughout Europe. Why?

According to Garcia-Rojas, "It's a combination of history and culture and also, [political] representation." Women make up less than 25 percent of the members of both Houses of the UK Parliament. Sweden's Parliament has more women than almost other lawmaking body in the world, about 48 percent women as of 2008. A BBC comparison of rape laws in the two countries, along with Germany, Scotland and the US, showed more similarities than differences, though it did not include data about enforcement. Sweden outlawed spousal rape decades before the UK, but the maximum prison sentence is much shorter. *[Most Swedish sentences for various crimes are shorter than their counterparts in most other countries. --A.B.]*

Just as WikiLeaks' political struggles have given the world a glimpse at governments' stances on free speech, the rape accusations against Assange have shined light on some left-leaning leaders and their attitudes about rape— and the result hasn't always been flattering.

Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa was skeptical of the womens' claims, naming among his reasons that Assange was sleeping in the same bed with one of his accusers. Filmmaker Michael Moore, who posted part of Assange's bail after his initial arrest, told former MSNBC TV host Keith Olbermann the accusations were "a whole bunch of hooey." British Member of Parliament George Galloway, in an August 2012 podcast, said: "I mean, not everybody needs to be asked prior to each insertion. Some people believe that when you go to bed with somebody, take off your clothes and have sex with them and then fall asleep, you're already in the sex game with them." He implied that Assange's alleged conduct was simply "bad manners" and that to equate the accusations with rape would be to "bankrupt the term rape of all meaning."

Women who accuse less well-known men of rape often face similar derision, but another factor comes into play in Assange's case. "The left has sort of adopted Assange as its progressive hero," said Garcia-Rojas. For that reason, "They don't really want to look at this alleged accusation with a lot of seriousness." *[Critics like Garcia-Rojas do not want to look at the available facts with a lot of seriousness. --A.B.]*

At at least a few Occupy camps— offline centers of left and radical activism that in some ways grew up alongside WikiLeaks— some women were discouraged from reporting rapes, with justifications ranging from distrust of law enforcement to shielding the movement from negative press. "Just because the men in the quote-unquote, like, 'the movement,' are involved in social justice work, this doesn't mean that they can't participate in the patriarchy, in some of the more horrid crimes," said Garcia-Rojas.

Shedding Light on a Shadowy Subculture

Assange is often referred to as a "hacker" or "blogger" while First Amendment lawyers, among others, equate his work on WikiLeaks' with journalism. The split suggests cyberactivism is not only controversial, but also not yet well understood. Gabriella

Coleman, a communications professor at work on a book about the hacktivist collective Anonymous, says the accusations against Assange and the often sexist criticism of his accusers are not strong indicators of hacktivist culture.

"It is a very, very male world," said Coleman, but "it doesn't tend to be a culture like football where you're talking about the ladies and scoring with them and that kind of thing." Closed subcultures where men are given particular admiration or authority, such as certain sports cultures, have been documented to create more risk and impunity for rape and other sex crimes.

Questioning norms is fundamental to the subversive act of hacking, said Coleman, and "There is non-normative treatment of sexuality within the hacker world, whether it is a lot of transgender folks; queer communities; polyamory is extremely common." But in her experience attending something like 40 to 50 hacker conferences and researching two books, she said she doesn't think hackers' culture of rule-breaking extends to sexual violence. "They're really into consent and transparency," said Coleman. "Polyamory is a really good example. It's a culture of, 'Let's talk about everything and make sure we're all on the same page when it comes to having multiple relationships.'"

That's not to say hacker gatherings like Defcon in Las Vegas are immune to instances of "ubersexualization of women," said Coleman, but increasingly, they are loudly condemned. She said skepticism among cyberactivists regarding the sex crimes accusations against Assange tends to be centered on the claims' potentially political nature. *[Or maybe they have taken the trouble to study the available evidence. --A.B.]* Coleman speculated that suspicion may have grown even stronger after September 2012, when file-sharing site Pirate Bay founder Gottfrid Svartholm Warg was deported from Cambodia to Sweden to serve a 2009 sentence for copyright infringement. According to Asia Times, Warg allegedly helped host WikiLeaks' web site for a time.

- *Alissa Bohling is an assistant editor at Truthout.*

<http://truth-out.org/news/item/14196-with-assange-in-diplomatic-limbo-sweden-in-no-rush-to-press-rape-charges>

Jemima Khan on Julian Assange: how the Wikileaks founder alienated his allies

WikiLeaks — whose mission statement was “to produce a more just society based upon truth” — has been guilty of the same obfuscation and misinformation as those it sought to expose, while its supporters are expected to follow, unquestioningly, in blinkered, cultish devotion.

*Jemima Khan
The New Statesman
6 February 2013*

I passed through Los Angeles recently on my way to the Sundance Film Festival. I don't know the place well, but it always feels to me as if it is in limbo and has never grown into a proper city: a municipal playground, populated by restless kidults. Here, people dine at seven and sleep by nine, ferried around in cars, sipping sodas, suspended in a make-believe world, poised in that fake calm between a toddler's fall and ensuing screams.

Its transient, unevolved quality may have something to do with it being a temporary home to a disproportionate number of famous people. There's a theory about fame: the moment it strikes, it arrests development. Michael Jackson remained suspended in childhood, enjoying sleepovers and funfairs; Winona Ryder an errant teen who dabbled in shoplifting and experimented with pills; George Clooney, a 30-year-old commitment-phobe, never quite ready yet to settle down. *[Just so we know what kind of person Julian Assange is... thereby demonstrating what kind of writer Jemima Khan is. —A.B.]*

Every plan in LA is SBO ("subject to better offer"). Fame infantilises and grants relative impunity. Those that seek it, out of an exaggerated need for admiration or attention, are often the least well equipped to deal with criticism.

Julian Assange was the reason I ended up at Sundance, the showcase for international independent film-makers. I was there to attend the premiere of Alex Gibney's documentary about WikiLeaks, *We Steal Secrets*, **which I executive produced** and which Assange denounced before seeing [based on the]. He objected to the title; WikiLeaks tweeted that it was "an unethical and biased title in the context of pending criminal trials. It is the prosecution's claim and it is false."

However, as I had previously pointed out to Assange, the title was derived from a comment in the film by Michael Hayden, a former director of the CIA, who told Gibney that the US government was in the business of "stealing secrets" from other countries. It was used specifically to highlight the irony of the situation of Bradley Manning, the US army private alleged to be the source of the American intelligence cables leaked to Assange. Manning may be put to death by his own government for doing the very thing to which Hayden so candidly admits. *[The film has been repeatedly advertised as concerned primarily with WikiLeaks and Assange, not the CIA. —A.B.]*

The film wasn't in the competition at Sundance, as Gibney is a well-known film-maker and it already has a distributor, but that didn't stop the WikiLeaks account from tweeting: "Anti-#WikiLeaks doc 'We Steal Secrets' steals no prizes at Sundance as film is rejected in all 31 categories".

The problem with Camp Assange is that, in the words of George W Bush, it sees the world as being "with us or against us". *[So Assange is not only comparable with Michael Jackson and Winona Ryder, but also George W. Bush. —A.B.]* When I told Assange I was part of the *We Steal Secrets* team, I suggested that he view it not in terms of being pro- or anti-him, but rather as a film that would be fair and would represent the truth. It would address, directly, the claims of his critics, which needed to be included so that the film could be seen as balanced and could reach people beyond the WikiLeaks congregation. He replied: "If it's a fair film, it will be pro-Julian Assange." *[Did he really and, if so, was he in deadly earnest? —A.B.]* Beware the celebrity who refers to himself in the third person. *[How often does he do that, and in what contexts? —A.B.]*

It became clear to me that Assange would be willing to co-operate only with an amanuensis and not an independent film-maker such as Gibney, whose nuanced work includes *Enron: the Smartest Guys in the Room*, *Client 9: the Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer* and *Taxi to the Dark Side*, for which he won an Oscar. In many ways, the film's narrative arc mirrors my own journey with Assange, from admiration to demoralisation. *[So, this is what she meant by "I suggested that he view it not in terms of being pro- or anti-him"? —A.B.]*

I supported Assange before I ever met him. I knew of his work when he was arrested on allegations of sexual assault in late 2010 and held in solitary confinement and I decided to stand bail for him because I believed that through WikiLeaks he was speaking truth to power and had made many enemies. Although I had concerns about what was rumoured to be a nonchalant attitude towards redactions in the documents he leaked, as well as some doubts about the release of certain cables— for example, the list of infrastructure sites vital to US national security [*Is “US national security” a concern of Jemima Khan and, if so, what does she know about the “vital infrastructure sites” disclosed by WikiLeaks? —A.B.*] — I felt more passionately that democracy needs strong, free media.

Accountability and democratic choice, I deeply believe, are guaranteed by rigorous scrutiny only. As Manning wrote, “without information you cannot make informed decisions as a public”.

As editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, Assange had created a transparency mechanism to hold governments and corporations to account. I abhor lies and WikiLeaks exposed the most dangerous lies of all— those told to us by our elected governments. WikiLeaks exposed corruption, war crimes, torture and cover-ups. It showed that we were lied to about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; that the US military had deliberately hidden information about systematic torture and civilian casualties, which were much higher than reported. It revealed that Bush and Obama had sanctioned the mass handover of Iraqi prisoners of war from US troops to the Iraqi authorities, knowing they would be tortured.

It revealed that America’s ally Pakistan was playing a double game, taking US aid and collaborating with the Taliban. It revealed the existence of a secret American assassination squad, with a terrible record of killing women and children in Afghanistan, and it exposed America’s covert war in Yemen. It laid bare criminal behaviour and corruption by tyrants in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, which in turn helped to fuel the popular anger against repression that gave rise to the Arab spring.

Meanwhile, the man accused of leaking the cables, Bradley Manning, was arrested and placed in solitary confinement in an American prison. He was put on suicide watch— against the protests of prison doctors— with his clothes and blankets taken away from him, the cell lights always on. He was cold and deprived of sleep and forced to stand naked at roll-call.

There were also calls by American politicians and pundits for the punishment (execution, even) of Assange, the man who had exposed US war crimes— but not for those who sanctioned or perpetrated them. The US justice department mounted an investigation into whether it could use the Espionage Act to put him in jail. A grand jury was convened to consider whether Assange as well as other members of WikiLeaks should be charged with a crime. Rumours emerged of a sealed indictment against him.

Under political pressure, Visa and MasterCard stopped processing donations to the WikiLeaks fund, even though, as the former WikiLeaks employee James Ball (who is now a Guardian journalist) points out in *We Steal Secrets*, they would happily process payments for the Ku Klux Klan. No charges have yet been filed, but I remain convinced that if Assange is prosecuted for espionage the future of investigative journalism everywhere would be in jeopardy.

As Bill Leonard, the classification tsar for the Bush administration, says in our film: “The Espionage Act is primarily intended to address situations where individuals pass national defence information over to the enemy in order to allow the enemy to harm us. It would be unprecedented if the Espionage Act was being used to attack individuals who did not do anything more than the New York Times or the Washington Post does every day.”

There is no evidence that US national security was damaged in any way by the leaks, nor indeed that democracy has ever been harmed by an increase in the public’s knowledge and understanding. If Assange is prosecuted in the US for espionage, I suspect even his most disenchanted former supporters will take to the barricades in his defence.

The list of alienated and disaffected allies is long: some say they fell out over redactions, some over broken deals, some over money, some over ownership and control. The roll-call includes Assange’s earliest WikiLeaks collaborators, Daniel Domscheit-Berg [*who has been thoroughly discredited*—-A.B.] and “The Architect”, the anonymous technical whizz behind much of the WikiLeaks platform [*according to Domscheit-Berg and who else?*—- A.B.]. It also features the journalists with whom he worked on the leaked cables: Nick Davies, David Leigh and Luke Harding of the Guardian; the New York Times team; James Ball; and the Freedom of Information campaigner Heather Brooke [*all of whose own behaviour has been contemptible*—-A.B.]. Then there are his former lawyer Mark Stephens [*who performed abysmally and charged exorbitant fees*—-A.B.]; Jamie Byng of Canongate Books, who paid him a reported £500,000 advance for a ghostwritten autobiography for which Assange withdrew his co-operation before publication [*of a text that Assange had not approved*—-A.B.]; the Channel 4 team that made a documentary about him which resulted in his unsuccessful complaint to Ofcom that it was unfair [*the bias was obvious*—-A.B.] and had invaded his privacy; and his former WikiLeaks team in Iceland. [*WikiLeaks’ lead spokesperson is Icelander Kristin Hrafnsson.*—-A.B.]

The problem is that WikiLeaks— whose mission statement was “to produce . . . a more just society . . . based upon truth”— has been guilty of the same obfuscation and misinformation as those it sought to expose [*specific examples, please*—-A.B.], while its supporters are expected to follow, unquestioningly, in blinkered, cultish devotion [yes, that certainly describes the subservience of John Pilger, Gareth Peirce, *et al.*].

In August last year, I asked Julian Assange to address the points made by the *New Statesman’s* legal correspondent, David Allen Green, in a blog entitled “Legal myths about the Assange extradition”. These were myths that, as a vocal supporter, I was concerned I might have spread unwittingly. Despite several attempts to elicit a response, I never received one. [*Green’s grossly erroneous analysis has been refuted by several knowledgeable critics, including Glenn Greenwald, as Ms. Khan should have been aware.*—-A.B.]

I was told that Assange was “very busy”, though I was invited to visit the Ecuadorean embassy, where he had recently taken refuge to avoid extradition, for a photo opportunity, which I declined. [*It would be interesting to hear Assange’s account of this exchange.*—-A.B.]

I had wanted to ask him about the opinion of objective legal experts who— contrary to the claims made by WikiLeaks— insist that he is no more vulnerable to extradition to

the US from Sweden than he is from the UK. The WikiLeaks server was once hosted in Sweden to take advantage of the country's liberal protections for journalists (in contrast to Ecuador, which ranks 119th in the World Press Freedom Index). *[Legal expertise is divided on this point; and in any event, the case has essentially to do with politics, not legal interpretations. —A.B.]*

After two Swedish women made allegations that Assange had raped and sexually assaulted them in August 2010 *[No, the police and prosecution did that, despite the two women's testimony to the contrary; and the suspected crime is "minor rape", involving no force or violence; further, one of the women is simply not credible, and the other one gave her consent to the alleged crime —A.B.]*, Mark Stephens, speaking as his lawyer, referred to Sweden as "one of those lickspittle states which used its resources and its facilities for rendition flights" *[that was Stephens, not Assange, and it was part of the above-noted "abysmal performance" —A.B.]*. Yet even WikiLeaks had revealed that in 2006 Sweden stopped rendition flights for the U.S. *[So it is not relevant? Also, the Swedish government has since demonstrated its subservience to the U.S. in numerous other ways. —A.B.]*

Stephens also did not mention that another "lickspittle" state which had involved itself with rendition and torture was the United Kingdom. In any case, onward extradition of Assange from Sweden to the US would still require the consent of the UK, as the original country involved. *[And that consent would surely not be granted? —A.B.]*

Furthermore, the extradition treaty between Sweden and the US prohibits extradition for political or espionage offences and prevents extradition where there is any risk of the death penalty. *[Of course, the U.S. would never dream of formulating an extradition request in such a way as to skirt those issues. —A.B.]*

There have been troubling aspects to the Assange case and questions may need to be asked about the conduct of the Swedish police investigation. The more serious allegation of rape *[i.e. "minor rape" —A.B.]* against him, for example, was dropped at one stage and his arrest warrant withdrawn by the Swedish authorities. One of the chief prosecutors in Stockholm, Eva Finne, who had heard *[read —A.B.]* the prosecution evidence against Assange, stated: "I don't think there is reason to suspect that he has committed rape." *[Ms. Finne's statement was: "I have discontinued the preliminary investigation of the charge originally designated as rape. There is no suspicion of any crime whatsoever." —A.B.]*

However, ten days later the rape investigation was reopened by the Swedish director *[????]* of prosecution Marianne Ny. *[Her status is no higher than Eva Finne's. —A.B.]*

There are also questions about why the public prosecutor waited so long to arrange an interrogation date with Assange (although there were reportedly repeated requests by the prosecution *[not until three weeks had elapsed —A.B.]*, and it was difficult to contact Assange) and why the prosecutor failed to take up Assange's offer of being interviewed via video link when there is a precedent for this in Swedish law. (However, it is worth noting that the Swedish prosecutor has said that Assange is wanted not merely for questioning, but for "the purpose of conducting criminal proceedings"—so that he can be arrested and charged. *[Ny's statements on this question have been contradictory and clearly manipulative. —A.B.]*)

The timing of the rape allegations and the issuing of the Interpol arrest warrant for Assange in November 2010 initially seemed suspicious to many, including me. They

came just two days after the release of the first batch of embarrassing state department cables. Conspiracy theories about the timing were given credibility by Mark Stephens, who attributed the allegations to “dark forces”, saying: “The honey-trap has been sprung.” *[That is Stephens again. Assange, himself, has noted the possibility of a honey trap, but has also noted that it has yet to be proven. —A.B.]*

In an interview with ABC News, Assange said that Swedish prosecutors were withholding evidence which suggested that he had been “set up”. *[His Swedish attorney, Björn Hurtig, said the same, based on evidence that he was permitted to see but not discuss with his client or anyone else. —A.B.]* There were claims by his legal team that Interpol red notices of the type issued in his case were reserved for “terrorists and dictators”. In fact, red notices have been issued for drink-driving and making voyeur videos of college students. The two women at the centre of the rape allegations against Assange were subsequently named and defamed on the internet, threatened with rape and pictured with bullseyes on their faces. *[Not by Assange or any of his closest supporters. He has himself been the target of equal or worse abuse. Does Ms. Khan hold the two women responsible for that? —A.B.]*

It may well be that the serious allegations of sexual assault and rape are not substantiated in court, but I have come to the conclusion that these are all matters for Swedish due process and that Assange is undermining both himself and his own transparency agenda— as well as doing the US department of justice a favour *[How so? —A.B.?] —* by making his refusal to answer questions in Sweden into a human rights issue. There have been three rounds in the UK courts and the UK courts have upheld the European Arrest Warrant in his name three times. *[Which proves what? Ms. Khan seems either unaware of or unconcerned with the well-grounded criticisms of the EAW by competent judicial and political experts. —A.B.]* The women in question have human rights, too, and need resolution. Assange’s noble cause and his wish to avoid a US court does not trump their right to be heard in a Swedish court. *[Has he ever claimed otherwise? What is clear is that he has repeatedly stated his readiness to submit to the Swedish judicial system — despite all the dubious behaviour of the prosecution, leading politicians, journalists, et al. — provided that the risk of extradition to the U.S. is eliminated. —A.B.]*

I don’t regret putting up bail money for Assange but I did it so that he would be released while awaiting trial, not so that he could avoid answering to the allegations. *[He has been ready to do so for over two years; see above. —A.B.]*

On the subject of Assange, pundits on both the left and the right have become more interested in tribalism than truth. The attacks on him by his many critics in the press have been virulent and highly personal. Both sides are guilty of creating political caricatures and extinguishing any possibility of ambivalence. “On the other handism” doesn’t make great copy, but in this particular debate everyone is too polarised. The kind of person who spends his life committed to this type of work, wedded to a laptop, undercover, always on the move, with no security, stability or income, is bound to be a bit different. I have seen flashes of Assange’s charm, brilliance and insightfulness— but I have also seen how instantaneous rock-star status has the power to make even the most clear-headed idealist feel that they are above the law and exempt from criticism. *[Journalist Elizabeth Farrelly in the Sidney Morning Herald, 7 February 2013: “As to the... conception, of Assange-as-wanker, I say only this. I expected to find him self-absorbed, humourless and rather vain. Instead he was warm, engaging, unpretentious, intelligent and frank.”]*

We all want a hero. After WikiLeaks released the infamous Collateral Murder video in 2010, showing US troops gunning down a dozen civilians in Iraq, I jokingly asked if Assange was the new Jason Bourne, on the run and persecuted by the state. It would be a tragedy if a man who has done so much good were to end up tolerating only disciples and unwavering devotion, more like an Australian L Ron Hubbard. *[More of Ms. Khan's brand of "truth". A totally gratuitous analogy, clearly intended to harm rather than to illuminate. One may reasonably demand that she provide some specific parallels between Scientology/Hubbard and WikiLeaks/Assange. --A.B.]*

- *Jemima Khan is the associate editor of the New Statesman*

<http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/02/jemima-khan-inside-story-how-julian-assange-alienated-his-allies>

[Annotations by Al Burke. See also Joseph Farrell's response below at 8 March 2013, and <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange.htm>]

Held in a gilded cage, optimism still reigns supreme for Assange

*Elizabeth Farrelly
Sidney Morning Herald
February 7, 2013*

I don't believe I've peed in earshot of a London bobby before. When after my chat with Julian Assange last week I asked for the loo, a sign on the toilet door warned of surveillance. Being watched is now so standard in London that it registered as no more sinister than having strayed onto the set of Spooks, until a pale glow outside the window brought it home.

A copper was there, glued-in 24/7, and he was on his iPad in the cold London night. I, centimetres away, was in Ecuador. This of course is the point. Inside the Ecuador embassy, a few steps from Harrods' high-lumen temple to consumerism, Assange pads safely around in socks. He has food, an exercise machine and optical broadband. But should he step through the mirror, even into the building's joyless foyer, he's toast.

It's any old evening in Knightsbridge, yet from the street I count five police, plus the toilet sentry, who must be wedged like a whelk into one of the building's terracotta crannies. There's also a van the size of a Hollywood trailer and for a moment I expect Benedict Cumberbatch to emerge, a white-haired pseudo-Australian. But no. It, too, is police.

When the foyer constable asks my name I give it without thinking. Later, leaving, I ask why. He explains that they have to keep tabs, just in case "he" escapes.

But escape is the last thing on the prisoner's mind. Speaking to Assange makes it immediately clear that he's fine with the situation; unbothered by when, how and whether he might resume a normal, *en plein air* kind of life. Indeed, he seems to think it an odd question.

There are many possible explanations for this unconcern, including the commonly held view that Assange is a narcissist, in it for the limelight. **Narcissism is not a crime, or**

most celebs and half our pollies would be in jail. But still, after some 90 minutes' conversation, this is not the explanation that recommends itself.

Assange seems wholly cause-driven. And that's where optimism reigns. Asked about his personal future, Assange says: "It's going great. Everything is developing. We made a promise and we were completely victorious. We're winning." **Not a first-person singular in sight.**

Asked about his personal present, he notes that he's safe, warm, fed, connected and able to work, in ascending order of importance.

Last Sunday, Assange was awarded the Yoko Ono Courage Award (usually given to artists). Credit sanctions have folded, so WikiLeaks's kitty is once again building, and he expects the Swedish case against him will "drop". The day we speak, the day of the federal election announcement, Assange quietly confirms that, yes, he will run for the Senate. From outside, to the world, Assange looks stuck. Abandoned by his own government, imprisoned in a small outpost of a regime known [*by the ignorant —A.B.*] for its press intolerance, actively threatened by America and Britain and routinely vilified in Sweden, Assange seems to have dwindling public support, as vilification campaigns start to bite.

Even around London, it's amazing how many people come out with one or all of the following. Count one, didn't publishing all those names get a whole lot of people killed? Two, why doesn't he just go to Sweden and face the music? And three, "oh well, he seems like a bit of a wanker anyway" — as though that justified imprisonment without trial or even a grand jury.

I put these to the man at the centre of the storm.

On count one, Assange notes that "not even the most rabid or hawkish general in the Pentagon has produced evidence or even claimed that we have led to the death or harming of any person— and if we had, they most certainly would".

As to "facing the music", everything hinges on the genuineness of the case and the probability of a fair trial.

Here, it's critical how far the two simultaneous cases— of "rape" in Sweden and of illegal publishing in the US— are in fact separate. If the "rape" case is genuine, the Swedish government should have no problem (a) sending the prosecutor to interview Assange in London, as repeatedly invited, (b) if necessary, charging him here and (c) guaranteeing against his extradition to the United States.

The Australian government should be strenuously advocating to this end. **In fact, both governments have not only refused such guarantees but have actively maligned Assange in a way that diminishes his chance of fair trial in either country.** The Swedish prosecutor has said Assange will be seized and imprisoned— potentially in solitary, incommunicado and indefinitely— the minute he sets foot there.

The Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, has never retracted her public (mis)statement that Assange had committed "an illegal act". The Swedish Prime Minister, Frederik Reinfeldt, has never retracted his public mis-statement that Assange had been charged with rape. Why not?

Assange points out that Sweden's is a culture of profound conformism; a population half the size of Australia's with a language spoken (and a culture therefore scrutinised) by no one else on earth. A country that, unlike say Germany, "never denazified" after World War II. [*Sweden was never "nazified"*. --A.B.] Never pushed the reset button.

So when the Social Minister, Goran Hagglund, publicly describes Assange as "sick ... a coward ... a lowlife ... a pitiful wretch", and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs tweets "you do not dictate the terms if you are a suspect. Get it?", the press follow suit.

Sweden's largest-circulation daily, Dagens Nyheter, calls Assange "paranoid" and a "querulant".

A prominent journalist for the Swedish tabloid Aftonbladet, Martin Aagard, calls him an "Australian pig", linking Assange with Rupert Murdoch. "There are many good reasons to criticise Assange. One ... is that he's a repugnant swine."

Is this the temperate response of a modern democracy to untested allegations of sex-without-a-condom? Can we seriously trust that the two cases are discrete?

The Foreign Affairs Minister, Bob Carr, for years a grand jury denier, admitted recently that "it appears ... a grand jury has been established" in Richmond, Virginia, to try Assange in secret.

What sort of government would not strenuously resist this for a citizen innocent under Australian law?

As to the third conception, of Assange-as-wanker, I say only this. I expected to find him self-absorbed, humourless and rather vain. Instead he was warm, engaging, unpretentious, intelligent and frank. It's not relevant, but I liked him.

www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/held-in-a-gilded-cage-optimism-still-reigns-supreme-for-assange-20130206-2dykj.html

Eight FBI agents conduct interrogation in Iceland in relation to ongoing U.S. investigation of WikiLeaks

The Iceland Review
February 7th, 2013

Recently it has become public that the FBI had secretly sent eight agents to Iceland in 2011 in relation to the ongoing U.S. investigation of WikiLeaks. The Icelandic Minister of Interior, Ögmundur Jónasson, has confirmed this to the Icelandic press and furthermore stated that when he found out on August 25th 2011 that the aim of the visit was to interrogate an Icelandic citizen he ordered the local police to cease all co-operation with the FBI. He indicated that the FBI had left the country the day after.

In a joint statement Monday from the Icelandic Police Chief and the Prosecutor General it is revealed that the FBI agents, in fact, did not leave the country

immediately and were conducting interrogation of an Icelandic subject for at least five days, without the presence of Icelandic police officers.

The person in question was a 18 year old individual who had offered his assistance to WikiLeaks as a volunteer. For a period of some months he did manage several minor tasks for the organisation as one of hundreds of volunteers all over the world assisting the organisation. Many of them have visited Julian Assange as did the person in question in the summer of 2011. A Canadian volunteer contacted the young Icelander with the idea of raising funds for WikiLeaks with online sales of T-shirts, coffee mugs and other merchandise. It later emerged that the Icelander deceived the Canadian volunteer into believing that he was WikiLeaks staff in order to have the funds transferred to his personal account instead of the organisation's. When confronted, he admitted the wrongdoing. Because of requests from people close to him and his young age he was offered the opportunity to repay the stolen funds, which amounted to about \$50,000. When it became clear he would not honour the agreement the matter was reported to the Icelandic Police.

WikiLeaks has learned that the police have finished the investigation and that the matter has been sent to the police prosecutor. It has also been reported that the police are processing charges of embezzlement against the individual pertaining to a number of other organisations within Iceland unrelated to WikiLeaks. **It has materialized that the individual has engaged in gross misrepresentations of different types to obtain benefit from a range of parties.** We will not identify him by name in light of information that he has recently received institutional medical treatment.

In light of the relentless ongoing persecution of U.S. authorities against WikiLeaks it is not surprising that the FBI would try to abuse this troubled young man and involve him in some manner in the attempt to prosecute WikiLeaks staff. It is an indication of the great length these entities are willing to go that they will disrespect the sovereignty of other nations in their endeavor. **There is strong indication that the FBI used a combination of coercion and payments to pressure the young man to co-operate.**

<http://wikileaks.org/Eight-FBI-agents-conduct.html>

Additional background:

http://icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/Unauthorized_FBI_Questioning_of_Icelandic_Teen_0_397584.news.aspx

Iceland Minister: FBI Used Hacker to Bait WikiLeaks

The Iceland Review
February 14th, 2013

Minister of the Interior Ögmundur Jónasson stated his opinion at Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, that the FBI had intended to use the young man they questioned, known as Siggi 'the hacker,' as bait in their investigation of WikiLeaks.

The affair was discussed at parliament this morning where opposition MP Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir harshly criticized the minister for having compromised the prosecution's freedom, ruv.is reports.

Another opposition MP, Siv Friðleifsdóttir, revealed that during meetings with parliamentary committees this week, State Prosecutor Sigríður Friðjónsdóttir stated she had been very surprised when Ögmundur decided to order the FBI agents to leave the country in August 2011.

Sigríður had found his actions bizarre, Siv added, as in her view, both the first and second visit of the FBI in summer 2011 had to do with closely-connected cases.

However, Ögmundur maintains that the FBI had only requested permission before they arrived the first time and that while the initial investigation had to do with an imminent attack on the Government Office's computer system, the second had to do with WikiLeaks and that these two cases were unconnected.


The minister concluded that according to his evaluation, the FBI intended to use Siggi 'the hacker' as bait to approach WikiLeaks.

Opposition MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir, who has worked for WikiLeaks, harshly criticized Icelandic police authorities for the actions in the affair, accusing them of having blindly believed the stories of two hackers, Siggi, and another one called Sabu.

The Icelandic police opened the possibility for the FBI to come to Iceland under false pretense, Birgitta claimed.


http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/?cat_id=29314&ew_0_a_id=397837


Today's picks



Please-take-Assange-to-Stockholm syndrome. It's the diplomat's disease

Marina Hyde: The poor Ecuadorian ambassador. After months with Julian Assange, she'll have had quite enough of insufferable narcissists

 245 comments



Will Ed Miliband be an Obama or an Hollande?

Jonathan Freedland: The Labour party leader faces a choice he's still not made: to keep ambitions modest, or to offer a genuinely radical vision

 273 comments

Please-take-Assange-to-Stockholm syndrome. It's the diplomat's disease

The poor Ecuadorian ambassador. After months with Julian Assange, she'll have had quite enough of insufferable narcissists

*Marina Hyde
The Guardian
8 February 2013*

Modern etiquette dictates that you can't even say Hamlet is a tragedy unless you preface the revelation with the phrase "spoiler alert". So I won't say which specific Agatha Christie mystery it is where all the characters commit the murder. But the notion of the "alldunnit" comes to mind every time I think of those poor Ecuadorian embassy staff, holed up for more than six months at close quarters with Julian Assange. I've half a mind to rush out a very bad play set in a fictional version of that most claustrophobic-sounding embassy, in which everyone from cleaner to ambassador is driven to wielding the knife on perhaps the most rapidly oxidising figure of the age.

The work, if you could call it that, would be a rather farcical sort of tragedy, for who in all seriousness can continue to suppress the odd smirk at the thought of Assange, holed up with his sunbed and his computer and his radioactive self-regard— a sort of diplomatic parody of the former Crystal Palace chairman Simon Jordan? Many natural allies will recall the various moments at which they first realised they would have to work incredibly hard not to giggle at the WikiLeaks founder. A friend cites that 2010 snap of him celebrating his bail at the Frontline Club in London by being photographed with a martini. Less Skyfall, more Pratfall.

This week, we learned he had shed another high-profile supporter, Jemima Khan (whose New Statesman article on her "journey with Assange" is reproduced on page 34 of this paper tomorrow). It's been a while since we heard from the Ecuadorian ambassador, initially so keen on her houseguest, but it is difficult not to read between the lines of Her Excellency's November suggestion that Assange must be allowed to leave for medical treatment, and not wonder whether by then she had the terminal ministrations of an NHS geriatric ward in mind. Eventually the embassy staff may be revealed as suffering from a perversion of Stockholm syndrome, when those doing the house arresting fall so deeply out of love with their victim that the only cure is to extradite him to the Swedish capital.

Before we go any further, I'm warned that any criticism of Assange will land me in the doghouse with those somehow still able to take him 100% seriously, and may even cause a section of commentators to suspect I am part of some Guardian plot against him. The reality is a thousand times less intriguing, alas, and may even land me in the doghouse with the Guardian.

You see, I am dimly aware of all sorts of articles about this newspaper's break-up with Assange, but I have to confess to not being abreast of their import. I do look at the headlines and make quarter-arsed mental notes to read them later in order to stay au courant, but the inelegant truth of it is that I never do because it just sounds like such an absolutely massive bore-off. There are apparently even two films in which this paper's dysfunctional relationship with Assange will feature at some level, which means there'll be one more box office receipt for whatever else is playing at my local

cinplex at the time of their release. (Films featuring the Guardian aren't really what I go to the movies for. It was awfully sweet of Jason Bourne to try and help my fictional colleague in *The Bourne Ultimatum*, but I would have preferred him to have had rather more riveting things to do with his time.)

So if you must see a conspiracy in all of this, is it not time that you considered the increasingly more credible one? Namely, that Julian Assange is a creation and agent of the global right, specifically designed to make the left look ridiculous. Assange ... the very name seems a sledgehammer hybrid of ass and angel, and with each balcony scene or face-saving desertion of a celebrity supporter, whichever CIA mastermind conceived Julian in a petri dish must be rubbing his hands with glee.

Quite where his narrative arc now goes is unclear. I suppose he might attempt to shoot his way out of his Knightsbridge bolthole like one half of Butch and Sundance, perhaps using a weapon fashioned from bits of his sunlamp and a USB stick. (It's certainly something *The A-Team* would have been able to come up with had they been holed up there for even an afternoon.) Certainly, if the attention continues to wane, the tractor-beam of the limelight will become harder to resist, and we should expect what Assange imagines to be the unexpected.

And so it goes on. How can it be that the man who shot to fame engaged in a swashbuckling, sublimely modern form of secret-busting has caused his former allies to wince at his name, as one might over a particularly misguided and naff teenage crush? Clearly there are all sort of complex legal, moral, philosophical and psychological answers to that question, which I'll leave to cleverer people to unravel. The quick answer is that Assange seems quite insufferable, certainly in any sort of long term.

If one subscribes to the view that only an ultimately insufferable narcissist could have had the balls to do what he did, then it was always going to come to this. But when so very few come out of a story well, from star to supporters, perhaps a mirthless laugh is the only option left.

Comments (selected)

Mercury

The Guardian, who first championed him, have now fallen in to line & have made him, and what ever deficiencies he may have as an individual the story. The crimes that Wikileaks exposed conveniently forgotten. Crimes by a states on a massive scale. The only result has been one man languishes in prison systematically mistreated, another ensconced in an embassy with police ready to pounce. And US carries on killing abroad and now reserving the right to kill her own. Oldest trick of every street magician. Directing the gaze. And they are worried about Leveson when do the bidding of power with ease & such enthusiasm. Not a skeptical bone in their innocent body.

Germanlady

I dunno— Assange is a bit of an easy target these days I find. And besides the fact that she [Martina Hyde] doesn't like him much and that she isn't interested in the Guardian's feud with him, **I haven't quite understood what she dislikes him for.**

TransReformation

... Anyone can see that for whatever reason Ms. Hyde has extreme emotional antipathy towards Assange— and that's her prerogative— but other than being an opportunity for her to vent her spleen— a slightly egoistic motive— what is the point of this article?

jimmsfairytale0com

... He may well be personally so slimy a character as to repulse those who come into close contact with him, and erode the support of people such as Ms. Khan. But several facts remain:

a) As leading light of wikileaks, he has done an immense service to our right to know the filthy (as well as petty, self-serving, arrogant, misanthropic... you name it) acts that our gov'ts, diplomats, and Royal Family members are involved in. (Something the British— with their Official Secrets Act— aren't very keen on... nor are the Yanks, despite their Freedom of Information Act).

b) He was almost certainly set up.

c) Although his counsel— the Spanish ex-"SuperJudge" Baltasar Garzón [who had the audacity to try to extradite Pinochet from Britain to stand trial for Crimes Against Humanity in a Spanish court, and has been barred from practicing law in Spain by right-wing rivals for daring to attempt to bring the Franco regime's crimes to light]— has repeatedly stated that Assange is willing to stand trial in Sweden as soon as the Swedish gov't pledges NOT to grant extradition to the USA... the said Swedish gov't has refused to give said assurance.

d) Meaning— I should think that this is clear— that a trial in Sweden almost certainly means prison in the USA, including solitary confinement and torture....

e) President Obama, a charming man, with whom I'm sure that you'd love to dine (and what an honour!!!), promised to close Guantánamo within a year. 4 years later, it's still abusing prisoners' rights. He pledged to clean up the financial mess created by the collapse of big finance houses... then appointed to NATIONAL ADVISORY positions the very men who had driven their own companies into ruin!!! (I highly recommend the witty, intelligent, angry documentary film "Inside Job".) I.e Charm isn't everything. There are worse people than slimeballs. Or maybe I should just say that Obama is a charming ball of slime? I wouldn't trust him an inch with Justice in the case of Assange.

So, Ms. Hyde, thanks so much for jumping on the [very easy] bandwagon of slagging off Julian Assange! Unpleasant character Assange might be (I repeat: *might*— I'm not sure I trust certain people's judgement of him). **But he hardly deserves to fall into the clutches of the Yanks... and articles such as yours are greasing the slide that leads that way.**

ATrueFinn

Assange does not deserve justice! Just read the article: he even has a surname that Ms Hyde thinks is stupid.

Socratesisinnocent

Shameful article. I know not whether the man is guilty of the crimes that have been alleged. I wasn't there, and he hasn't been tried, let alone found guilty, so by all civilised standards he must currently be presumed innocent. What I do know is that he risked all— his life included— in holding to account the most powerful rogue state in

History for its crimes of kidnap, torture and murder. I'm not sure an article like this does the author or the Guardian any credit.

susi22

The only one here who sounds like an inmate from a mental asylum is the author of this article who jumps from one insane thought to the next. She couldn't have made herself look more ridiculous if she tried FCS. BTW I wonder if she thinks she is capable of mind reading when it comes to speaking for the Ecuadorian embassy staff who ACTUALLY have found very fond words about their "houseguest" JA.

www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/08/please-take-assange-to-stockholm-syndrome

Khan shuns Assange, joining other celeb turncoats

Former Julian Assange supporter Jemima Kahn has written a piece accusing WikiLeaks of the same misinformation as those it sought to expose. It's a sign of a renewed open-season on Assange in London.

*Guy Rundle
Crikey
Feb. 8, 2013*

Woolwich Magistrates Court on the edge of London, 2011. A drab place filled to bursting that day with the world's media because the latest hearing of Julian Assange's extradition case had been transferred there. The spectators' gallery looked like the green room for Celebrity Big Brother auditions, 2014: Bianca Jagger chatted earnestly with Tony Benn etc.

One attendee was Jemima Khan (nee Goldsmith), ex-wife of Imran, who posted part of the bail for Assange, that allowed him to fight extradition from outside a cell. The celebs there behaved, well, pretty much like celebs, setting up an impromptu VIP room. After lunch Bianca Jagger jumped the queue, prompting mutterings that this wasn't Studio 54 and she ain't on no white horse now. It was all sickly and self-regarding, but they were stumping up money for a bloke everyone believed would and many thought had a right to — jump bail if necessary, so props.

Except apparently she didn't think that. In a piece for the New Statesman, which begins with some blather about LA and goes through a Sundance screening of the new WikiLeaks film *We Steal Secrets*, Kahn denounces Assange as the leader of a "cult-like" group, who demands absolute obedience. She was shocked by Assange's flight into the Ecuadorian embassy when his appeals against extradition had run out, and said she posted bail only so he could fight for justice from outside a cell. He should, she believes, go and face the music in the frozen north: "I don't regret putting up bail money for Assange but I did it so that he would be released while awaiting trial, not so that he could avoid answering to the allegations."

This is nonsense of course. Assange was fighting extradition, not defending the case itself. If Khan thought that he should face the allegations, she should have simply urged him to go to Sweden direct. Perhaps she wasn't listening when Assange and

his several legal teams argued that extradition to Sweden was politically motivated and would result in his extradition/rendition to the US.

With such an addled account of her original motives, you can't help but wonder if La Khan is another disappointed female in the Assange train. She wasn't the only woman in the gallery to be obviously besotted with the bogan with a modem — indeed watching women fall for Assange is like some demented eternal repetition of high school. "He's just a devil-may-care rebel who lives by his own rules," gaak gaak. **Also, tall.**

Khan is not unintelligent, but the daughter from a German-Jewish financier family, has a tendency to enthusiasm and buyer's remorse, as witnessed in her conversion and immersion in Islam when she went from being London flotsam to marrying the famous cricketer in the 1990s. The religious enthusiasm didn't last much beyond the marriage, though the cool surname persists.

Khan appears to have been offended that Assange refused to respond to a long, intermittently accurate article by a New Statesman legal blogger about the Swedish case. Instead Assange allegedly asked her to come for a photo shoot at the Ecuadorian embassy. **Maybe true, maybe not.**

In the process, she appears to have taken on many of the criticisms made by WikiLeaks opponents, many of them disgruntled supporters, from Guardianista Nick Davies through would-be Assange biographer Heather Brooke and beyond (my own dissection of the profound misconstruction of the Assange case by The Guardian and others is now back online at The Monthly). **Khan's caveat emptor on Assange ends up being unintentionally hilarious:** "I have also seen how instantaneous rock-star status has the power to make even the most clear-headed idealist feel that they are above the law and exempt from criticism."

Cue Casablanca reference: "I am shocked to see that the man who leaked a quarter million classified diplomatic cables would ... break the law." **That is doubly funny because Khan herself jumped borders once, in 1999, when she was accused of smuggling out antique tiles from Pakistan, a charge she said was fabricated to embarrass Imran. To give Pakistan every chance to avoid its own embarrassment she left the country, only returning after Imran's enemies were removed by the Musharraf coup, and the charges were mysteriously dropped.**

But how did Khan manage to get such a detailed and personal piece of revisionism into The New Statesman? By, uh, being an associate editor of it. Having socialised, potted about with charities, and completed a master's, Khan was appointed to the post after a guest editorship in which the mag was filled out with celeb interviews (including one with Assange) got through her contacts.

Thus does the London media hire: you turn to the person sitting next to you at Annabel's (the elite Mayfair disco named after Jemima's mother) and say "d'y'know, fancy editing The Staggers for a bit?" This helps explain why, columns by John Pilger and John Gray aside, the magazine feels desperately boring, out-of-touch and has cratering newstand sales, perhaps as low as 8000 or less.

The movie that's occasioned Khan's charge is Alex Gibney's new work We Steal Secrets. Gibney is the maker of Taxi to the Dark Side among other works, and is

generally on the same side as WL. But according to WikiLeaks legal advisor Jennifer Robinson the movie constructs Assange as overly suspicious and paranoid by failing to mention an in-session grand jury, from which espionage charges against Assange may spring (under an administration whose Vice President Joe Biden has called Assange “a high-tech terrorist”). But perhaps Khan would have turned even if she hadn’t seen the film.

There are signs of a renewed open-season on Assange in London. The DreamWorks movie *The Fifth Estate*, is currently in production, and is, according to a leaked script, a farrago of fact and fiction in high style. Assange appeared by video link at an Oxford Union debate to denounce the film *inter alia*, and gained the by-now-standard slanted Guardian report, in which a long response became a “verbose” one, and a refusal to discuss the Swedish accusations — at a presentation event for the Sam Adams award, set up by ex-CIA officers to celebrate whistleblowers — became a “refusal to be gracious”. It might have been a refusal to let a ceremony about global politics become another salacious inquiry, but since the reporter Amelia Hill failed to mention the exact nature of the event, there was no way for the reader to consider that.

A few days later, The Guardian had to publish a letter by nine of Assange’s prominent supporters who had attended the event, correcting the report’s assertion that he had no supporters present. Hill had previously worked very closely with Nick Davies the first Guardian reporter to turn against Assange. Indeed she and Davies wrote the now-notorious Milly Dowler story, in which News of the World reporters were accused of hacking a missing, presumed murdered, teenage girl’s mobile phone, based on the disappearance of voice messages on the phone.

The accusation was false; there was no way to tell if the phone automatically wiped the messages or not. Why was this senior “special investigations reporter” sent to cover a video appearance by a Guardian nemesis in snowy Oxford? Pure coincidence, doubtless, doubtless. The former ambassador and later whistleblower Craig Murray posted a video of the event to show the absurdity of Hill’s characterisation. **It’s hard not to conclude The Guardian simply goes a little bit crazy whenever the topic of Assange reappears on the horizon.**

It is all set to get worse this year, as the Swedes renew their insistence on Assange being extradited, and the Brits increase their pressure on Ecuador — which is heading towards elections on February 17 with a run-off in April. Rafael Correa, Assange’s protector, is overwhelmingly likely to win, leaving Sweden with the next move.

Unless Assange, through biohacking, grows to eighty metres tall, smashes black helicopters in his hands and walks to Quito. Three years on this beat, and nothing will surprise me....

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/02/08/rundle-khan-shuns-assange-joining-other-celeb-turncoats/>

Pravda UK: Guardian's Assange Coverage Descends Into Farce

Simon Wood

Direct Democracy and Human Rights

February 9, 2013

*"News is something someone doesn't want printed. All else is advertizing."
— William Randolph Hearst*

Those following the saga of Julian Assange, the founder (also editor-in-chief) of the transparency organization Wikileaks will be well aware of the long-running feud with the UK's Guardian newspaper. Initially partners in the explosive release of US diplomatic cables in 2010, the two suffered a very public falling-out. **The period since then has been characterized by smear after hit piece after smear, and given that The Guardian's website is one of the most visited news sites in the world with millions of unique visitors every day, any misleading or negative article on Mr. Assange or his organization is certain to adversely influence public opinion on an enormous scale.**

The smear is the standard response of establishment figures and entities to anyone who seriously challenges or stands outside the sphere of mainstream media ortho-doxy, and it is nothing new. It serves both as a means of distracting from the points made by the target of the smear and of simultaneously skewing public perceptions against the 'outsider' and reinforcing those for the establishment. It does not require a conspiracy to effect, simply a self-reinforcing media culture in which mutual praise and backslapping with unwritten laws regarding treatment of certain public figures (including other journalists), leading to descriptions of controversial establishment politicians like Tony Blair with 'nuanced' language while high-profile opponents of mainstream Western ideology like Hugo Chavez are labeled 'firebrands', 'dictators' and 'self-styled' 'revolutionaries'.

Smearing is extremely effective, and the proof of this lies in open view. Julian Assange has been called pretty much every name under the sun by journalists eager to ensure that their colleagues (and readers) know that they absolutely conform to the standard view of the Wikileaks founder as a 'narcissist', '(alleged) rapist', 'attention-seeker', 'trouble-maker' etc. etc. Thanks to this almost daily smearing by high-profile journalists and other figures, along with astroturfing techniques such as using sock-puppet accounts on Twitter and posting multiple comments on popular news sites, there is now a situation where millions of people around the world, most of whom are profoundly indifferent to political issues or media transparency, believe that Mr. Assange is a very naughty boy indeed, 'holed up' in the Ecuador embassy because he is a 'coward' who will not face his accusers in Stockholm.

That this, along with multiple other claims disseminated in countless media outlets and through the astroturfers' echo chambers, is actually a blatant falsehood speaks volumes about the need for reform of the dysfunctional media culture we are all forced to suffer twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

In most cases, the best response to smears is to ignore and refuse to engage the smearer, as that feeds into their desire to distract from the points being made by the

target of the smear. However, it is occasionally useful to confront (in the form of a responding article or open-letter) smears when something comes along that is so disgustingly and offensively false that it highlights all that is wrong with corporate media group-think.

The Guardian today published a piece by Marina Hyde entitled: "Please-take-Assange-to-Stockholm syndrome. It's the diplomat's disease". **In this piece, the final tattered remains of the Guardian's credibility on this particular issue were blasted into nothingness as Ms. Hyde proceeded to smear Mr. Assange with unsupported claims, ad hominem attacks upon his character and credibility, and omissions of vital details.** It is particularly disappointing that Ms. Hyde has resorted to this form of gutter journalism as she has demonstrated herself to be a gifted, intelligent and thoughtful writer on many other issues in the past. That her blind spot is finally revealed in her treatment of Mr. Assange is no accident: merely another symptom of the media culture that strongly discourages dissent on the issue of identified enemies.

It is illuminating to dissect some of the comments made by Ms. Hyde:

"The poor Ecuadorian ambassador. After months with Julian Assange, she'll have had quite enough of insufferable narcissists."

A blinding start to the piece-- the subheading, no less-- in which Ms. Hyde utilizes a vicious personal attack in a statement that is not supported by any evidence.

"I've half a mind to rush out a very bad play set in a fictional version of that most claustrophobic-sounding embassy, in which everyone from cleaner to ambassador is driven to wielding the knife on perhaps the most rapidly oxidising figure of the age."

Translation: Mr. Assange is such a dick that anyone spending a significant amount of time with him would be filled with the desire to murder him. On reflection, it may well be worth Ms. Hyde spending the time on writing said play as there is little doubt that it would be heavily promoted by the Guardian in order to make more money out of the plight of Mr. Assange. As an aside, it is particularly telling that the book 'Wikileaks: Inside Julian Assange's War On Secrecy' written by two Guardian journalists, David Leigh and Luke Harding, is prominently advertized near the top of the piece. Classy: many of the senior Guardian staff clearly hate Assange's guts, but they're certainly not beneath using their platform to make as much cash out of him as they can.

"The work, if you could call it that, would be a rather farcical sort of tragedy, for who in all seriousness can continue to suppress the odd smirk at the thought of Assange, holed up with his sunbed and his computer and his radioactive self-regard...."

Indeed-- there is little doubt that sociopaths everywhere, encouraged by lies and smears propagated relentlessly by media organs, would have a bit of a chuckle at the thought of a man never charged with any crime being deprived of his freedom, possibly for the rest of his life, for publishing information that showed the mind-boggling criminality of nation states and corporate entities. Yes, I do believe my sides are splitting.

"It's been a while since we heard from the Ecuadorian ambassador, initially so keen on her houseguest, but it is difficult not to read between the lines of Her Excellency's

November suggestion that Assange must be allowed to leave for medical treatment, and not wonder whether by then she had the terminal ministrations of an NHS geriatric ward in mind.”

The actual comments of the Ecuadorian ambassador were accessible via a hyperlink, which Ms. Hyde no doubt knows most readers do not follow, with most lacking the time, or simply not caring enough, to check every source and therefore far more likely to take a writer's comments in good faith.

The ambassador actually said: "He has a chronic lung complaint that could get worse any time. The Ecuadorean state is covering Mr Assange's medical costs and we have arranged for regular doctor visits to check on his health."

This is a simple statement of facts with no implication whatsoever that Mr. Assange has outstayed his welcome. Indeed, if anything, the ambassador's concern about his health is the most obvious feeling conveyed here.

“Eventually the embassy staff may be revealed as suffering from a perversion of Stockholm syndrome, when those doing the house arresting fall so deeply out of love with their victim that the only cure is to extradite him to the Swedish capital.”

Geddit?

“Before we go any further, I'm warned that any criticism of Assange will land me in the doghouse with those somehow still able to take him 100% seriously, and may even cause a section of commentators to suspect I am part of some Guardian plot against him.”

Getting the justifications in early for disgusting and unfounded personal attacks is always a good tactic and Ms. Hyde does not disappoint. She also reinforces the now prevailing media view that anyone who harbors sympathy for the plight of Mr. Assange is a 'cultist' or 'disciple', incapable of independent thought or anything beyond a worldview stipulated by the cultist-in-chief himself. It is a cowardly, passive-aggressive smear upon the millions of people who actually believe Wikileaks has done the public a great service, indeed the very same service that Ms. Hyde and her colleagues themselves should be providing, and that Mr. Assange is paying for his temerity of standing up to the US. She also misses the point that in fact many Wikileaks supporters do indeed have several concerns both about the organization and its founder, concerns that they would prefer to be debated honestly and openly in a neutral, informative media.

“You see, I am dimly aware of all sorts of articles about this newspaper's break-up with Assange, but I have to confess to not being abreast of their import. I do look at the headlines and make quarter-arsed mental notes to read them later in order to stay au courant, but the inelegant truth of it is that I never do because it just sounds like such an absolutely massive bore-off.”

Here Ms. Hyde displays her impeccable journalistic principles in agreeing to write an article about Mr. Assange while candidly admitting she does not know the details of important aspects of the background. As anyone familiar with the facts of the Assange case knows, the devil really is in the details, and many of the comments with

misconceptions and false impressions one reads below the line in comments threads, whether from astroturfers or not, are written as a direct result of total ignorance of the true facts of the case. Modern media does not do details well, as details do not attract casual readers who want only the headline and basic outline of stories before moving on to the next drama in their busy lives. For a journalist to write on such an important issue, 'humor' piece notwithstanding, while admitting ignorance is simply shameful.

“Assange... the very name seems a sledgehammer hybrid of ass and angel, and with each balcony scene or face-saving desertion of a celebrity supporter, whichever CIA mastermind conceived Julian in a petri dish must be rubbing his hands with glee.”

This speaks volumes about the journalistic integrity of the writer. While it is obviously her idea of humor, it once again relies on nothing but obvious and outright contempt for the subject of the 'joke'.

“Quite where his narrative arc now goes is unclear. I suppose he might attempt to shoot his way out of his Knightsbridge bolthole like one half of Butch and Sundance, perhaps using a weapon fashioned from bits of his sunlamp and a USB stick. (It's certainly something The A-Team would have been able to come up with had they been holed up there for even an afternoon.) Certainly, if the attention continues to wane, the tractor-beam of the limelight will become harder to resist, and we should expect what Assange imagines to be the unexpected.”

Translation: Mr. Assange has sacrificed his freedom and risked his life because...he wants attention. Congratulations, Ms. Hyde: you are now a certified propagandist.

“If one subscribes to the view that only an ultimately insufferable narcissist could have had the balls to do what he did, then it was always going to come to this. But when so very few come out of a story well, from star to supporters, perhaps a mirthless laugh is the only option left.”

It is hard to fathom this sociopathic need to ridicule and demean a man who millions believe to be unjustly imprisoned and who has been granted asylum by a respected sovereign nation. No doubt Ms. Hyde would defend her comments, citing the fact that her columns almost always contain caustic humor. Indeed, in other pieces, Ms. Hyde has demonstrated real wit and an ability to comment very cleverly. However, there is nothing in this piece but downright nasty and mean-spirited bashing of a man already beaten down by demonstrably corrupt powers. Clearly the very British pastime of supporting the underdog does not extend to serious critics of Western foreign policy and the behavior of trans-national corporations.

Before you ask why the author of this article is writing in support of an alleged rapist, it might be a good idea to check the facts of the case. When one does, one finds the inconvenient reality that neither of the women involved actually wanted to press charges for rape, but in fact wanted to know whether Mr. Assange could be forced to take an HIV test. In fact, both women in their own words said the sex was consensual. From the linked article:

The fact that the sex was consensual in all of the events is not disputed. One of the complainants, AA (Expressen, 21 August 2011), stated that both she and SW had consensual sex with Assange.

Complainant AA's statements to the tabloid Aftonbladet (21 August 2010) also deny criminal intent on Assange's side or threat/use of force.

"It is completely false that we are afraid of Assange and therefore didn't want to file a complaint. He is not violent and I do not feel threatened by him." -
Complainant AA

Many more misconceptions are addressed here along with more background of the case.

Without knowing the details, no one has the right to smear Mr. Assange as even an 'alleged' rapist, and the only people who in fact do so are either ignorant by stupidity, laziness or design, or are propagandists.

It is instructive to compare the treatment of Mr. Assange with that of editors of mainstream media organizations. **Do we see personal smears of the former executive editor of The New York Times, Bill Keller after he sat on the NSA warrantless wiretapping story for over a year until G.W. Bush was safely re-elected at the request of the White House?** Glenn Greenwald here lays out several instances of outrageous acts of suppression of information very much in the public interest by other editors just because the administration in power asked them to, including the recent suppression of the existence of a secret US drone base in Saudi Arabia.

No we do not see personal smears against them, and the reason is simple: these editors do not threaten the status quo, and the status quo is favorable for corporations, like the ones who own the vast majority of media outlets all around the world. By publishing secrets that are classified, not for 'national security', but because they betray vast criminality carried out in the name and with the tax dollars of the people of so-called democracies; by 'printing something someone doesn't want printed', Julian Assange is instantly identified and smeared as public enemy number one, and the criminality he brought to light ignored while the news-reading consumers are told instead that a 'narcissistic alleged rapist' cannot be assigned credibility.

Even if the smears were true, they would be a red herring. While the credibility of executive editors of traditional media outlets is certainly important, the beauty of Wikileaks is that it employs no journalists-- the information released is in its original form, and speaks for itself as long as it is not fake or a forgery. There is no prism between the journalists and the readers with Wikileaks, and the reader can decide for themselves. Further, while Wikileaks is a nonprofit that survives on donations (despite a massive blockade), most media organizations depend on corporate advertizing, adding an automatic element of possible bias to editorial decisions.

In other words, because the information released by Wikileaks is in its original form, the character of Mr. Assange is utterly irrelevant. Any focus on personality is pure distraction, and anyone who does so either has an agenda or has been influenced by someone who has an agenda.

When confronting smear and propaganda, it is vital not to waste time and energy directly debating. Such people have zero interest in honest discussion, wanting only to stir up as much controversy as possible in order to distract from important issues. It is easy to spot the astroturfers: on Twitter, their timelines are overwhelmingly focused on

one issue, with numerous instances of pedantic interactions with opponents of their view. They typically (but certainly not always in prominent cases) have few followers as their accounts are often sock-puppets, recently created with only one aim in mind. On message boards and comment threads, they also focus overwhelmingly on one topic. These people should be blocked instantly and ignored, and honest people who know the facts should simply go on airing and spreading those facts to all who will listen.

Propagandists know that only a tiny number of people who read the news actively comment on it beyond a few simple observations, either via comments below media articles or on Twitter and other social media, with most not commenting at all. Given that we know big media outlets like The Guardian have millions of readers, we can infer it is only a fraction of a hundredth of a percent. However, propagandists also know that a very large number of people who do not comment on threads often do read the comments below the line, perhaps in the hope of a reading a good ding-dong or even of learning something new. These ordinary people from all walks of life have one thing in common: a very long list of cognitive biases which can be easily manipulated in ways that create a false consensus. Notable among these biases is the well-known human tendency to follow and believe (consciously or unconsciously) what many others say to be true, even in the total absence of evidence: the so-called 'bandwagon effect'.

The obvious danger, therefore, is that astroturfers or just plain brainwashed or ignorant people will exert a form of peer pressure on formerly more neutral readers via emotive language, and articles like Ms. Hyde's act as fuel to the fire, adding the more credible influence of a paid journalist at a supposedly neutral media entity. Always keep in mind that comment thread contributors and social media astroturfers absolutely do not represent any majority view, simply because they are overwhelm-ingly one type of person: the type who spends a significant amount of time making comments on the internet-- hardly the average citizen.

Several negative articles in the Guardian have now created a pattern of smears against Mr. Assange, a serious taint of the credibility of a newspaper with a proud history of journalism. Having Glenn Greenwald, a prominent and outspoken supporter of Wikileaks and Julian Assange, on the roster to provide 'balance' simply does not cut it. No articles at a serious media publication should contain personal attacks or misleading information for any reason, including humor. Those responsible for editorial control at The Guardian must provide an honest and open explanation of the pattern of abuse on this issue. Don't hold your breath; there are books and films to sell yet.

<http://99998271.blogspot.se/2013/02/pravda-uk-guardians-assange-coverage.html>

Assange to White House staff: 'Leak drone killing rules'

RT

9 February 2013

Julian Assange addressed US officials on a popular TV channel, urging them to disclose to WikiLeaks the secret instructions on how decisions on eliminating American citizens using drones are being taken. Source confidentiality guaranteed.

In the first appearance in a long time by Julian Assange on a major American TV channel, the founder of WikiLeaks lashed out at the re-elected President Barack Obama and his administration, which gave the go-ahead to elimination of the American citizens abroad using military Unmanned Automatic Vehicles (UAVs).

An unclassified document from the US Justice Department, revealed by NBC News this week, exposed that US authorities consider the elimination of senior Al-Qaeda members lawful and ethical, even if they are American citizens and plotting no crime. The Obama administration promised to provide American lawmakers with access to classified documents giving the legal basis for such drone strikes.

The first known assassination of Americans by a US UAV occurred in September 2011, when a US drone strike in Yemen killed radical preacher Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, editor of an Al-Qaeda magazine. Both were US citizens who had never been charged with a crime.

"I cannot see a greater collapse when the [American] executive can kill its own citizens arbitrarily, at will, in secret, without any of the decision-making becoming public," Assange said during his appearance in the HBO talk show 'Real Time with Bill Maher'.

"That's why we need organizations like WikiLeaks. I encourage anyone in the White House who has access to those rules and procedures, work them on over to us. We'll keep you secret and reveal [the drone killing rules] to the public," Assange promised.

Julian Assange remains at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has been since June 2012. He was granted asylum to avoid extradition to Sweden on sex crimes allegations. He has consistently maintained his innocence.

Assange's lawyers believe that if Assange is extradited to Sweden, he would be automatically extradited further to the US, where he has been declared an enemy of state after publishing hundreds of thousands of classified diplomatic and military memos on the WikiLeaks website....

Julian Assange — speaking truth to the powerless

Richard Haley
Scotland Against Criminalising Communities
9 February 2013

It's a serious thing to have the Government of the USA for an enemy. If it continues for very long, you'll notice friends crossing the street to avoid you. Jemima Khan has this week used a rather rambling article in the New Statesman to announce that she will be keeping to the far side of Julian Assange's street from now on.

The proper place to weigh the allegations of sexual offences by Julian Assange is in a court of law. Far too often, women making a complaint of rape or other sexual offences find their motives impugned. Far too often, men who are the subject of such complaints are protected by the regard other people have for them. So it is necessary to place the allegations and the evidence carefully before a court, paying due attention to all the well-known difficulties attendant upon such cases.

The pursuit of Julian Assange by the USA is an entirely different matter. Anyone inclined to question the right of Assange— or anyone else— to obtain and publish "secret" material needs only to watch WikiLeaks' Collateral Murder video, showing the cold-blooded murder of Iraqi civilians by a US helicopter crew.

Jemima Khan says that she previously supported Assange because he was "speaking truth to power." But he wasn't. Power was already perfectly familiar with the truths that WikiLeaks published. Julian Assange was doing something much more important. He was speaking truth to the powerless, in order to equip them a little better for their efforts to defend themselves against power.

The US Government evidently wishes to deter others from speaking that kind of truth. Its campaign has so far been played out on a vast scale. Obama has been at war with whistleblowers ever since the "Collateral Murder" affair.

Last month, a US court sentenced former CIA officer John Kiriakou to two years in jail for exposing CIA torture. No one has been prosecuted for participating in the US torture programme.

US prosecutors are currently in hot pursuit of officials who may have leaked information about US involvement in the creation of the stuxnet computer worm, which was used in 2008 to target Iranian nuclear facilities. Stuxnet crossed a new line in cyber-terrorism, with still incalculable consequences for us all. The decision to develop and deploy the worm should be the subject of a searching inquiry. Instead, the searchlight has been turned onto whistleblowers.

Almost at the beginning of the war on Julian Assange, various financial firms including Bank of America, Visa and Mastercard announced that they would no longer process payments to WikiLeaks. Bank of America was at that time the world's third biggest company, according to the Forbes Global 2000 list. It might have been thought big enough to resist pressure from any quarter, even the White House. Not so, apparently.

For people linked to the malign strand of militarism and imperialism that runs through the US state, Julian Assange may well have seemed a bigger threat than Anwar al-Awlaki, the US citizen murdered in a US drone strike in 2011. He must certainly have seemed a bigger threat than Anwar al-Awlaki's 16 year old son Abdul-Rahman al-Awlaki, murdered in another drone attack a couple of weeks later. For the moment, there seems to be a tacit understanding that the CIA's licence to kill extends only to Muslims. So Assange may, perhaps, be safe from an overt, attributable assassination attempt.

But the US pursuit of Julian Assange is nonetheless quite clearly underway, with the aim of despatching him, via a US court-room, to the US prison system for destruction by long-term solitary confinement— the fate of thousands of prisoners in the US and especially of those convicted because of the government's antipathy towards them. **The US can afford to wait. But in the end, there is probably very little it won't do to achieve its goal.**

Grand jury empanelled

A Freedom of Information request filed in Australia last year revealed that the Australian Embassy in Washington had reported in February 2012 that "the US investigation into possible criminal conduct by Mr Assange has been ongoing for more

than a year." Media reports have claimed that a Federal Grand Jury has been empanelled in the case. The embassy merely reported that the US Government "cannot lawfully confirm to us the existence of the grand jury", and similarly that claims that a sealed indictment was already in existence could not be confirmed. The embassy report nevertheless appears to treat the empanelling of a grand jury as an accepted fact.

So it seems reasonably certain that at some opportune moment the US will attempt to obtain custody of Julian Assange, by extradition or otherwise. Assange is entitled to protection from any such attempt, just as surely as Salman Rushdie was entitled to protection from any attempt by the Iranian Government to act upon the fatwa against him, whether by judicial or extra-judicial means.

The obligation to protect Julian Assange falls particularly clearly on Australia, Britain and Ecuador. So far, neither the Australian Government, nor the British Government nor the British courts have shown any inclination to respect that obligation.

There are some countries to which some people should never be sent for trial, whatever the charges. Opponents of the Jordanian regime, for example, should never be sent to Jordan, even if there is a prima facie case against them and the charges are unrelated to politics. And Julian Assange ought never to be extradited to the US, whether for espionage or for murder, rape or shoplifting.

But what about Sweden?

Like Britain, Sweden is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights. The decision last year by the European Court of Human Rights to allow Babar Ahmad and others to be extradited from Britain to the USA **shows just how malleable the Convention can be in the face of political pressure.** The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and many other human rights experts believe that the court got it wrong and that the isolation in which the men will be held in the US violates their rights.

In other respects, Sweden is quite different from Britain. Sweden is one of just two countries in western Europe from whose home territory people are known to have been abducted for extraordinary rendition by the US.

The other country is Italy. Abu Omar, an Egyptian refugee, was abducted in Milan in 2003 and then rendered to Egypt by the CIA. Italian courts have subsequently convicted 2 Italian officials and (in absentia) 23 US officials over their involvement in the rendition. The convictions were upheld by Italy's highest appeal court last September. The court also ruled that the trial of 5 senior Italian intelligence officials can go ahead, overturning a previous court decision blocking their trial.

Nothing of that sort happened in Sweden. In December 2001 Swedish security police secretly seized two Egyptian refugees, Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery and handed them to US officials. The men were stripped, dressed in orange jumpsuits, drugged, shackled and blindfolded in the presence of Swedish police, who did not intervene. They were then flown by US personnel to Egypt, where they were tortured.

Sweden's Parliamentary Ombudsman later issued a critical report on these events. He did not call for prosecution of those involved, and no such prosecutions have taken place. **Crimes that Italy jails its officials for are apparently untouchable in Sweden.**

Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery have been awarded compensation by the Swedish government. Agiza was released from prison in Egypt in 2011 and last year was granted permanent residence in Sweden.

A diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks reveals that in April 2006 Swedish officials questioned the US about a charter aircraft, described as a Homeland Security deportation "ICE" (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) flight, that was bound for the Middle East via Sweden. The US Charge d'Affaires comments in the cable that "what is not yet clear is whether the new requirements are simply an indication of a government sensitive to the renditions/prisoner transfer issue in the run-up to general elections in September, or if Sweden wants to make the clearance process so difficult that we will seek other refuelling venues."

The Swedish newspaper Svenska Dagbladet, reporting on the WikiLeaks story in December 2010, claimed that Swedish officials had boarded the aircraft. A press spokesman for the Swedish police is said by Radio Sweden to have confirmed "parts" of the newspaper report. The newspaper is also reported to have said that as far as it could tell no rendition flights had landed in Sweden since the 2006 incident.

Jemima Khan claims in her New Statesman article that "WikiLeaks had revealed that in 2006 Sweden stopped rendition flights for the US," though this isn't mentioned in the cable made public by WikiLeaks. She doesn't mention the rendition of Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery, or the impunity enjoyed by those responsible for it. **She has either been economical with her research, or she is being economical with the truth.**

In fact, there is no solid reason to think that the Swedish authorities would be less accommodating to the US today than they were in 2001. [Correct!—A.B.]

Like Sweden, Britain has also allowed its airports and airspace to be used by aircraft involved in rendition. But this support was limited to aircraft on their way to or from a rendition mission (for example, the plane involved in the rendition of Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery refuelled at Prestwick in Scotland after completing the rendition). No aircraft with a prisoner on board appears to have ever stopped in Britain or flown over Britain (British territory in Diego Garcia is another matter).

Despite the substantial part that British intelligence officials played in US abductions and torture (including the abduction and torture of British citizens), Britain seems to have been out of bounds for US personnel with prisoners illegally in their custody. **Evidently the US felt obliged to minimise the embarrassment to the British Government, but believed that its goons could make themselves at home in Sweden.**

Justice for the complainants

If Julian Assange is sent to Sweden, the Swedish authorities will need to shoulder the obligation to protect him from judicial or extra-judicial transfer to the US. **Sweden's part in the rendition of Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery, and its ongoing failure to prosecute any of those responsible, means that it cannot be relied upon to do the job. That should be sufficient to block his extradition, regardless of the seriousness of the allegations against him.**

The two women who have brought complaints against Julian Assange need justice. In these extraordinary circumstances, it should not be impossible— if there is substance to the allegations— for charges to be put before a British court, with the co-operation of the complainants and the Swedish authorities.

It would then be up to the British Government and British courts to deal with any US attempt to gain custody of Julian Assange. The risible tabloid remarks made in court by the British judges who authorised the extradition to the US of Babar Ahmad, Talha Ahsan and others last year, and the later (quite correct) decision by the Home Secretary to block the extradition to the US of Gary McKinnon, notwithstanding Britain's treaty obligations, **demonstrate the power that politics has over extradition decisions.**

The New Statesman's leader writer thinks that time's up for Assange. The paper claims, without explanation, that "Sweden has shown more independence than the UK when dealing with US extradition requests."

The claim is perhaps based on an article by Göran Rudling, a Swedish blogger and campaigner who gave evidence for Julian Assange in the February 2011 extradition hearing in Britain. The article points out that in the 60s and 70s Sweden gave refuge to young Americans who did not wish to fight in the Vietnam War, and that in 1992 it refused to extradite CIA defector Edward Lee Howard. [*That Sweden no longer exists. — A.B.*]

Rudling says that Sweden does not extradite people to the US for "political or military crimes." **But it seems fairly clear that the US authorities are working hard to construct charges against Assange that would deflect some of the domestic and international criticism that explicitly political charges would provoke.**

Rudling dismisses the concerns raised by the rendition of Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed al-Zery with the comment that "the reason they were denied political asylum was because they were suspected of belonging to a terrorist organization according to the Swedish Secret Police, SÄPO."

And then Rudling blows it, saying: "It is apparent that Julian Assange is extremely afraid of an extradition to the US. Phobic fear." [*Rudling is completely, perhaps willfully ignorant in these matters. — A.B.*]

But there really is an investigation into Julian Assange underway in the US, there are good grounds to suspect that a sealed grand jury indictment already exists, and it is clear that Assange's treatment in the US, if he were to be convicted there, would be harsh and destructive. **There is nothing phobic about his fear.**

Britain has a very shabby human rights record, especially in relation to America's War on Terror. But it's still possible to mount an effective fight for justice here, and sometimes to win. That's why the slow erosion of conspicuous support for Julian Assange matters, not just for Assange but for anyone who is serious about holding governments to account for their actions.

Jemima Khan is annoyed because Julian Assange withdrew his support from the just-launched film about WikiLeaks in which she had a stake as Executive Producer. **He**

could hardly have done otherwise, once the film was given the title "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks." She has nothing significant to say about the case. But her desertion may prompt others to believe they can smell a sinking ship and to disembark along with the rats. She is undermining the only thing that stands between Julian Assange and a lifetime of hellish incarceration— people power.

The WikiLeaks Grand Jury

In November 2012 a Federal judge in Virginia effectively confirmed that the grand jury investigation into Wikileaks is still ongoing. The judge gave a brief ruling refusing a request from 3 former WikiLeaks associates for documents in their case to be unsealed.

The three were Seattle coder and activist Jacob Appelbaum; Birgitta Jonsdottir, a member of Iceland's parliament; and Dutch businessman Rop Gonggrijp. They were attempting to obtain records of the court orders under which investigators had in 2010 compelled Twitter to hand over details of their accounts.

The ruling provided the first official confirmation since Julian Assange took refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London that the grand jury investigation is still ongoing. It's existence had been revealed almost two years earlier, in December 2010, when Assange's lawyer, Mark Stephens, told journalists that "we have heard from Swedish authorities there has been a secretly empaneled grand jury in Alexandria."

In April 2011 Glenn Greenwald revealed that a subpoena had been served on a Cambridge (USA) resident, requiring his appearance before a grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia. Greenwald says that the person had previously been publicly linked to WikiLeaks. The terms of the subpoena strongly suggest that it related to the WikiLeaks investigation.

Later that year, it emerged that the US Government had used secret orders to obtain information from Google and sonic.net relating to the accounts of former WikiLeaks spokesman Jacob Appelbaum. Sonic.net successfully applied for the order to be unsealed.

In February 2012 Wikileaks published an email sent by Fred Burton, a Vice President of US private intelligence firm Stratfor, that claimed "we have a sealed indictment on Assange." It's difficult to know whether the claim can be relied on— emails obtained from Stratfor are full of bombast— and whether the indictment referred to is the real thing or a draft. The email was dated 26 January 2011.

<http://www.sacc.org.uk/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=931&catid=56>

Assange is trapped, the U.S. is in decline

Exclusive interview with Assange's lawyer

*John Robles
Voice of Russia
Feb 9, 2013*

President Emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Michael Ratner, the U.S. lawyer for Julian Assange talked to the Voice of Russia's John Robles regarding the current situation surrounding Julian Assange who remains trapped in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. During part one of the interview he goes into the illegality of the U.S. usage of drones, he speaks about the extremely aggressive reaction against whistleblowers and "truth sayers" by the U.S. Government and characterizes the illegality and irrational actions of said, as a state in decline desperately clinging to power. Mr. Ratner also discusses Bradley Manning, Jeremy Hammond, U.S. government secrecy, mentions his clients in Guantanamo who have been tortured and the Yoko Ono-Lennon Award for Courage that he recently received in New York for Mr. Assange in absentia.

John Robles: You are listening to an interview with Michael Ratner, Julian Assange's lawyer in the US and the President Emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights. Hello Sir! How are you this evening?

Ratner: I'm good and I'm glad to talk to you John, thank you for having me.

Robles: Very glad to speak with you too, it's a pleasure. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about how you are involved in the case and what is going on behind the scenes if you could, in the US and in general because news is not coming out?

Ratner: Yes, a lot is not coming out and it is very upsetting to me. I'm sure as a lot of your listeners know Julian Assange who is the editor and publisher of WikiLeaks has been in the Ecuador Embassy now for 234 days, two thirds of a year. He has been in detention or custody of some sort for 796 days and that's all really primarily because the US wants to eventually get its hands on him and I think put him in jail for the rest of his life.

And so what Julian Assange was forced to do, was to take refuge in the embassy where fortunately the Ecuadorians have been very good to him and where he was given diplomatic asylum by the Ecuadorians so that he is safe while he is in there. The problem for Julian Assange right now is of course that he can't leave without being subjected to arrest by the British and then being sent to Sweden.

In Sweden there are allegations of some sexual misconduct but that is not what's holding Julian Assange up. The problem is if he gets to Sweden, he'll be in jail and then he'll be sent I believe very quickly to the United States.

Robles: Can you tell us anything about those allegations very quickly, if you know anything about the alleged victim? Apparently she had connections with the Central Intelligence Agency. Can you tell us anything about that?

Ratner: You know, I don't know very much about that. I do know that I did read a report that one of the people had gone to Cuba and was working with a group called

the Women in White. The Women in White are dissidents in Cuba, if you want to call them that, but as far as I know they are funded by, if not the CIA, certainly by AID which is the US funding source. *[This is of doubtful significance. --A.B.]*

So, there is that, I have seen words and the language about one of the people going to that. I don't know more than that about what is going on in Sweden. I do know that it is allegations now, there are no charges.

And Julian I do know would be willing to go to Sweden and deal with those allegations and give a statement but he is very fearful and **I have supported him on this very heavily, knowing my country, knowing the United States, knowing what it does to people like Julian, that if he gets himself to Sweden he is going to be in real trouble if the US gets its hands on him.**

So, that's a really serious issue for me at this point. Unless we can get guarantees, and this is if you are talking about behind the scenes, unless we can get guarantees from Sweden and the United Kingdom that he will not be sent onward from Sweden to the United States, and my recommendation is very strongly that he does not go to Sweden.

Robles: Can you tell us a little bit about what you are doing in the United States to stop his persecution? Is there any chance they would back off? Are they demanding anything in particular? Can you talk about that?

Ratner: The context in the United States is terrible. I'm sure people may remember as the cables started to come out first of course with Iraq War Logs, the Afghan War Logs, the Collateral Murder Video and then ultimately the State Department Cables that were not only embarrassing to the US but showed their hypocrisy, as well as secret wars going on in places like Yemen that the United States became very, very angry at WikiLeaks and Julian Assange. **And there were people, politicians, pundits and others who actually said he should be essentially killed with the drone, I mean that's what they said.**

Robles: I heard that not too long ago again. I read a lot of the material that was put out myself, I didn't see anything that was particularly that damaging. Why such a violent reaction?

Ratner: There's material in there that has obviously been very useful both to people like me who are human rights attorneys. It shows for example that the US was trying to interfere with our efforts to bring the torturers to justice in Spain, it showed that there was a secret war going on Yemen.

But I agree with you, there is nothing in there that is equivalent of what the US would call espionage: troop movements or how to make an atomic bomb or anything on that level at all.

You know, we are in bad period in the United States right now. We are in a period of incredible aggressiveness in terms of: certainly under the Bush administration torture in Guantanamo, in the Obama administration now with the drone policy of murdering people with drones even if they are not an imminent threat to the United States. We've just had a hearing on that and the person in charge of that policy Jon Brennan, it looks like he is going to be our CIA person.

It is in a very aggressive posture the United States and also there is a huge amount of secrecy going on so that the amount of classified documents has gone from 8 million a year to 76 million a year.

I have clients, I represent some people at Guantanamo, they were tortured and we can't even talk about that. **People can't talk about the fact that their own clients were tortured.**

So, the Government has just put a lid on everything. So, if you look at the work of WikiLeaks, other truth-tellers, other whistleblowers, those people are really doing a great service to the United States right now or to the people of the United States by showing all this hypocrisy and illegality.

And so I think the United States right now wants to just put a stop. The Government is saying: we want to keep running our Government in secret, the way we are and we are going to make sure that people get the message.

And look what they've done! They've got Julian Assange sitting in the embassy. They have Bradley Manning sitting in a brig in Fort Meade. He's been in prison for 991 days, almost thousand days, almost three years. Jeremy Hammond who was allegedly another source for WikiLeaks, he's been imprisoned almost a year here in New York.

There is a secret Grand Jury investigating Julian Assange trying I believe to indict him for espionage. That Grand Jury has been going on for almost three years.

So, you are talking about a major onslaught by the United States against truth-tellers, against publishers of the truth and they want to put a stop to it because as I think as the United States weakens, it gets more aggressive on the international field and that stuff is secret.

Robles: You see this as a weakening and maybe a desperate cling for power?

Ratner: I think so. I think in the United States, if we look historically at both the United States power as well as when countries engage in things like torture and when they engage in assassinations all over the world; **it seems to me it is a period of decline in which they are fearful about how they are going to be able to continue to dominate the world.**

The US still, for 5% of the world, uses 25% of its resources. Has by far the biggest standing military in the world and it is not going to want let go of that easily. I think what you are seeing here is the recognition by the Government that it is weakening and it is striking out in ways that aren't always rational but that are certainly inhuman.

Robles: I don't know if you can even talk about this, but were you hit with a "National Security Letter", or something about Guantanamo?

Ratner: I've never gotten a National Security Letter. You are right, it's a question of: "Can anybody talk about them?", and it took years to even win the right to tell your attorney about them and go to court.

I've never gotten a National Security Letter. But you know, it is conceivable. They wouldn't necessarily give it to me, they would give it to places where I go, they would give it to my library, they'd give it to my Twitter account and they wouldn't necessarily tell me about it. So, I wouldn't necessarily know if I've gotten one.

I've personally never gotten one but they give it to your third party record holders your credit card company, your bank, your library, to get records of what kinds of books you check out, what your bank account says, who I'm telephoning. **They would give it to your server, so they find out what websites you go to and all kinds of things like that. That happens massively in the United States right now, that happens all the time.**

The surveillance state in the United States, is absolutely gigantic right now. And Julian Assange has talked about this. He talked about how they no longer have to target individuals, what they do is they have computers that take in all the information and then they decide how to look at that material. They don't bother going for me or you, they take everything.

'You might call the United States CIA: 'Murder Inc.'

Exclusive interview with Assange's lawyer — Part II

Voice of Russia

Feb. 11, 2013

Robles: Can you tell us a little bit about Julian and about the award you received for him?

Ratner: I saw that you wrote a very good piece on the award.

Robles: Oh?! Thank you!

Ratner: "Assange Receives Yoko-Lennon Courage Award for the Arts" I thought that was really important.

I think: two things, I visited Julian about ten days ago in London. I spent a couple of days at the Ecuadorian Embassy and Julian is doing quite well in there. He is going to sit it out till we can figure out how to get him out of there without putting him in jeopardy of going into some underground prison cell in the United States.

He's working. WikiLeaks is continuing to function. There are websites still with WikiLeaks that continue to publish documents. So, he is quite strong. And of course because he is a computer person, you know he is with his computer and he has friends and visitors, and he can speak, etc. So, he is doing well in my view.

How long he can do well for...? You know, I don't want this to go on forever, we've got to get him out of there at some point. And hopefully something like Yoko Ono who gave Julian the Courage Award this year will help on that because she recognized that Julian Assange despite all the quote "detractors" who are like "fair weather people", you know, when he is popular: they go with him, and now that he is not so popular: they don't, she stood up for him and it is really courageous.

She gave him the Yoko Ono-Lennon Courage Award at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, 150 people came. And it is awarded by Yoko every year to people of extraordinary courage whose work has changed the world.

And she believes that WikiLeaks has played a crucial role in changing the world and doing specifically what she thinks ought to be done which is to say government is paid for and should be run by the people of the United States in the United States.

We have a right to that material and Julian Assange and WikiLeaks gave us access to that material. And she gave him the Courage Award and it was accepted on his behalf by myself but also even more importantly by Baltasar Garzon.

Garzon, who deserves his own Courage Award, was a Spanish Judge, who indicted Augusto Pinochet for torture, war crimes in Chili from his period in the 70s and the 80s, very heroic man! He eventually lost his job in Spain, merely for political reasons, because he wanted to open up and examine the 130,000 graves of the disappeared in Spain, during the Spanish Civil War.

They were disappeared from the Republic side, (the good side), in Spain that was fighting against Franco and the fascists. And when he did that, the right wing, still is very powerful in the judiciary in Spain, and they got rid of Baltasar Garzon.

To his credit, he's now one of Julian's lawyers. In fact he's the main coordinating lawyer for the world. I'm the lawyer in the United States. Baltasar Garzon is the lawyer really working on how we're going to get Julian Assange out of that Embassy.

Robles : I see, there isn't too much that we hear from Ecuador and the Ecuadorian people, and in Julian's speech he thanked the Ecuadorian people for their support and the price they're paying. Can you tell us a little bit about what's going on the Ecuadorian side, if you know anything?

Ratner: Well, it's very interesting. I mean, I think actually, I mean Julian is in Ecuador, because President Correa really supported what Julian did, even though some of the cables pointed a finger of corruption at some of the police in Ecuador, but President Correa, of Ecuador, still supported him.

I'm sure, you know, that on Russian TV, RT rather, Julian did a long interview with President Correa that was very important, it's very funny and very interesting. And after that Julian decided that maybe Ecuador is a good place, and Ecuador did decide that Julian Assange is a hero, a truth teller and that he ought to get a political asylum, because he's being prosecuted.

Now the night he got the award; the Yoko Ono-Lennon Courage Award, at the museum of modern art a few days ago, the Foreign Minister of Ecuador came in from Ecuador. They felt that it was that important, and he gave really the longest talk of the evening.

Baltasar Garzon and I read Julian's little talk, which you quoted in your article, and then the longer talk was given by the Foreign Minister of Ecuador. And he was really talking about how Ecuador did what it felt was right in this case, that Julian was a truth teller.

And it's really courageous of Ecuador, think about it. Ecuador is this small little 9-million-person country, all kinds of trade agreements with the United States, and yet it stood up to the United States! So there was a lot of courage there that night, I mean Julian, Baltasar Garzon, Yoko and obviously Ecuador.

My feeling is that Julian has a lot of support in Ecuador, there're groups that go out in his support and hopefully we'll one day get him to Ecuador where he can really live freely and safely.

Robles: I wrote about Julian's... apparently, he's going to run for Senate in Australia. Would that affect his asylum with Ecuador, or...? Can he run for office like that?

Ratner: He can definitely run for office and I think at this point he plans to. And there's a very good chance of winning and, of course, it will put everybody in a very uncomfortable position: everybody being the British and maybe the Australians, who have not given the support they should. Whether that would entitle him to walk out of that Embassy and go take his seat in the Australian Parliament is not 100% clear at all.

It does seem, though, that because it's a British Commonwealth Country, Australia is, that there might be a certain recognition they have to give to their legislators and might have to let him out. That would be our argument, but the British have been pretty hard-nosed, but I think Julian Assange has a good chance of getting to be a Senator, from Australia.

Robles: There're fears that if he goes to Australia, they'd ship him to the United States too.

Ratner: That's not wrong. It's a good question. We don't have an answer to that yet. Hopefully, if he became a Senator from there, he'd have some kind of immunity from being extradited to the United States. But it's true, the Australians are like the lapdogs for the United States. So they do what the United States tells, basically, I mean the British do as well.

It is a problem. Julian, he's 41 years old, right now he has the United States after him and he will probably have them after him for a very long time. To be honest it's

extremely upsetting for all of us, because this is a man, who I consider, as do millions of millions of others, to be a world hero and a truth teller and a whistle blower, and that he should be subjected to this kind of treatment, when the people who engaged in torture and war crimes are still running my country, well it's pretty outrageous!

Robles: And they're walking free and nothing is going to happen to them apparently.

Ratner: That's correct. We saw that with John Brennan becoming the head of the CIA, who was very aware of the waterboarding and the torture that took place when he was third in command at the CIA. He is in charge of the drones, the drone policy that's killing people all over the world. Yet, he's going to be the head of our CIA! And he was given a real pass by this intelligence committee that examined him a few days ago.

Robles: Regarding extra-judicial assassinations and droning and everything, I'm sure you've read that White Paper from the Department of Justice? Are you familiar with that?

Ratner: Yeah, of course.

Robles: What's your opinion on that? I read through it and it seems that they're basically trying to justify, in any way they can, what amounts to, just murder, anywhere in the world.

Ratner: It's basically a murder paper. It's one thing to drone or bomb in an act of war, when you're in a war-zone, when you're fighting an actual war in Afghanistan, yeah, you can kill people from the other side. But here's what they're doing, they're killing people all over the world; killing them in Yemen, killing them in Somalia, under their argument they made in the so-called White Paper: they could kill them in the United Kingdom, they could kill U.S. citizens here in the United States, by drone.

And the excuse, (there is a lot wrong with that paper), but the major point to me was: there is a doctrine that says it's "Self-Defense" if someone is about to push a button, and launch an atomic bomb on your country, you have a right to get rid of that person, whether you try it by arrest first, but you get rid of them.

But what they did in this paper is that they went way beyond that. The concept is one called imminent. If it's imminent, if a person is going to hit that button, and they said they were going to use broader definition of "imminence", they no longer have to be actually planning an attack on the United States, they simply have to be a member of al-Qaeda or "associated forces", whatever that means. And they have to have some bad activities in their past. Really it's a worldwide murder scheme!

It's no different from what Pinochet did in Chili in 70s when he would murder his opponents all over South America, in Operation Condor. It's different only in the sense that the U.S. is more powerful and has a means now to murder hundreds, if not thousands of people, and we think that they've murdered over 3,000 or 4,000.

They said at a hearing on this, Brennan was testifying, that they only have hit civilians in single numbers, single digits. We know that's wrong. They have probably killed a thousand civilians, killed 200 children. So right now you might call the United States CIA: "Murder Inc."

Robles: I see, about Julian, can you tell us anything that's going to be coming up soon? What's your prediction?

Ratner: I don't think we're going to see a lot of movement until we see what happens at the end of the Bradley Manning case. Bradley Manning is one of the alleged sources.

And I suspect that when that case gets resolved, maybe we'll be able to try and resolve Julian's case in some way. So, I think he's going to be in that embassy for certainly, the next foreseeable future, which is the next few months for sure.

February 2013

Justice for Assange published an in-depth analysis entitled "Extraditing Assange: Why The New Statesman is wrong about Julian Assange". It fully addresses many false claims surrounding Julian Assange's case, including those perpetuated by New Statesman's David Allen Green. This comes as Mr Assange had his 800th day detained without charge.

<http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html>

WikiLeaks is a rare truth-teller. Smearing Julian Assange is shameful

WikiLeaks is a rare example of a newsgathering organisation that exposes the truth. Julian Assange is by no means alone.

*John Pilger
New Statesman
14 February 2013 8:39*

Last December, I stood with supporters of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange in the bitter cold outside the Ecuadorean embassy in London. Candles were lit; the faces were young and old and from all over the world. They were there to demonstrate their human solidarity with someone whose guts they admired. They were in no doubt about the importance of what Assange had revealed and achieved, and the grave dangers he now faced. Absent entirely were the lies, spite, jealousy, opportunism and pathetic animus of a few who claim the right to guard the limits of informed public debate.

These public displays of warmth for Assange are common and seldom reported. Several thousand people packed Sydney Town Hall, with hundreds spilling into the street. In New York recently, Assange was given the Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award. In the audience was Daniel Ellsberg, who risked all to leak the truth about the barbarism of the Vietnam war.

Like Jemima Khan, the investigative journalist Phillip Knightley, the acclaimed film director Ken Loach and others lost bail money in standing up for Assange. "The US is out to crush someone who has revealed its dirty secrets," Loach wrote to me. "Extradition via Sweden is more than likely . . . is it difficult to choose whom to support?"

No, it is not difficult.

In the NS last week, Jemima Khan ended her support for an epic struggle for justice, truth and freedom with an article on Wiki-Leaks's founder. **To Khan, the Ellsbergs**

and Yoko Onos, the Loaches and Knightleys, and the countless people they represent, have all been duped. We are all “blinkerred”. We are all mindlessly “devoted”. We are all “cultists”. In the final words of her j'accuse, she describes Assange as “an Australian L Ron Hubbard”. She must have known this would make a gratuitous headline, as indeed it did across the press in Australia.

I respect Jemima Khan for backing humanitarian causes, such as the Palestinians. She supports the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism, of which I am a judge, and my own film-making. But her attack on Assange is specious and plays to a familiar gallery whose courage is tweeted from a smartphone.

Khan complains that Assange refused to appear in the film about WikiLeaks by the American director Alex Gibney, which she “executive produced”. Assange knew the film would be neither “nuanced” nor “fair” and “represent the truth”, as Khan wrote, and that its very title, *We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks*, was a gift to the fabricators of a bogus criminal indictment that could doom him to one of America’s hellholes. **Having interviewed axe-grinders and turncoats, Gibney abuses Assange as paranoid. DreamWorks is also making a film about the “paranoid” Assange. Oscars all round.**

The sum of Khan’s and Gibney’s attacks is that Ecuador granted him asylum without evidence. The evidence is voluminous. Assange has been declared an official “enemy” of a torturing, assassinating, rapacious state. This is clear in official files, obtained under Freedom of Information, that betray Washington’s “unprecedented” pursuit of him, together with the Australian government’s abandonment of its citizen: a legal basis for granting asylum.

Khan refers to a “long list” of Assange’s “alienated and disaffected allies”. Almost none was ever an ally. What is striking about most of these “allies” and Assange’s haters is that they exhibit the very symptoms of arrested development they attribute to a man whose resilience and good humour under extreme pressure are evident to those he trusts.

Another on the “long list” is the lawyer Mark Stephens, who charged him almost half a million pounds in fees and costs. This bill was paid from an advance on a book whose unauthorised manuscript was published by another “ally” without Assange’s knowledge or permission. When Assange moved his legal defence to Gareth Peirce, Britain’s leading human rights lawyer, he found a true ally. **Khan makes no mention of the damning, irrefutable evidence that Peirce presented to the Australian government, warning how the US deliberately “synchronised” its extradition demands with pending cases and that her client faced a grave miscarriage of justice and personal danger. Peirce told the Australian consul in London in person that she had known few cases as shocking as this.**

It is a red herring whether Britain or Sweden holds the greatest danger of delivering Assange to the US. The Swedes have refused all requests for guarantees that he will not be despatched under a secret arrangement with Washington; and it is the political executive in Stockholm, with its close ties to the extreme right in America, not the courts, that will make this decision.

Khan is rightly concerned about a “resolution” of the allegations of sexual misconduct in Sweden. Putting aside the tissue of falsehoods demonstrated in the evidence in this

case, both women had consensual sex with Assange and neither claimed otherwise; and the Stockholm prosecutor Eva Finne all but dismissed the case.

As Katrin Axelsson and Lisa Longstaff of Women Against Rape wrote in the Guardian in August 2012, “. . . the allegations against [Assange] are a smokescreen behind which a number of governments are trying to clamp down on WikiLeaks for having audaciously revealed to the public their secret planning of wars and occupations with their attendant rape, murder and destruction . . .

“The authorities care so little about violence against women that they manipulate rape allegations at will . . . [Assange] has made it clear he is available for questioning by the Swedish authorities, in Britain or via Skype. Why are they refusing this essential step to their investigation? What are they afraid of?”

<http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/02/wikileaks-rare-truth-teller-smearing-julian-assange-shameful>

Westwood on Khan

Vivienne Westwood
Get a Life
14 February 2013

Since before Christmas, I have wanted to find a way to address the confusion swimming around Julian Assange. I believe that misapplied feminism is holding Julian in legal limbo; women living in the privileged world who blindly support feminism, not seeing the wood for the trees. The word “rape” has been mentioned though there are no facts to support the allegation. Women want this cleared up. “I wish he would go to Sweden to answer the claims” they say. **Do they really want our hero to satisfy their wish and vindicate himself by spending the rest of his life in a US Supermax jail?** Julian is in danger because through Wikileaks he exposed the killings our authorities cover up in their wars which cause death and rape.

So I was sad and puzzled when my friend Jemima Khan joined the ranks of these irresponsible women and in general “the pathetic animus of a few who claim the right to guard the limits of informed public debate” (John Pilger). I phoned Jemima. I hope she will change her mind. I will see her when we are less busy.

The great John Pilger completely exploded Jemima’s opinions in the New Statesman one week later but by then her opinions had run through the global press. (John Pilger is just about the best political writer if you really want to know how this world is run).

<http://www.activeresistance.co.uk/ar/?p=2982>

Julian Assange police guard at Ecuadorian embassy nears £3m cost

*Alan Jones
The Independent
15 February 2013*

The cost of policing the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been staying for almost eight months, has reached £2.9 million, Scotland Yard said today. Metropolitan Police officers have been stationed outside the embassy in Knightsbridge around the clock since last June.

The Met said that the estimated total cost of policing the Ecuadorian embassy between last June and the end of January is £2.9 million, of which £2.3 million is opportunity costs— police officer pay costs that would be incurred in normal duties— and £0.6 million in overtime.

A spokesman at the Ecuadorian embassy told the Press Association: "The Ecuadorian government is concerned by the significant cost to the taxpayers of London of policing the embassy at the present time.

"However, we believe this expenditure could be avoided if the UK Government would provide the undertakings that the Ecuadorian government has sort that there will be no onward extradition of Julian Assange to the United States.

"The Home Office has the power to offer such an assurance but has so far declined to do so. Until we obtain these undertakings, the Ecuadorian government will continue to protect Julian Assange's human rights that are enshrined in international law."

Mr Assange, who is fighting extradition to Sweden on sex charges, which he denies, amid fears he will be sent to the United States, has been granted political asylum by Ecuador.

Assange misunderstood, claims legal eagle

*Andrew Stone
New Zealand Herald
Feb 16, 2013*

The WikiLeaks founder, holed up in a London embassy to elude Swedish prosecutors can, she concedes, be difficult. But Assange needs to be hardnosed "to achieve the things he's done," asserts Robinson.

Lawyer Robinson is determined, upbeat, and a serious achiever herself. Two degrees, a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University, fluent in the Indonesian language Bahasa, a disarming needle in the flank of authorities irritated by advocates of human rights and media freedoms, the 32-year-old has blazed across the international legal circuit for half a decade.

Her passionate defence of whistleblowers and democratic principles has placed her at the heart of mega-cases which continue to create headlines: besides remaining on Assange's legal team, she advised the New York Times in the phone-hacking investigation which shook the Murdoch media empire, continues to monitor the United States case against Private Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of passing damaging US military secrets to WikiLeaks, agitates for West Papuan independence, and mentors young lawyers for the philanthropic Bertha Foundation, a Geneva-based human rights group.

"I wear a lot of hats," Robinson cheerfully admits.

This week the Australian whizzed through New Zealand in support of West Papuan exile Benny Wenda. The trip, she said with a laugh, was a roaring success because it got the little noticed political cause some airtime after Parliament's Speaker David Carter banned Wenda from speaking in a room at Parliament. Risk-averse Foreign Affairs officials, nervous at offending Jakarta's implacable opposition to West Papuan independence, cautioned against allowing Wenda speaking rights on parliamentary property.

"They helped us a lot," said a happy Robinson.

The eldest of six siblings, Robinson grew up in the New South Wales coastal town of Berry. Her dad trains racehorses, and her mother teaches. Her connections to Indonesian politics go back firstly to her teenage years when her youthful eyes were opened to poverty on Australia's doorstep during a high school trip to the Muslim nation.

A few years later, she returned as a graduate student, and got caught up in the prosecution of Wenda for allegedly inciting a fatal attack on a police station. During the case, Wenda escaped from custody, got a false passport and eventually made it to Britain, where Robinson helped him win asylum and then citizenship.

She says that both Wellington and Canberra pay lip-service to gross abuses of human rights in the resource-rich West Papua in their pursuit of steady relations with Indonesia's rulers. Pragmatism, in her view, over-rides more pressing humanitarian needs in a small distinct region which has become "one of the most brutal places on the planet".

Her path to the door of Julian Assange arose from her time at Oxford. She worked part-time for London-based Australian lawyer Geoffrey Robertson— an author, human rights advocate and Rhodes scholar— who in turn introduced her to Assange, yet another Australian. It was 2010, and just before WikiLeaks published the Iraq War Logs, revealing US military abuses in Iraq— the largest classified leak in history.

Nearly three years later, with Assange in asylum at the Ecuadorian Embassy in Knightsbridge, beyond the reach of Swedish police investigating sexual assault claims and isolated from former supporters, Robinson remains unswervingly in his corner.

"I'll continue to support him," she avers.

Why, when everyone from his media partners at the Guardian to heiress Jemina Khan, who shelled out £30,000 (\$55,000) for Assange's bail, has given up on him?

"Look," responds Robinson, shifting gear a little: **"Not everyone has the opportunity that I have to engage with him. The way he is portrayed in the media is different to**

the way he is in person. He is engaging, warm, far more self-deprecating than anyone realises and very concerned about his staff."

Assange, she agrees, can be uncompromising, but is also "incredibly brave. I can't imagine anyone else standing in his shoes."

She says the media focus on Assange's trying personality obscures the bigger issue. **"I'm astounded the press hasn't identified its own self-interest in all of this.** You cannot distinguish between what WikiLeaks and what the traditional media does ... at its core receiving and publishing information is what the press does. It's exactly what WikiLeaks does."

Revelations about torture, spying, corruption and human rights abuses had become public knowledge because of WikiLeaks, Robinson remarked. **"It's one thing to know what's going on; it's another thing to have it on the record.** In this respect WikiLeaks has been a game-changer."

Of the sex allegations against Assange, Robinson says simply that he continues to deny them. She was certain though that he wouldn't risk going to Sweden while the real risk of extradition to the US remained. The door was open for Swedish investigators to question Assange in London but they had refused: **"One can only speculate about their reasons."** Everyone, she adds, wants to see the case resolved **"in a way which does not result in his extradition to the US."**

When she returns to Britain, Robinson expects to put some time into Interpol "red notices" , which the global police agency issues in their thousands. In her view the electronic "wanted posters" can be abused to deprive dissidents and activists of their liberty and reputation. Red notices were issued against Wenda and Assange, though after a fight, a team which included Robinson got Wenda's notice lifted, which meant he could beat the drum for West Papua in New Zealand this week.

There's another pull drawing the determined young advocate back to the UK. In London, she'll hook up with her touch rugby team, a line-up she says includes "lots of mad Kiwis".

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10865758

Lunch and dinner with Julian Assange, in prison

*John Keane
Professor of Politics at University of Sydney
The Conversation
18 February 2013*

Everybody warned this would be no ordinary invitation, and they were right. Three hundred metres from Knightsbridge underground station, just a stone's throw from fashion-conscious Harrods, I suddenly encounter a wall of police. I try to remember my instructions. Look straight ahead. Avoid eye contact. If asked my name, reply with a question. Ask who authorised them to ask. Climb the stone steps. Act purposefully. Appear to know exactly where you're heading. I don't.

Through a set of double doors, I'm confronted by more police officers, this time armed, with meaner faces. "Good afternoon", I say politely, as I edge towards the receptionist. "I've an appointment at the Ecuador embassy. Am I at the correct address?" "Ring the brass bell", grunts the bored-looking man squatting at his desk. A few minutes later, after some confusion about whether or not my name's on the appointments list, I'm ushered inside. I'm greeted by the personal assistant of the most wanted man in the world. "Julian is taking a call," says the well-spoken and debonair young man in black-rimmed glasses. "I'm terribly sorry. Please do have a seat. Would you like some tea, or coffee, or polonium, perhaps?" There's a smile, but it's pretty faint. I know I've reached my destination: a prison with wit and purpose.

The deadpan irony sets the tone of the lunch and dinner to come. The silver-haired "high-tech terrorist" (Joe Biden's description) appears quietly, dressed in crumpled slacks, a V-necked pullover, socks. He's relaxed, and welcoming. The quarters are cramped. We shuffle down a corridor into his office, where we occupy a desk covered in laptops and cables and scraps of paper. It's black coffee for him and tea for me. I offer gifts that I'm told he'll like. Popular delicacies from down under: a couple of honeycomb Violet Crumbles, chocolate biscuit Tim Tams, a bottle of Dead Arm shiraz from my native South Australia. I know he likes to read. Lying on his desk is a biography of Martin Luther, the man who harnessed the printing press to split the Church. To add to his collection, I hand my pale-skinned host a small book I've mockingly wrapped in black tissue paper with red ribbon, tied in a bow. The noir et rouge and dead arm pranks aren't lost on him. Nor is the significance of the book: José Saramago's *The Tale of the Unknown Island*. Inside its front cover, I've scribbled a few words: 'For Julian Assange, who knows about journeys because there aren't alternatives.'

I'd been told he might be heavy weather. Fame is a terrible burden, and understandably the famous must find ways of dealing with sycophants, detractors and intruders. People said he'd circle at first, avoid questions, proffer shyness, or perhaps even radiate bored arrogance. **It isn't at all like that. Calm, witty, clear-headed throughout, he's in a talkative mood. But there's no small talk.**

I tackle the obvious by asking him about life inside his embassy prison. "The issue is not airlessness and lack of sunshine. If anything gets to me it's the visual monotony of it all." He explains how we human beings have need of motion, and that our sensory apparatus, when properly "calibrated", imparts mental and bodily feelings of being in our own self-filmed movie. Physical confinement is sensory deprivation. Sameness drags prisoners down. I tell how the Czech champion of living the truth Václav Havel, when serving a 40-month prison spell, used to find respite from monotony by doing such things as smoking a cigarette in front of a mirror. "Bradley Manning did something similar," says Assange. "The prison authorities claimed his repeated staring in the mirror was the mark of a disturbed and dangerous character. Despite his protestations that there was nothing else to do, he was put into solitary confinement, caged, naked and stripped of his glasses."

Life in the Ecuador embassy is nothing like this. It's a civilised cell. After eight months, Assange tells me, the embassy staff remain unswervingly supportive, friendly and professionally helpful. They get what's at stake. When delivering messages, they knock politely on his office door, as they did more than a few times during our time together. Yet despite feeling safe, Assange feels the pinch of confinement. He says the "de-

calibration" (he uses a term borrowed from physics) that comes with "spatial confinement" is a curse. **That's why he listens to classical music, especially Rachmaninov.** He has boxing lessons (gloves are on his study shelf) and works out several times a week ("just to get the room moving around") with a wiry ex-SAS whistleblower. The need for variety is why he welcomes visitors and why, judging from the long and animated conversation to come, he's desperately passionate about ideas.

Assange begins to enjoy the moment. Nibbling a chocolate biscuit and sipping coffee, he springs a surprise. **"Truth is I love a good fight. Many people are counting on me to be strong.** I want my freedom, of course, but confinement gives me time to think. I'm focussed and purposeful." It sounds implausible. Entrapment wounds; it's painful. Psychic defences are needed to ward off the unbearable. But striking is his utter defiance. "Never, ever become someone's victim is a golden rule," he says. In graphic detail, he then sketches his ten days in solitary confinement, in the basement of Wandsworth Prison, in south-west London, in late 2010. "I had expected to be completely out of my depth. But I felt no fear. I was tremendously enthusiastic about the challenge to come. I learned to adapt on my feet." He means what he says.

I'm keen to talk about courage and its political significance. We do so for well over an hour. Lunch arrives: soup and a vegetable wrap from the local Marks and Spencer. His boxing mate appears. Assange says "it will be a while" and politely asks him to wait in the adjoining room. I remind Assange that he's holed up in the right-wing Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, home to one of the safest Tory seats in Britain. So, just for fun, I play devil's advocate by repeating the well-known remark of Winston Churchill that success is never final, failure is never fatal, and that what really counts in life is courage, the ability of people to carry on, despite everything. Assange lights up. "That's undoubtedly true." He's never written or spoken at length about courage, but our time together convinces me he's thought deeply and in sophisticated ways about the subject. He's been forced to.

We discuss the detention without trial and torture of Bradley Manning. Assange mentions how the authorities are "picking off people all around me" (he's referring to the ongoing FBI investigation and arrests of WikiLeaks activists). There's no maudlin wobble. He understands the traps of "obsessive self-preoccupation" and speaks of the vital importance of cultivating a strong personal sense of "higher duty" to carry on. Courage is for him something that's more important than fear because it involves putting fear in its place. **I quote Aristotle at him: courage is the primary virtue because it makes all other virtues possible. "Yes, and that's what's worrying about present-day trends. We're losing our civic courage."**

So where does courage come from, I ask? What are its taproots? Some people evidently draw breath from spiritual or religious sources, I say. He frowns. "My case is quite different. It's hardship that makes or breaks us. **True courage is when you manage to hold things together, even though most people expect you to fall to pieces.**" The words ooze resilience. They could easily be his personal anthem, the proverb engraved on his Knightsbridge prison walls. He goes on to explain that although courage may or may not be a quality within human genes, a good measure of it is always learned. Courage is cultivated. It's infectious. **"Women on average have more of it than men," he says. We discuss examples: on our list are Raging Grannies, Pussy Riot and the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. "These women show men what courage**

is. Treated as outsiders, women have learned the hard way how to deal with structural power. They're consequently much more adaptable than men. The world of men is structured force."

The phrase catches me by surprise, but it captures in the most concise way exactly what the prisoner sitting across the table has done, in style, with great courage: he's confronted structured force head-on. Julian Assange could be described as the Tom Paine of the early 21st century. Drawing strength from distress, disgusted by the hypocrisy of governments, willing to take on the mighty, he's reminded the world of a universal political truth: arbitrary power thrives on secrets. We run through how WikiLeaks perfected the art of publicly challenging secretive state power. **This "intelligence agency of the people" (as Assange calls his organisation)** did more than harness to the full the defining features of the unfinished communications revolution of our time: the easy-access multi-media integration and low-cost copying of information that is then instantly whizzed around the world through digital networks.

WikiLeaks did something much gutsier. It took on the mightiest power on earth. It managed to master the clever arts of "cryptographic anonymity", military-grade encryption designed to protect both its sources and itself as a global publisher. For the first time, on a global scale, **WikiLeaks created a custom-made mailbox that enabled disgruntled muckrakers within any organisation to deposit and store classified data in a camouflaged cloud of servers.** Assange and his supporters then pushed that bullet-proofed information (video footage of an American helicopter gunship crew cursing and firing on unarmed civilians and journalists, for instance) into public circulation, as an act of radical transparency and "truth".

We're at the several hours mark, but everybody around me remains gracious. Nobody looks at watches; in fact, there's not a clock to be seen. The debonair assistant pops in and out of the office, sometimes squatting at our table, tapping out messages on his laptop, fielding phone calls, several times handing his mobile to Assange. "It's the latest crisis," he whispers during the first of them. "We handle on average at least four or five a day." He looks undaunted. This one's just to do with the FBI investigation.

When Assange comes off the phone, I change topics. I ask him about his pre-Christmas speech from the embassy balcony, when he predicted that in the next Australian federal parliament an "elected senator" would replace an "unelected senator" (he was referring to Foreign Minister Bob Carr, appointed through the casual vacancy rule). Now that the federal election date (September 14th) has been announced, is he still seriously intending to stand as a candidate?

Our conversation grows intense. For several years, Assange has been serious about entering formal politics. A new WikiLeaks Party is soon to be launched. He's sure it will easily attract the minimum of 500 paid-up members required by law. The composition of its 10-member national council is decided. There's already a draft election manifesto. The party will field candidates for the Senate, probably in several states. And, yes, Assange is certain to be among them, probably as a candidate in Victoria, where (conveniently) three Labor senators face re-election.

Assange bounces through the probable scenarios. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa will be re-elected, for another four years. He'll stand firm in his personal and political support for Assange. **This will ramp up pressure on the Swedish authorities, whose**

case against him is “falling apart”, with the two women plaintiffs looking for a way to extricate themselves from the protracted messy drama. “The Swedish government should drop the case. But that requires them to make their own thorough investigation of how and why their system failed.”

The man’s not for turning. He’s certainly no intention of apologising for things he hasn’t said, or done. If he wins a seat in the Senate, he says, the US Department of Justice won’t want to spark an international diplomatic row. The planet’s biggest military empire will back down. It will drop its grand jury espionage investigation. The Cameron government will follow suit, says Assange, otherwise “the political costs of the current standoff will be higher still”. So the obvious question: what are the chances of that happening? Can bytes and ballots trump bullets? Can dare claim victory in his personal battle for political freedom?

What he has in mind has never before been attempted in Australian federal politics. Eugene Debs ran for the US presidency from prison (in 1920). Sinn Fein MP Bobby Sands was elected to Westminster while on hunger strike (in 1981). Under house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi won a general election (in 1990). In defiance of Israeli occupation and prison confinement, Wael Hussein was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (in 2006). There are plenty of similar examples, so why shouldn’t Julian Assange attempt to do the same, and in style?

By now the boxing mate, kept waiting several hours, has gone home. The young assistant has left for another appointment outside the embassy. Dinner is nowhere in sight. We reach for chocolate biscuits and spend the last hour drilling down into the barriers Assange might well face. We start with nagging questions about his eligibility to stand. He’s characteristically upbeat. The technical objections (raised by Graeme Orr and others) aren’t real, he says. He’s no traitor to his country, and most definitely not under the “acknowledgement of allegiance, obedience or adherence to a foreign power” (section 44 of the Australian constitution). Truth is he was let down by a gutless Gillard government and forced into political asylum, under threat of extradition. “I’m safe here inside the embassy walls,” he mocks, “protected by more than a dozen police, including one stationed night and day right outside my bathroom window.”

From the Ecuador embassy to the staid chambers of the Australian Senate— Julian Assange’s journey will be packed with surprises.

The man of courage clearly relishes the thought of being the first Australian senator catapulted from prison into a debating chamber. I crack a bad joke, telling him that he’d better hurry up, reminding him that the Commonwealth Electoral Act stipulates that people who’ve been sentenced for more than 3 years in prison don’t have the right to vote in federal elections while they’re serving their sentence. His eyes twinkle, before laying into those who insist that the federal electoral laws are against him, that he’s ineligible because candidates must already be registered to vote. “That’s untrue,” he notes. “The Act specifies only that candidates must in principle be qualified to become a voter.” Assange is right, but since he’s not currently on the electoral roll much turns on whether his preferred strategy of registering as an overseas voter will work. Courtesy of legislation pushed through by John Howard, I know from bitter experience, having once lived abroad for more than three years, what it means to lose the right to vote. Assange says his case is different. He’s been overseas for less than three years (he was last in Australia in June 2010) and intends to return home within six years— that’s why he’s just applied to be on the electoral roll in Victoria.

That leaves two final snags. If victorious, some advisors speculate, Assange might need to take oath before the Governor-General. For this to happen he'd have to be set free, naturally, but it could also be done, "for the first time ever, by video link". Whatever the situation, continued confinement, he says, would breach the rule that he must take up his Senate seat within two months. "In that case, the Senate could vote to evict me. But that would trigger a big political row. Australians probably wouldn't swallow it. They've learned a lesson from the controversial dismissal of Gough Whitlam."

I'm curious about the kind of political party WikiLeaks will launch. **"The party will combine a small, centralised leadership with maximum grass roots involvement and support. By relying on decentralised Wikipedia-style, user-generated structures, it will do without apparatchiks. The party will be incorruptible and ideologically united."** I flinch at his mention of ideological unity. He explains that the party will display iron self-discipline in its support for maximum "inclusiveness". It will be bound together by unswerving commitment to the core principles of civic courage nourished by "understanding" and "truthfulness" and the "free flow of information". It will practise in politics what WikiLeaks has done in the field of information. It will be digital, and stay digital. Those who don't accept its transparency principles will be told to "rack off". That's the ideological unity bit.

Assange agrees the WikiLeaks Party must address and respond creatively to the creeping local disaffection with mainstream politicians, parties and parliaments. **"I loathe the reactivity of the Left," and that's why, he says, much can be learned from clever new initiatives in other countries.** We discuss Beppe Grillo's 5 Star movement (it could well win up to 15% of the popular vote in Italy's forthcoming general election). On our list is the Pirate Party in Germany (it practises "liquid democracy" and has representatives in four state parliaments). So is Iceland's Best Party. It won enough votes to co-run the Reykjavik City Council, partly on the promise that it would not honour any of its promises, that since all other political parties are secretly corrupt it would be openly corrupt. Assange lets out a laugh. "Parties should be fun. They should put the word party back into politics." The WikiLeaks Party will try to do this, and to learn from initiatives in other democracies. Supported by networks of "friends of WikiLeaks", it will be seen as "work in progress" designed "to outflank its opponents".

He and his party supporters are bound to attract hordes of detractors. Tom Paine was cursed by foes; he even suffered the dishonour of being called a "filthy little atheist" by Theodore Roosevelt. Assange is similarly facing an army of spiteful enemies. In Britain and the United States, there are signs they're now closing in on him with new arguments. He used to be denounced as a "cat torturer", a "terrorist" and "enemy combatant" and accused of committing "an illegal act" (Julia Gillard). He was attacked as both an "anti-Semite" and a "Mossad agent". There were murderous calls to "illegally shoot the son of a bitch" (Bob Beckel). These days the language is milder but no less vicious. He's said to be 'paranoid', all 'alone' in his gilded prison, abandoned by his supporters, at the British taxpayers' expense. He and WikiLeaks are guilty of the same "obfuscation and misinformation" (Jemima Khan) they claim to expose. Swedish media and politics are meanwhile crammed with crass epithets: "rapist", "repugnant swine", low-life "coward", "Australian pig" and "pitiful wretch" hooked on sex-without-a-condom.

I can't tell from our time together whether any of this stuff hurts. It's clear he's aware that going into parliamentary politics will involve permanent fire-fighting, but unflappable he sounds. "I've had to deal with the FBI, the British press and more than a few rank functionaries. The Australian press are decent by comparison. No doubt the Australian Tax Office will show an interest in our campaign. Old enemies may make an appearance."

Assange knows that in the age of surveillance and media saturation little remains of the private sphere. I put to him a prediction: the way he dodged questions about the Swedish allegations during a recent video-link appearance before the Oxford Union ("I have answered these questions extensively in the past") isn't sustainable, that avoiding the subject when running for the Senate will be blood to the hounds of the press pack. He asks what he should do. I put to him a positive alternative, which is to come clean on his alleged misogyny. "I'm not interested in softening my image by planting attractive women around me, as for instance George W. Bush did. **I like women. They're on balance braver than men, and I've worked with many in exposing projects that damage women's lives.** An example is the scandalous practice of UN peacekeepers trading food for sex that we exposed. Our WikiLeaks Party will attract the support of many women." But what about the charge of misogyny, I ask? Isn't Julia Gillard's use of the word to attack the Leader of the Opposition worth widening? The reply is very Julian Assange: "Let's just say I prefer miso to misogyny."

There are moments when Assange seems much too serious, nerdish even, yet one thing's very clear: prison hasn't ruined his deadpan humour. He's smart, and he's shrewd; he's a fox, not a hedgehog. That's why he's counting on lots of public support down under. "When people speak up and stand together it frightens corrupt and undemocratic power", he says. "True democracy is the resistance of people armed with truth against lies." I wonder whether he's right. Australians can be a politically lazy bunch, but we're also known for our cheeky cheerfulness, our taste for the matter-of-fact, plus our strong dislike of bullshit. We respect hard work and admire courageous achievement. We're mawkish in the company of Ned Kelly underdogs. And so, if a political fight over his election to the Senate were to break out, strong public support for Assange might suddenly surface.

Time's up. Not wanting to overstay my welcome, I slip on my coat, prepare to say goodbye, to pass back through the wall of mean-faced police. Assange shakes my hand, twice in fact. Both of us are pretty tired and stuck for words, so I let myself loose by asking him to ponder a wild southern hemisphere fantasy, a hero's welcome later this year, a rascal's reunion with spring sunshine, fresh ocean air, flowers, banners, tweets, whistles, haunting sounds of didgeridoos. For a few seconds, he smiles, then draws back, looks down, and glances sideways. It's the reaction of a man who knows in his guts there are no easy solutions in sight. The cards are stacked, piled high against success. He's trapped. He knows his fate will be decided not by legal niceties, or diplomatic rulebooks, but by politics. That's why he's aware that in the great dramas to come, nothing should be ruled out.

The Irish bookmaker Paddy Power lists his odds of winning a Senate seat as seven-to-two. The cautious fortune telling may be significant. Down under, nationwide polls conducted by UMR Research, the company used by the Labor Party, show (during 2012) that a clear majority of Australians think he wouldn't receive a fair trial if extradited to the United States, and that in any case he and WikiLeaks shouldn't be prosecuted for releasing leaked diplomatic cables. Green voters (66%) and Labor

supporters (45%) are sympathetic to Assange. Significant numbers of Coalition supporters (40%) think the same way. In the most recent UMR poll, Assange tells me, around 27% of voters say they'll vote for him.

That should be enough to slingshot him from Knightsbridge to Canberra. Set aside the cheap diatribes and what you think of Julian Assange as a person, or whether he's done this or not achieved that. The fact is that electoral victory for him later this year would be one of those rare political miracles that make life as a citizen worth living. In a country weighed down by sub-standard politicians, sub-standard journalists and sub-standard freedom of information laws, the political triumph would be great. It would breathe badly-needed life into Australian democracy. And, yes, if the miracle happened, from that very moment the fun party down under would begin.

<http://theconversation.edu.au/lunch-and-dinner-with-julian-assange-in-prison-12234>

Julian Assange: Senate my ticket to freedom

WikiLeaks founder says election to Australia's upper house would prompt US and Sweden to drop their cases against him

*Associated Press
18 February 2013*

The WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has told an Australian news website that his bid to become an Australian senator will serve as a defence against potential criminal prosecution in the United States and Britain

If he were to win a Senate seat at elections on 24 September, Assange told the website, the US department of justice would drop its espionage investigation rather than risk a diplomatic row. The British government would follow suit otherwise "the political costs of the current standoff will be higher still", Assange said.

Assange supporters have enrolled him to vote in the state of Victoria. Electoral enrolment is necessary to be nominated as a candidate. Nominations for the Senate are likely to close on 22 August and if Assange were elected his six-year term of office would begin on 1 July 2014.

Australians living overseas can enrol to vote and run as a Senate candidate if they left Australia within the past three years and intend to return within six years of their date of departure. Assange said he was last in Australia in June 2010.

Assange said he would register a new political party, the WikiLeaks party, to run Senate candidates in several Australian states. He told the website he was sure the party would attract the minimum 500 fee-paying members required to be registered.

WikiLeaks Australian Citizens Alliance spokeswoman Sam Castro has said that if Assange is elected and unable to take his Senate seat another WikiLeaks party member will be chosen to fill the vacancy. The party would run on a platform of transparency in government, Castro said.

Assange told the Conversation that the Swedish allegations against him were "falling apart" and police should drop the case.

The US department of justice has been investigating WikiLeaks since it began distributing hundreds of thousands of classified US documents.

Assange's supporters suggest the Swedish case is being pursued as an avenue to extradite him to the US, though the Swedish government denies it.

Fidel Narváez: "Julian Assange and Ecuador will hold out for as long as they need to"

The Prisma
February 18, 2013

After three years at the Ecuadorian Consulate in the UK, activist Fidel Narváez speaks of his experiences there, the recent elections in Ecuador and his relationship with Julian Assange.

When, on July 15th 2010, Narváez first set foot in the office where he was to begin his diplomatic career, there were many things running through his mind: he imagined himself serving his community, working from within officialdom with the same intensity as he had as an activist, becoming accustomed to the inevitable formality and bureaucracy of political life, and writing occasionally.

All this, and maybe more, ran through his mind. All, that is, apart from crossing paths with a man the USA has declared public enemy number one, and over whose head hangs a death sentence: Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks and, as of several months ago, resident of the Ecuadorian Embassy until a just solution to his situation is found.

Nevertheless, almost two years later the inconceivable happened and since then, Narváez has become one of only a handful of Latin Americans to spend a significant amount of time with Assange. He even, in his role as Consul, spent two months living at the Embassy.

Whilst there, he had plenty of time to talk with Assange, to get to know him a little and shatter the myths surrounding a man who has been demonized by the media and certain governments.

Fidel Narváez tells *The Prisma* about that time, about his conversations with Assange and his impression of a man who has more than a few quaking in their boots since the Wikileaks revelations. His words brimming with energy and candour, Narváez nevertheless remains reserved and discreet in talking about his experience.

However, he does take care to express his confidence in Assange's innocence, as well as in his genuine concern for free speech and the public's right to know what their governments are doing. Of course, before talk turned to Assange, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa's third consecutive election victory had to be discussed.

Prisma: Victory once again for President Rafael Correa and his Citizens' Revolution. How has he achieved such good results?

Narváez: It's his eighth successive win in every election since 2006. Unlike most governments seeking re-election which suffer the effects of voters' inevitable disillusionment, over the last six years the government of the Citizens' Revolution has shown the people that it is capable of following through on the pledges it made from the start.

Did the media support Correa this time?

Not a chance. **Most of the big media outlets which dominate the information market in Ecuador, and the press in particular, fiercely oppose the government.** But this makes its achievements all the more impressive because the government has come up against the enormous power of the media which behaves almost like a political actor.

Why has he won again?

Because the people have regained their trust and hope in a government which has made good on its promises of change like no other before it and has implemented a new style of governance, one which is much more dynamic and closer to the people.

How has Correa served the people?

By reclaiming national sovereignty, which has meant larger and better revenues can be generated from our natural resources. This has allowed an unprecedented level of investment in health, education and housing. Now the people are able to see how we are building a nation, how this country is investing in infrastructure in order to sustain a new model for long-term growth.

What has the Citizens' Revolution been about?

It's been about citizens who have generally been at the margins political debate, decision-making and democratic participation now seizing that political debate. The people want to participate in political life again and defend the achievements and principles of the revolution.

How has Correa's government affected the lives of immigrants?

We have managed to turn the tide of emigration in Ecuador. Nowadays there are more people re-entering the country than leaving it. They have renewed hope in a better future for our country and are proud of the image Ecuador is presenting of itself to the outside world.

What has caused the tide to turn?

It's a combination of the current dynamic and healthy state of the Ecuadorian economy (one of the fastest growing in Latin America) and the major economic crisis which has hit the countries favoured by our immigrants, particularly in Europe.

Of course, economic growth on its own is not an indicator of development. But Ecuador has achieved historic levels of poverty reduction, employment, purchasing power and inequality reduction, putting it out in front of the region's other economies, if a comprehensive analysis is carried out.

You have been at the Consulate for almost three years. What has it been like to go from being an activist to working for the establishment?

I feel very comfortable being part of this political process, because most of the causes I fought for as a social activist are up for debate. Obviously, the task of putting together dreams and social and political projects, of trying to make them a reality, is probably a bit more complicated than protesting against injustice or demanding civil rights. Before, we were fighting to bring down a system, now we're fighting to build something new and better.

What has been the most difficult thing about your work as Consul?

Getting used to all the bureaucratic and administrative red tape which often makes things worse before it makes things better.

You were there during a very important moment: Julian Assange's request for asylum. What has that meant for you?

It's been a unique experience and an exciting challenge at the same time. This is the most important political asylum seeker in the world, and he turned to Ecuador for protection.

Some say that you are one of the reasons Assange is at the Embassy.

I wouldn't say that. We did have some involvement with Julian Assange and Wikileaks prior to his asylum request. It has all been in the public eye, ever since 2011 when Ecuador asked Wikileaks to publish all the diplomatic cables concerning our country. Some time later, Assange requested an interview with President Correa for his television show. All this meant a series of meetings with him and his team, over the course of which it became apparent that they felt a sort of empathy for the fact that they saw me not just as a diplomat but as a social activist too. I imagine that this kindled an even greater interest in Ecuador.

When was your first direct contact with Assange?

When we asked for the cables to be published. In April 2011.

What was your impression of him?

Julian is a sort of celebrity; a lot of myths and enigmas have been cultivated around him. To get to know and be around him has been an interesting experience.

Where did this meeting take place?

In England, where he has been living against his will for more than two years now, under house arrest.

What opinion have you built up of Assange?

He's a pleasant person to deal with, very knowledgeable, particularly when it comes to international affairs. I believe he's always very much involved in Wikileaks' work and the causes it champions.

Do you support these causes?

If we assume that his main cause is advocating the need for maximum transparency, demanding that the political and economic powers that be take some responsibility, and seeking retribution for human rights abuses by putting unrestricted freedom of expression and information into practice, then of course I support that.

Why did Assange choose Ecuador?

That's something you'll have to ask Julian Assange. And I hear it's a question many people are asking: why, with no less than 150 different embassies in London, did Assange choose Ecuador?

Maybe it's because he has seen how this small country has given convincing demonstrations of its sovereignty, resolve and commitment to human rights. Ecuador has the best record for protecting asylum seekers in the region; it has enshrined the concept of universal citizenship, which recognises the right to migrate, in its constitution. In an unusual move, it terminated the contract which allowed a US military base on its soil.

This and other factors have made Ecuador more visible internationally. **It is also practically the only country to have asked Wikileaks to publish all the cables, without exception, even at the risk of information getting out which could damage the government.** I imagine Wikileaks and Julian Assange appreciated this demonstration of genuine transparency.

What effect has Assange's presence had on the Embassy?

Sheltering someone considered public enemy number one is a bold move, not just diplomatically but also politically. **The reaction from civil society's progressive forces, particularly internationally, has been one of both overwhelming support for the Ecuadorian position, and solidarity.**

Has Ecuador become more visible because of this?

Yes, as a sovereign country committed to the defence of human rights and the international civil rights movement's demands for transparency and free speech.

What negative effects has his presence had?

I should think that those who want to see Julian Assange and Wikileaks destroyed are ratcheting up the pressure on the country that's protecting him. The evidence of this is the fact that media powers are trying to tarnish Ecuador's image in the international arena.

Where have the biggest attacks come from?

From a certain section of the press. This has really been the main consequence of him being here. **I haven't noticed any concrete impact on business or economic collaboration**

Does this situation make you feel uncomfortable?

When someone turns to diplomatic asylum as a last resort to save their life, it's an uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. Uncomfortable for him, confined to

limited surroundings (living in an enclosed space without natural light, unable to exercise or get fresh air). Uncomfortable for Ecuador, which feels responsible for finding him a solution that will ensure his physical wellbeing and rights, and certainly uncomfortable for the rest of the countries involved.

Did the situation with Assange win or lose Correa votes during the elections?

The high number of votes registered for President Correa is a reflection on his effective leadership, and doubtless things would have been the same with or without Assange's application for asylum. However, I would say that the image the international community has of Ecuador and its president has improved.

You were very close to Assange. I understand you slept at the Embassy.

Of course.

For how long?

Two months.

Why you and not someone else at the Embassy?

Because we couldn't leave Assange alone at the Embassy as it was being besieged by police. **Someone with diplomatic status had to be there "protecting" the place at all times. And that job was assigned to me.**

I imagine you got to know Assange better, and personally.

It's certainly true that we talked a lot over those months, especially at times when we were alone, at night.

What did you talk about?

Everything. With Julian Assange you can discuss all sorts of subjects.

I imagine Assange got to know more about Ecuador too.

Latin America was probably the part of the world Julian Assange knew least about. I expect he's studying us with much greater interest now. He has a deep appreciation for Ecuador. Those words attributed to him describing Ecuador as insignificant were taken completely and maliciously out of context.

How much did daily life at the Embassy change?

Significantly. With him around there's much more movement in the building. He's always got visitors, members of his team but also celebrities and people from all over the world who come to show their solidarity.

Who is Assange's team made up of?

Very committed activists, totally dedicated to their work.

Since getting to know him, how much would you say of what people say about him is true?

A lot of what people say about him is pretty distorted.

Is he easy to get along with? A good tenant?

Hmmm. I don't know whether easy is the best description. I would imagine he's very demanding of the people who work for him. **In any case, he's a good "tenant" as far as being respectful towards all the Embassy staff is concerned.**

How would you describe him?

He's slightly introverted, completely dedicated to his campaign, genuinely committed to his ideals and very grateful to those who support him.

What impact has knowing Assange had on your life?

It has certainly been a unique experience and an enormous responsibility to know that you are not only witness to, but in a way also part of, a historical and significant event in the struggle for civil liberties and free speech across the world.

Do you believe Assange is innocent?

If you're referring to the allegations that they want to interrogate him over in Sweden, personally, of course I believe he's innocent. But the justice system must have the final say in determining his innocence. Ecuador has been very clear on this point from the beginning. We are not protecting Julian Assange from the Swedish justice system. What's more, it's in our interest that this process moves forward, and we have suggested various alternatives which would allow Sweden to interrogate Assange. Ecuador is protecting Assange from the very real threat of being subsequently extradited to the United States where his basic rights would be at risk.

It looks like this situation is going to drag on for a while.

We believe a political and diplomatic solution will be possible sooner rather than later.

But if it turns out to be later, do you think Assange could hold out that long?

We hope he won't have to. But if he does, I'm certain that both Julian Assange and Ecuador will be able to hold out as long as it takes.

<http://www.theprisma.co.uk/2013/02/18/fidel-narvaez-%E2%80%9Cjulian-assange-and-ecuador-will-hold-out-for-as-long-as-they-need-to%E2%80%9D/>

"Our government refused to listen to us"

Interview with WikiLeaks Alliance co-founder Sam Castro

*John Robles
Voice of Russia
Feb 15, 2013*

Sam Castro, the co-founder of the WikiLeaks Australian Citizens Alliance, spoke with the VOR's John Robles about Julian Assange's Australian Senate bid, internal Australian politics and the rules and current condition of Australian government policies, the public's support of Mr. Assange and the soon-to-be-official WikiLeaks Party and what has happened to Australia and the Australian people since the United States of America pulled Australia into the endless "War on Terror". Her viewpoint from the inside of Australia is both refreshing and informative as she details everything from surveillance to foreign policy.

Robles: Hello Sam! How are you this evening? Or it is morning for you, I believe.

Castro: I'm great, thank you. Yes, it is mid morning.

Robles: We've heard the news that Julian has officially registered. Your next step, I guess is registering the party, or what is your next step if you could?

Castro: Sure! So, just to clarify, Julian has officially reconfirmed his enrollment on Australian Electoral Commission's roll which basically means that he is now eligible to run for the Senate. In Australia the rule is that, if you are going to run for a political position, you have to be eligible to be a voter. So, he's just re-enrolled onto the roll in Victoria which means he is now eligible to stand for the Senate.

Robles: Has he registered as a candidate yet? Can he start campaigning?

Castro: No, the rules in Australia are; you need to register as a candidate once the writs for the election have been issued. And that probably won't happen until a few months down the track and that will be done by the Prime Minister when the Parliament is dissolved.

So, nobody can officially register as a candidate running until that is done. But he is now eligible and the next step is choosing and the formation of the WikiLeaks Party which is also obviously, as it is in most countries, a process, which we are very close to formulating.

Robles: Can you do campaigning starting now or is it early? What are the rules in Australia?

Castro: It is an interesting situation because the Prime Minister recently announced that the election will be on the 14th of September. So, she's announced her intent to call an election. Officially the campaign for any political party has not officially begun until the Prime Minister dissolves the Parliament and takes the writs to the Governor General. So, there is much speculation in the media in Australia about the fact that this is the longest unofficial election campaign in the history of campaigns in Australia.

So the hardcore election campaign has not begun because the election has not been officially called. But obviously everybody in this country of all persuasions of the political fence have already begun gearing up. And our focus is on helping to convene the WikiLeaks Party, so that we can take membership, and then formally register the party with the Australian Electoral Commission at which point Julian will be then formally endorsed as a lead candidate. So, it is a bit of a complicated situation that's never before occurred in the history of campaigns in this country.

Robles: I see. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about the reaction by the Australian populists and the men on the street to Julian's situation and the fact that he is going to be running?

Castro: It is funny you say that I was out, just the other night and overheard some young "gen" wives and they'd all just run into each other, and I heard one of them say "Hey, Julian Assange is running for Senate. How cool is that!" That's generally the reaction that I've received from all walks of life. And in fact, from people that are disenfranchised on both sides of the political parties in this country.

Julian has a great deal of support in Australia both for his current situation in relation with WikiLeaks and also in relation to running for Senate. The reason for that; I think is that many Australians feel disenfranchised by the two main parties, that we are deeply concerned as a citizenry about our militarized relationship with the United States of America and the behavior of our Government around our citizens, such as Julian and many others in fact, a long list of people who have effectively been abandoned by the Government when they are in trouble overseas.

So, there are a lot of components within Australian society that are very unhappy with the domination of the two main political parties and are really looking for something that reflects a more democratic and direct process of participation for the citizens.

Robles: What would your party do to bring about changes, to bring about more transparency in Government and make it a Government that is more of the people? It sounds like the Government has completely disconnected itself from the populace. Would you agree with that?

Castro: I think that's a fairly accurate description of most Western governments' relationships with their citizenry, and certainly here in Australia. Really this goes back to the Howard Government, particularly since 9\11 and the whole war on terror, the state of continuous war.

It was actually the ten year anniversary here yesterday of mass protests across Australia to prevent us from going to war in Iraq. And unfortunately, what we saw take place was hundreds of thousands of people come out on the streets and then our government refused to listen to us. And that was very debilitating and deflating for many people in Australia who did not want to enter into an illegal war.

And we've seen increasingly over the last ten years the slow erosion of our civil liberties, the desire for our Government to engage private corporations and public resources to surveil, to repress and suppress. We've also seen policies that contravene our international citizenry in relation to human rights.

So, there are many things that are severely concerning people in this country, not to mention that we are a nation that is currently relying on mining. But we also are very much aware that the practices that are being employed are potentially devastating to our environment. So, there are many trigger points for people in this country at the moment where we feel that the current Government and also the opposition are pretty much the same and not representing the truth of the people.

So, my own standing, and I want to make clear again that I speak from the perspective of the WikiLeaks Australian Citizens Alliance, although we are deeply engaged and involved in the formation of the new WikiLeaks Party, we are not the party.

But I would say that the WikiLeaks Party is definitely interested in protecting the rights of the citizenry and privacy of the individual, and bringing transparency to our Government. And repeatedly, we have had it demonstrated to us that the government is clearly not willing to reveal particular behavior to the citizenry.

So, I think that the WikiLeaks Party has an opportunity to represent the issues that actually really concern people around our own participation in our democracy and civil rights. And I think that in the development of the WikiLeaks Party, as it goes along they will be employing very innovative ways of membership being able to participate in the formation of policies that actually reflect the people.

END Part 1

'If Australia handed a Senator to America for exposing war crimes the country would explode'

Interview with WikiLeaks Alliance co-founder Sam Castro — Part II

*John Robles
Voice of Russia
Feb 20, 2013*

Robles: People have characterized Australia as being a lapdog to the US. Would you agree with that statement?

Castro: I personally do agree with that statement. There are many people who support the work of WikiLeaks and who would also echo the same response. This has become increasingly clear from our engagement in American wars, from our foreign policy that is determined to protect its relationship with the United States, over its citizenry.

We have, currently, legislation and draft papers on the table in this country that reflect the kind of cyber crime and national surveillance concepts that are being introduced in not only America but across Western countries, which we see as designed to target civilian population and activists, as opposed to tracking war crime and terrorism.

And most recently we also have expansion of American forces in military bases in this country and closer cooperation with America in terms of it trying to get a foothold in the Asia-Pacific region. So, we are deeply concerned that our foreign policy is so tightly entwined into a militarized foreign policy of America, that we are in fact eroding our own sovereignty as a nation and making choices around how our young men and women engage in warfare across the planet.

So, this is very tricky for Australia because of course our neighbours are in Asia and China, so it is a delicate process. And we are not saying that we shouldn't be in relationship with America but we need to distance ourselves and make independent choices around what kind of warfare, and in fact, if you look at the WikiLeaks cables, what kind of war crimes and human rights abuses we are going to allow our country to be complicit in.

And this has the great deal of impact on politics in this country. **And one of the things that WikiLeaks clearly revealed to the Australian population is that many of the officials and elected representatives in Australia have no qualms in secretly discussing and manipulating internal politics within our country. And this is quite disturbing, as it should be to every country, the way that America is interfering in internal political processes.**

Robles: And they are doing the same thing in Australia, I take it.

Castro: Absolutely!... They are absolutely doing the same thing in Australia.

Robles: I see. All the surveillance, the crackdowns, the militarization: some experts have said it is a sign of an empire in decay. Would you agree with that? What's your opinion on everything that's happened since 9-11? And your opinion on 9-11 itself as a catalyst for all this, if you could?

Castro: Well, I'd like to think that in the current paradigm we often talk about the post-9-11 world. I'd like to think that, as we go along, that it will become the post-WikiLeaks world.

I think 9-11 and the war on terror have striking similarities to the Cold War and McCarthyism. And I think it is quite clear that America is in decline. And one of the reasons that America is in decline, besides its financial situation and its ever-expanding militarized intervention, is the fact that it has now been revealed to be acting as a "rogue nation".

And clearly when countries or power are in decline, the first thing they do is trying to hang onto it, and they often employ violence and subversive tactics in doing that. And we've seen America and its allies working in cooperation on a global scale to repress all kinds of social movements. And I guess the most recent example is of course the Occupy Movement. Clearly there was a global crackdown on the Occupy Movement.

And I think that America has lost touch with reality about who it actually is and how it is perceived outside of its own country. And I think it's done itself a great disservice with not addressing the issues of human rights abuses and war crimes, with not addressing and prosecuting people for crimes revealed in the WikiLeaks cables in relationship to war, and I'm thinking of course of "Collateral Murder".

Obama's continuation of many of the Bush policies which extend into the domestic financial realm, but most importantly in term of continuing to expand the "War on Terror", not closing down Guantanamo Bay, which is effectively a torture facility, and pursuing the disposition made tricks and trying to embed drone warfare. Things like that, which I'm not sure if Americans in general and the American Administration actually understand, is severely eroding America's support and perception with the rest of the world.

So, they do seem to be an empire in decline and each empire does have to have an end. And it is shame that the path they seem to be pursuing is to continually up the military presence in a hope that that will somehow cement their power as sheriffs for the world. **They see themselves as the leader of the world and yet they are acting like a rogue nation. And this is very disturbing to many people in Australia, mainstream Australian people, who perhaps do not engage frequently in our politics, but they know enough to know that we should be wary of America's behavior.**

There is a certain amount of cynicism that has sort of crept into the global citizenry as a result of the revelations of WikiLeaks. And when you see a country behaving in

such a hypocritical manner, **assuming to criticize other countries about enabling protest and free Internet access, while they continually arrest and crackdown on whistleblowers and people that may disagree with their policies and their behavior, then obviously it becomes very hard to take them seriously when they are the ones committing perhaps some of the most gross violations on the planet, both at a military level and on a corporate level.**

Robles: I have a question about Julian. If he gets a Senate seat, will he have some kind of immunity in the English Commonwealth, I mean would they let him to leave the embassy and will he have immunity in Australia?

Castro: Well, I'm not a lawyer, but my understanding is that it may provide some further impetus for him being able to leave the Ecuadorian Embassy as an elected official of Australia, elected by the people. My understanding is: if he comes back to Australia, which is... He would like to come back to Australia and take his seat... and by the way, **the polls are suggesting that he has a very good chance of winning a Senate seat.**

If he comes back to Australia and is able to take his seat, I think that we have some recent changes in our extradition laws that were pushed through by the previous Attorney General, Nicola Roxon who like our unelected Foreign Minister Bob Carr have both trotted out the same old script that they know nothing about America's pursuit of Julian for many, many years, and they only recently acknowledged the existence of a WikiLeaks Grand Jury.

So, the previous Attorney General pushed through changes to the extradition laws in this country, which certainly lower the threshold for being extradited to a country like America for minor offences. The changes also reduced the safety guards around political offensives because of course they now include those obscure words of terrorism and terrorist acts. And in this country we have already seen over the last 18 months Public officials claiming that environmental activists are terrorists or more dangerous than terrorists.

The use of this obscure word and the inclusion of that within the changes to the extradition act in this country, certainly mean that somebody like Julian, or in fact anyone that is creating dissent, may be more easily extradited for example under copyright laws. So, these things exist.

I think if Julian Assange was in Australia and the Australian Government handed him over to America; there would be an absolute out-roar in this country and this would be proof positive to the Australian people of the deception and the sellout of our Government to US wishes. So, I think in some respects the people of Australia would certainly provide a level of protection for Julian in Australia.

But if we combine this with such legislation as the **National Defense Authorization Act in America which effectively means that America is trying to extend unconstitutional domestic law to the global citizenry**, which is mind-boggling in itself, this of course leaves open a very, very scary component where anyone may be picked up and held indefinitely, and extradited.

So, there is a risk for Julian wherever he may be. And I guess if he is back in Australia and he is an elected senator and if our Government agrees to extradite a senator to the US for the revelations of war crimes, this country would absolutely explode.

Robles: I hope so! My God! To even ponder such an occurrence, I mean you would think would be something out of some science fiction novel, but, I mean, to consider that that could be a possibility says a lot about where the world has gone, I think.

Castro: And I think it also reflects on the fact, just as you were referring to: “Is America a dying empire?” I guess that one of the things that happens when a country is trying desperately to hold onto power; they reveal themselves for what they are, and have very little “care factor” if that is known.

So, I think America, in trying to impose the NDAA on the global citizenry has actually revealed that it is not even keeping up the pretence of rule of law or a due process, which is the same thing it is doing with its drones a targeted killing program.

Robles: And with: Guantanamo and torture programs, and aggressive wars, and crimes against humanity, which those are, etc. etc.

Castro: Yes. And of course on a corporate level it is also engaging with the Transpacific Partnership Agreement which again is just another blatant corporate grab at over-riding national sovereignty and democracy for the countries that are participating.

Robles: I've heard many people say, on the economic side, I mean for the US in particular: "Democracy is not profitable". So, any country that has real democracy has to be gotten rid of. What would... as a senator, let's say Julian has got his Senate seat. What would be some of the first changes that he would make or attempt to make? And how much can you change from the Senate in Australia?

Castro: Well, I think it is important for people to understand the way that the Australian political and the Governmental system works. **The Senate is the house of review.** It is a way that ... There is a saying in Australia: “the Senate is there to keep the bastards honest!”

Robles: I think that would be the perfect place for Julian.

Castro: Exactly! So, in some respects Julian’s role, if he wants to be elected as a senator, is an oversight role. The Senate is there to scrutinize the legislation that is being pushed from the lower house, the Senate is there to scrutinize the draft policies and suggestions to be put into legislation. And for us in Australia, we’ve been lucky from my perspective that **the balance of power in the Senate has recently been held by the Greens and Independents.**

And I think we need more of that in both houses of Parliament in this country. We’ve had for the last election cycle pretty much a whole Parliament where the Independents and Greens have held the power both in the lower house and the upper house. In this coming election it seems pretty clear that it is unlikely that that balance of power will be held in the lower house, unless the people get out there and vote for the Independents.

In the upper house there is the opportunity to expand that with people like Julian Assange, with the WikiLeaks Party, the Pirate Party, various Independents and Greens so that we can actually stop bad policy and bad legislation from going ahead. In Australia it is kind of the last frontier in preventing bad policy.

And unfortunately the reason that one of the reasons that Australia has ended up in the state that it is in, in terms of lack of any real responsibility or democracy is prior to the last election cycle, when the Howard Government was in power, they controlled both houses. And I think that’s very dangerous for any democracy because it is not reflective of the broader range of views and desires of the population.

So, Julian’s role would be an oversight role, like of all the rest of the senators. And hopefully, Julian along with other independents and smaller parties can hold that

balance in the Senate to make sure that legislation is not put through that sells our civil liberties and our independence down the river, basically.

Robles: Wonderful!

Castro: So, in terms of affecting a change, it is very hard for a senator, I guess to push through brand new concepts. But it is very possible for senators to impact the direction of our country by ensuring bad legislation and bad policy does not make it into our Government's process and platform.

Robles: Would you say Australia has a real multi-party system unlike the US, which has basically a one party system which is disguised as a two party system?

Castro: I think we are actually pretty similar. I think that the two main parties in this country are the Labour Party, which I guess is equivalent in some respects to the Democrats in America, and the Liberal Party, which is equivalent to the Republicans. But we all know that they are all the same. **The differences between the two major parties in this country are in fact minimal** and that's one of the issues that is making people feel really disenfranchised and disillusioned with this two party system....

I think Australia is on the verge of actually understanding that it needs to crack open the two party system in this country, if we are going to have true reflective democracy other than going out once every three or four years and voting for one of the same two. And that is happening. In the last election the Greens managed to secure their first ever seat in the lower house of our Government and I do hope that they retain that and we get more independents and minor parties in there.

I think why the WikiLeaks Party is so timely, is because the Australian people are ready to find a new way forward because we have been continually disappointed and sold down the river by both sides of politics in this country....

Carr drops promise to raise Assange case

*Philip Dorling
Sydney Morning Herald
February 22, 2013*

Foreign Minister Bob Carr has walked away from a written undertaking to raise the case of Julian Assange in discussions with Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt next week.

Senator Carr's apparent decision to abandon consular advocacy for Mr Assange comes after the WikiLeaks publisher confirmed his plans to run as a Victorian Senate candidate in the September federal election.

Fairfax Media has obtained a copy of a **letter Senator Carr wrote to Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam on February 8, advising that he intended to seek further diplomatic assurances from Mr Bildt concerning the possible prosecution of Mr Assange in Sweden.**

However, Senator Carr's office has now stated that Mr Assange's case will not be on agenda when the two foreign ministers met in Canberra on Wednesday. "There are no plans to discuss Mr Assange," a spokesperson for Mr Carr told AAP yesterday.

Senator Ludlam last night said he "still sincerely hoped Foreign Minister Carr will be true to his written word and speak up on behalf of an Australian citizen".

For the past eight months the WikiLeaks publisher has been confined to Ecuador's London embassy. He has been granted political asylum by Ecuador on the grounds that he is at risk of extradition to the US to face conspiracy or other charges arising from WikiLeaks obtaining thousands of secret US military and diplomatic reports leaked by US Army soldier Bradley Manning.

British police are on guard outside the embassy 24 hours a day, waiting to arrest Mr Assange so he can be extradited to Sweden to face questioning about sexual assault allegations. Mr Assange claims extradition to Sweden would facilitate his extradition to the United States.

Senator Ludlam wrote to Senator Carr on January 14, highlighting public comments by Swedish government representatives that could prejudice Mr Assange's prospects for a fair trial in Sweden.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt and Foreign Minister Bildt have both publicly attacked Mr Assange. Swedish Health and Social Affairs Minister Goran Hagglund responded to Ecuador's decision last August to grant the WikiLeaks publisher asylum with a public diatribe in which he condemned Mr Assange as "Sick. A coward who dare[s] not have his case tried by a court. If he had done what he is accused of, he is a wretch."

At that time Senator Carr said: "Mr Hagglund's reported remarks are a matter for him."

In response to Senator Ludlam's letter, however, the Foreign Minister indicated his intention to take the matter up with Mr Bildt. "The Australian Government has on several occasions sought and subsequently received assurances from Swedish authorities that Mr Assange would receive due legal process in any proceedings against him in Sweden," Senator Carr wrote on February 8. "I would expect to renew our request for such assurances at my next meeting with my Swedish counterpart."

The news that Mr Assange's case is no longer on the agenda for Senator Carr's discussions with Mr Bildt follows confirmation last week that Mr Assange intends to run for a Victorian Senate seat as the lead candidate for a new WikiLeaks Party at the September 14 federal election.

Writing in his Thoughtlines political blog in February last year, then retired former New South Wales premier Carr was highly critical of the Swedish prosecutorial process levied against Mr Assange. "The Swedish judge is prosecutor . . . yes, the two roles in the one officer, an outrage by Australian standards," Mr Carr wrote. "The charge includes rape but the sex was consensual. The victims have exchanged emails talking revenge and money."

Senator Carr promptly distanced himself from these and other comments once he was appointed Foreign Minister, saying that they were the views of a private individual and did not necessarily reflect the positions he would adopt as a member of the Federal Labor Government.

The Persecution of Bradley Manning

Craig Murray
February 27, 2013

The thrilling development in the trial of Bradley Manning is that Manning has acknowledged he is the source of the leaked materials, but employed a whistleblower defence. His case is that he was exposing illegal acts and trying to arouse legitimate public debate. However in the kangaroo court trial the prosecution has objected to Manning's proposed evidence, and claims that Manning's detailed references to specific war crimes are irrelevant and should not be allowed to be made in court. In other words, the state is seeking to prevent Bradley Manning from presenting his defence, and doubtless the military "judge" will comply with the state.

In order to overshadow Manning's defence, the government and corporate media brought out, the moment the news of Manning's defence was announced, the "news" that the government will put in the stand an all-American hero, a US Navy Seal, one of the Zero-Torture-Thirty killers of Osama Bin Laden, who will give evidence that Bin Laden had a stash of the Wikileaks released cables in his home.

That the timing of this piece of propaganda theatre was deliberate to wipe out public perception of Manning's defence—and his not being allowed to make it—there is absolutely no doubt. But what in any case is the real value of this evidence?

Well, it certainly adds to the mountain of evidence that the US government will go after Assange the moment he leaves the UK. But against Bradley Manning it adds nil. Who would have thought that Bin Laden would not read the Wikileaks cables? Nobody would have thought that. Hundreds of millions of people read them. Many Arab Spring protestors in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen were motivated in part by information in the cables. Is the US government going to bring evidence on that too?

The problem is, of course, that Bin Laden was never convicted of anything. If the Americans had not murdered him, evidence from him about his view of the cables and what he intended to do with them might have been interesting. It may even have helped the prosecution. But they killed him rather than prosecute or question him, so they do not have that.

Perhaps enough time has passed for people to be a bit more dispassionate about the strange killing of Bin Laden. There was absolutely no need to kill him. He had no weapon. His small compound was completely secured by US Marines. At the time they shot Bin Laden, there was nobody on the compound who could fire back. Bin Laden was an elderly man in poor health. Trained navy seals could have hauled him alive into the helicopter without adding more than 10 seconds to their mission time—and it seems they had plenty of time, time to go searching for Wikileaks documents anyway. It is perfectly plain that the truth is that Obama had instilled an understanding Bin Laden was to be killed, not captured.

But that makes no sense. If the Americans really believe the entire al-Qaida narrative which has been banged out incessantly by the media this last decade, then **Bin Laden alive would have been the most valuable intelligent asset in US history.** To kill him

needlessly with no attempt at interrogation would be absolutely extraordinary. There was no operational need to do it in the compound that night. Keeping him alive would in no way have further endangered the troops on the operation. They did not want him to talk.

Now for a state to use the alleged intentions of somebody as evidence, when the state killed that person to avoid him giving evidence, is rather remarkable. Only in the Bradley Manning kangaroo court does it make sense.

The US government's problem is that it has spoonfed to mainstream media journalists for years the lie that the Wikileaks cables release endangered lives. **There is then this appalling lie that Assange stated that the informers deserve to be shot— a statement which the host of the small dinner has sworn was never made**, and Assange swears he never said. But despite all this propaganda, and despite the fact that they are extremely keen to do so, and every mainstream media organisation in the whole world has worked on it, nobody has produced one credible instance of an individual who was harmed as a result of being named in a Wikileaks cable— unless you include the dictators whose people turned against them.

Part of the reason for this is rather prosaic. The State Department cables were not intelligence material. The media likes to call them intelligence because it sounds exciting and sells papers, **but it is not intelligence material. It is just diplomatic reporting. And it is not highly classified. None of it is Top Secret— it is just Restricted or Confidential.**

If the release of any material would endanger the life of the source, that material would automatically get classified Top Secret. That is why nobody has been endangered. The system works, The Americans should celebrate that, rather than try Hollywood-linked stunts to demonise Manning.

http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2013/02/the-persecution-of-bradley-manning/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

WikiLeaks questions for Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt's trip to Australia

WikiLeaks (@wikileaks)
27 February 2013

The Swedish press are timid due to the small overlapping political and media class in Stockholm (essentially, everyone is related [*not really*—-A.B.]). Consequently it is important that foreign press ask the hard questions:

a) You have said that it is not a secret that you are an old friend of Karl Rove. When was the last time you met with/spoke to him. When was the last time Mr Rove formally or informally advised you? Have you every spoken to Mr. Rove about WikiLeaks or Julian Assange? When did you first meet Mr. Rove? Isn't it true you met in a hotel room together during 2012, in London?

Context: Karl Rove lists on his website only one foreign consultancy job: for the conservative party in Sweden, Carl Bildt's Moderaterna (<http://www.rove.com/bio>). From an [interview](#) with Assange (early 2012): "Carl Bildt, became a U.S. Embassy informant in 1973 when he was 24 years old. He shipped his personal effects to Washington, to lead a conservative leadership program, where he met Karl Rove. They became old friends and would go to conferences together and so on."

Q: Karl Rove? How do you know this?

A: Cables.

Carl Bildt, in an [interview](#) with the tabloid Expressen (23 February 2012): "Bildt has never tried to hide that he knows Karl Rove, they "meet regularly" and Bildt described Rove as "one of my oldest friends".

b) What is your relationship with Niklas Svensson (who first published the allegations against Assange) at the Expressen newspaper. Your wife was present at his birthday party. Why?

Context: Niklas Svensson, editor [*political reporter*—-A.B.] of Expressen, has had an extremely hostile editorial line against both Assange and WikiLeaks, publishing fabricated stories claiming that WikiLeaks "internal memo" was planning a 'smear campaign' against Sweden and that WikiLeaks 'managers' were monitoring Swedish journalists in Sweden, including Niklas Svensson, including by taking pictures of their homes and breaking into confidential tax records.

c) What is your relationship to Lundin Petroleum. There have been reports in the Swedish press that you have helped arrange business deals for them while you have been in office, is this correct? [*Indicating that the Swedish press is not always as passive and inbred as stated above.*—-A.B.]

Context: Carl Bildt was a member of the board of directors of Lundin Oil (now Lundin Petroleum) 2000-2006. Lundin Petroleum, one of the largest Swedish oil company was managed by Bildt and is now criminally embroiled in a crimes against humanity case in the Sudan from the time of Bildt's management.

June 2010, ECOS (European Coalition on Oil in Sudan) report: [Unpaid Debt](#)

More: <http://www.thelocal.se/36112/20110913/>

<http://rixstep.com/1/20120214,01.shtml>

d) It has been noted in [the Swedish press](#) that your government has allowed the largest media conglomerate (the Bonniers) to break anti-monopoly laws in exchange for political support. Can you comment on that?

Context: The consolidation of ownership in Sweden's main newspapers reduces the number of owners basically to two: Bonnier (with the biggest share) and Schibsted. The Bonnier family are the "Murdochs" of Sweden [*a closer analogy would be with the Sulzbergers in the U.S. — N.Y. Times, etc.*] and have large international holdings. Dagens Nyheter is owned by Bonnier. Svenska Dagbladet is owned 99,4% by Schibsted. Aftonbladet owned 49,9% by Schibsted. Expressen is owned by Bonnier. Kvällsposten by Bonnier. GT by Bonnier and Stockholm City [*now defunct*—-A.B.] by Bonnier. The Swedish News Agency TT is owned by "the big newspapers and media companies" (Bonnier and Schibsted [*they own a total of 60%*—-A.B.]).

e) You have granted Mr. Torbjörn Törnquist (co-owner of oil company Gunvor) a status as honorary consul in Geneva. Why did you do that? What kind of business projects have you had in the Russian oil sector, in the Russian land purchasing sector?

f) How do you reconcile your position on the rule of law in Sweden when you yourself, and members of your cabinet, have made slanderous comments that harm Mr. Assange's prospects for a fair trial in Sweden?

- Why has there been no attempt to sanction members of the Swedish executive from making hostile comments against an Australian citizen who has not been charged with any crime?
- Why has there been no formal retraction by Minister Hagglund, yourself (on the 'smear campaign' remarks about Wikileaks), or the Prime Minister, who falsely stated that Mr. Assange had been charged? Would you say that for the most part the media in Sweden is respecting the presumption of innocence and Mr. Assange's personal integrity?
- You commented to Australian lawyer Jennifer Robinson in June 2012 that Assange 'is not above the law'. However, Ms. Robinson reminded you that it is within the law of Sweden and the bilateral agreements between Sweden and the UK to interrogate Assange in the UK. Why does Sweden refuse to hear Mr. Assange's side of the story? (MORE: <http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#LONDON>)
- If the decision to interrogate Assange in the UK is discretionary, and not prevented by law, what is the reason behind Sweden refusing to interrogate him? (MORE: <http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#LONDON>)
- Are you aware that Sweden has sent a prosecutor to interrogate a murder suspect in Serbia, and that suspects have been interrogated similarly in the Swedish embassy in London, and that Sweden has sent an entire court to Rwanda?

More on the Swedish media/politicians public comments about Assange:

<http://theconversation.edu.au/lunch-and-dinner-with-julian-assange-in-prison-12234>

A guide to the following claims:

The claim: "easier from the UK than Sweden" <http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#UKEASIER>

The claim: "there are political exceptions"

<http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#POLITICALEXCEPTIONS>

The claim: "there are death penalty and torture exceptions"

<http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#TORTUREEXCEPTIONS>

The claim: "the rendition was an isolated incident"

<http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html#RENDITION>

g) Do you recognise the Ecuadorian government's finding that Mr. Assange is a political asylee and has a well-founded fear of persecution by the United States due to his work as the Wikileaks publisher?

h) You have accused WikiLeaks of planning a 'smear campaign' against Sweden without any factual basis. Aren't you just a bit thin-skinned? Isn't this odd behavior for a foreign minister to be engaging in? How can Assange have any confidence in Sweden when you make statements like this: "I take note of the information in Expressen that Wikileaks is preparing a smear campaign, you can figure out yourself what I think of that"

QUESTION: In an interview with Expressen, you say that you are taking note that Wikileaks is planning a "smear campaign" on Sweden. You also made several tweets referring to the 'smear campaign' that Wikileaks says is baseless. Have you seen the documents that purport to be Wikileaks 'internal documents'? Are you aware that WikiLeaks says that these documents are forged and that this is false?

Context: The story came out just a week before Julian Assange was expecting to be extradited to Sweden. It appeared to be designed to undermine the impact of the release of the information about Bildt's relationship to the US and to Karl Rove (see b). Expressen ran a story exaggerating Assange's words (claiming Assange had said Bildt was a US spy), and claimed that they had obtained an 'internal Wikileaks memo' with plans to harm Swedish prestige and economic interests. It followed up the story with claims that Wikileaks 'managers' were spying on Swedish media editors and photographing their homes.

Wikileaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson's response:
<http://wikileaks.org/Kristinn-Hrafnsson-The-Great.html>

And Wikileaks response: <http://wikileaks.org/Press-release-WikiLeaks-on-Recent.html>

No assurance on Assange extradition: Swedish FM

*ABC (Australia)
Feb. 28, 2013*

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt discusses WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's situation in the Ecuadorian embassy and his country's similarities with Australia.

Video at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-02-28/australia-similar-to-sweden-foreign-minister/4544164>

Assange At Bay

An interview with Julian Assange's lawyer, Jennifer Robinson

*Gordon Campbell
Werewolf
February 2013*

The criticisms of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange spring from the accusations about (a) his alleged intolerance of dissent and criticism (b) his sexual behaviour in Sweden and (c) his rationale for seeking asylum in Ecuador's London Embassy, rather than returning to Sweden and facing his accusers in court. A sense of betrayal is evident among some former supporters, such as Jemima Khan. At its heart lie the allegations of sexual predation on his part, made by two women in Sweden. The accusations are that on both occasions what began as consensual sex became rape in one case, and in the other, sexual molestation.

Assange has denied the allegations, and has offered to be questioned by the Swedish authorities, either in Britain and/or by video link. Returning in person to fight the accusations, Assange claims, would put him at serious risk of being extradited to the

United States to face charges regarding the material taken by Bradley Manning and subsequently published by Wikileaks. Assange's legal advice is that extradition to the US could occur, regardless of the outcome of the Swedish court proceedings.

This has been a disputed point. His critics argue that Swedish law prohibits extradition for charges carrying the death penalty or for charges of a political nature— but that stance seems disingenuous. If the US extradition request was merely framed in terms of criminal, not political charges— eg computer theft or collusion with theft by Manning of what Wikileaks later published— the extradition request would fall into a grey area where it is unclear whether the Swedish authorities would retain much discretion to refuse co-operation with the US request. It is only if the US publicly waives its intentions to prosecute Assange— which it has refused to do— that the Swedish prosecution could go ahead without the US extradition shadow hanging over it.

Currently, an impasse exists. Jemima Khan lost 20,000 pounds as her part of the bail forfeited by Assange's supporters when he fled to the Ecuadorian Embassy. In a critical *New Statesman* article published early in February, Khan depicted Assange as being a cult-like leader intolerant of criticism— “an Australian L. Ron Hubbard”— **although the examples she offers seem utterly trivial**. At the centre of her article though, Khan raises the issue of genuine substance: “The women in question have human rights, too, and need resolution. Assange's noble cause and his wish to avoid a US court does not trump their right to be heard in a Swedish court.”

That is the basis of the current deadlock. Khan is right, but only half right [*and Assange does not dispute that half --A.B.*]. **One could just as easily invert her argument by saying that the women's right to be heard does not require Assange to undergo decades in a US Supermax prison regardless of whether he is found innocent or guilty of the charges in Sweden**. There is no clean solution, and that helps to explain some of the heat in the rhetoric about Assange. (If only people shout loud enough, their side will drown out the other.)

Assange's personal behaviour has hardly been blameless. Moreover, his decision to subordinate his accusers right to be heard in court to his desire to avoid imprisonment in the US has been laid open to challenge. Yet the celebrity worship that elevated Assange and is now denigrating him also seems highly dubious. Khan writes about Alex Gibney's new Wikileaks film: “In many ways, the film's narrative arc mirrors my own journey with Assange, from admiration to demoralisation.” To which one can say: was Assange's celebrity ever about anything other than the personal ‘journey’ of his admirers and accusers? Only, it seems, if Assange goes to Sweden, is acquitted but martyrs himself in a US prison for a decade or more, would admiration be restored and a “Free Julian Assange” lobby group then formed. Small consolation, in the circumstances. For now, Assange is refusing to go down that route— and as a result, the rape allegation remain unresolved in court. As a further consequence, Assange has become the poster child for the expendability of women's rights for the greater good of left wing political causes. [*What? --A.B.*]

Recently Assange's lawyer Jennifer Robinson was in New Zealand with West Papuan independence leader Benny Wenda, as part of her work in an organisation called International Lawyers for West Papua. In a brief interview, Werewolf editor Gordon Campbell sought an update from Robinson on the legal aspects of Assange's situation.

Campbell: The Swedish prosecutor in a press release had said that Assange — if he returned to Sweden — would be held in custody and wouldn't be released on bail. And [allegedly] this would preclude his ability to claim asylum in Sweden. Is that correct?

Robinson: Yes. The situation Julian was facing was that there is a grand jury impaneled in the US but we have no legal way to flush out the Department of Justice to determine whether or not there is a sealed indictment in the US. We know the grand jury [investigation] is ongoing. We know their criminal investigation continues. We don't know what the outcome of that is, because it is completely sealed. So he was in a position where he had exhausted his last appeal with respect to the UK — about going to Sweden. He knew that he going to be taken into custody in the coming days ahead of that. The Swedish prosecutor had put out a press release saying that she would put him in custody and that he would be held in custody pending charge and trial. Which meant that physically, he wouldn't have the opportunity to seek asylum [from say the Ecuadorian embassy in Sweden] with respect to what might happen in the United States.

But he could have sought asylum in Sweden itself?

I don't know enough about that to know. Yes, I guess he could have, I think his view was...he doesn't trust Sweden.

Lets look at that. There are people who say his view of Sweden is false, and reflects a paranoia not grounded in the Swedish realities. They'd cite two strong counts: Swedish won't extradite on a capital punishment charge and secondly, it won't extradite for a political charge — which admittedly does leave the door open for a charge framed in criminal terms. Yet in the circumstances of this case, wouldn't a criminal charge be seen for the de facto political charge that it is? So what's the problem?

Well, I debated a professor of public international law — Pal Wrangé — in Stockholm last summer. And **we came to the same conclusion — that it depends entirely on what the US pleads its case as.** It depends entirely on the criminal charges that are brought, and [whether] the charge is, on its face, not political, I understand under Swedish law that it can consider certain facts. But if on the face of it, it does not appear to be political — it if it is some sort of accessory / liability in computer crimes —

Yes, I understand how it could be framed as a criminal matter but —

It is entirely possible he could be extradited to the US. The legal advice we have from Sweden is that ultimately it will be a decision by the executive, and it is within the power of the executive to give an undertaking that they wouldn't do that [extradite Assange] Also, because he is being extradited from the UK to Sweden, then the UK could insist on the rule of specialty, and insist that he not be extradited to any third country for any other crime, because he is only being extradited for that particular criminal investigation. And the UK has refused to do that. The point is... it is entirely possible to be extradited from Sweden. You don't have to argue any collusion with the US. You don't have to argue any political interference. It is entirely possible.

Legally possible. The question is whether it would be politically possible.

Would you be willing to put your life at risk for that possibility?

You wouldn't be putting your life at risk. In this case, you'd be putting your liberty at risk.

Would you be willing to put your liberty at risk ?

Well, that's his decision. And the longer he maintains that position, the more he erodes the consensus in Sweden [which consensus is that? --A.B.] that would be his best protection against extradition. I'm not saying there's a simple way out of this. But that whittling away of support must be a concern, isn't it?

Public opinion in Sweden has always been a concern. Because of the nature of these allegations. Because of the nature of the press coverage in Sweden. And because of the very public statements being made by members of the Swedish administration about Julian. Of course, we are concerned about the political climate in Sweden. I'm not going to venture an opinion on that, or any of his choices except to say that—legally speaking— it is possible to be extradited from Sweden. The assurances that were sought by Ecuador in the process of granting political asylum were refused. And that's his legal position, as it stands.

Clearly, the role of intermediaries will be crucial if this deadlock is ever to be broken. As Assange has pointed out, pressure could be applied to the US to publicly waive any intent to extradite him. The other obvious pressure point is Sweden itself, to provide an assurance that there would be no onward extradition, whatever the outcome of the trial. Arguably that would even be in accord with Sweden's obligations under the Refugee Convention of...what's the French term?

Non-refoulement?

Exactly. So either a commitment by the US to waive prosecution or a public commitment to non-refoulement to the US by Sweden would break the deadlock?

Absolutely.

And obviously, those commitments are not going to be volunteered. They'll have to be elicited. In that respect, what could the Australian government be doing— on behalf of its citizen— that it is not doing at the moment?

The Australian government could have done any number of things that we have been asking them to do for more than two years. We asked them to seek an assurance from the US that they wouldn't seek his extradition. We asked them to seek an assurance from Sweden that they wouldn't send him onwards to the United States but that he would be permitted to come home to Australia. **They refused to ask for any of those assurances. Flat out refused. Its well within the power of a state to ask on behalf of its citizens.**

We've asked for various due process assurances. In particular, political assurances that if Julian were to go to Sweden, that he would receive an assurance from the Swedish government that he could travel home to Australia after whatever happens, happens. But at least he'd be home [afterwards] in Australia. And the Australian government said "No." The Australian government won't even ask the US whether they are going to prosecute. We asked them— ask the US what their intentions are. [But] the only thing the Australian government has asked— which we have only able to detect through a Freedom of Information request— is that they be given advance warning if charges are brought, so that they can prepare their political response.

Couldn't there be a legal rationale for that — in that the Australian government wouldn't want to prejudice or preclude any beef that some third country may well have with Assange, given the global nature of Wikileaks?

No. All it would be requesting— and this is all a moot point, it is all only for background basically now. Because the Australian government was asked for two years and said no, and that's the reason he sought asylum from another state. And Ecuador has asked all the questions that we asked the Australian government to ask, and were refused answers. But while it is now a moot point, no— it wouldn't preclude further action. All we were asking is that he be returned to Australia, so that he could defend any future extradition request.

When it comes to public opinion, two elements are being put on the scales— the rights of the women to have their case heard, and Assange's right to avoid political persecution. What is your answer to Khan's point that the Swedish women have human rights too— and that they deserve to have their day in court.

We absolutely agree they deserve to have this matter resolved, as much as Julian deserves to have this matter resolved. He has offered his testimony to answer these questions for more than two years. He actually co-operated with the Swedish prosecutor while he was in Sweden. He sought her permission to leave and got that permission to leave. He was interviewed with respect to the allegations. He has been offering his testimony since then. All he is asking for is an undertaking with respect to onward extradition. If those could be provided, he is happy to participate. In no way, is he attempting to deny their right— he is asserting his own. He wants to resolve this. He hopes to resolve it. But not at the risk of being sent on to the United States. He continues to offer his testimony from the Ecuadorian Embassy. The Ecuadorian government has offered that to the Swedish government.

Khan's point though is that Assange's rights— and his desire to avoid a US kangaroo court— do not trump their rights.

He has never said that either. He has offered himself to be questioned and to answer their allegations. And with the appropriate assurances, he would go back and answer.

Have you seen the Alex Gibney film on Wikileaks ?

Yes, I was at Sundance...

Do you have a response to its handling of the legal position?

The film actually covers some important ground. It shows the importance of Wikileaks, at least in the initial states of the film. It shows how the New York Times has tried to distance themselves in ways that are rather unacceptable— in the way they've treated us all. With respect to Julian's legal position, **it does not refer to the Grand Jury. It does not explain the grand jury or how the Grand Jury process works.** And then in the narration, Alex Gibney himself says 'despite any evidence of a US secret plot, Ecuador grants asylum.' In order to understand the US position and the Ecuadorian government's decision to grant asylum, you have to be able to understand what the grand jury is— that it is by its nature secret, and that we have no legal recourse to

flush out the answers from the grand jury. It is simply a waiting game for Julian. And unless and until the US government make public what it has decided to do, we have no recourse. But we know the grand jury has been impaneled, and we know that Julian is the subject — that's in the Bradley Manning proceedings. But none of that—

Is in the film?

None of it is in the film.

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of the Khan article is the characterisation of Assange as being at the centre of a dwindling cult of Scientology— like followers— from whom he demands absolute fealty. Is that the guy you know?

I would say that is not an accurate assessment. Wikileaks still has widespread support. My observation of the Wikileaks team— and I interact with them regularly— is they are an incredibly hardworking and intelligent-thinking group of people who question him constantly. I have no problem with people criticising— but cult-like status? That's incredibly unfair. Wikileaks was set up— and Julian has worked tirelessly— to reveal Scientology...

Right. But its not about his attitude to Scientology. Its whether he is starting to evidence some of its traits.

How so?

By dint of— at least according to Khan— his obfuscation, and his lack of transparency.

Obfuscation about what, though ?

Obfuscation about his rationale for refusing to go to Sweden. Those arguments that he advances are being seen — fairly or otherwise— as excuses, rather than as solidly based concerns.

Well, these are questions that should be put to Julian, not to me. But he has explained his position. The Ecuadorian government has given a full statement on the matters that they have considered in granting him asylum. The Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry had an entire legal team analyzing the application. Julian had a full legal team that submitted the application, that was looked over by Ecuador and considered very carefully, and approved. Julian has made public statements giving the reasons for his seeking asylum. There are legal commentators on either side of the debate who agree one way or the other—

That a clear and present danger to him does exist?

Precisely. So I don't think in any way he has obfuscated. He has been very clear about what his reasons are. People might disagree with them, but a lot of people agree with him. I don't think you can call that obfuscation. He's been very upfront.

Footnote: Under the Refugee Convention, the non-refoulement obligation of ensuring Assange would not be extradited by Sweden onwards to a third country where he is at risk of political persecution rests finally with the United Kingdom. However, there is no sign the UK has sought or required any guarantees from Sweden about onward extradition.

<http://werewolf.co.nz/2013/02/assange-at-bay/>

Resistance From a Cage

Julian Assange Speaks to Norwegian Journalist Eirik Vold

Truthout

1 March 2013

Julian Assange is the itinerant hacker from the Australian Outback who gave the world the biggest leak of secret documents in history. Seven months into his embassy asylum, the cyber crusade for transparency goes on.

This is not the first time that WikiLeaks has come under attack, Assange tells me.

"We had been through a couple of fights. With a commander at the Guantanamo base. We were sued by a Swiss bank. One of my cryptographer friends was ambushed by intelligence agents in a parking lot in Luxembourg. They tried to make him tell them things about WikiLeaks."

A cryptographer friend? Does that sound a bit like having a "hobbit friend" to you? Then let this be a warning: If you are not used to a modern Internet vocabulary, the story of Julian Assange is full of characters that may seem like they are out of a science fiction novel....

"I do what I do because I saw the opportunity," Assange says. "Because I was born in a Western country, with the necessary education and material resources. And because I care about these issues."

Don't even bother to ask if he became the world's most famous leaker [???] and the West's number-one dissident because of his special family background and childhood in the Australian Outback.

"I really don't like that approach," he says.

But Assange does have a special background. He was born on July 3, 1971, in the medium-sized town of Townsville on the tropical northern coast of Australia. The French-sounding surname, Assange, is said to be an Anglification of the Chinese name Ah Sang. A Taiwanese pirate, it is said, brought that surname to Australia. Assange grew up with his mother. They lived in hiding for about five years due to a conflict over the custody of Julian's half brother and moved about 30 times before Julian was 14.

Some describe Assange as a distrustful person, at times bordering on paranoid. Is that why he started the interview by asking me questions about my Spanish, as he heard me make small talk with someone who I thought was an Ecuadorian embassy employee?

"Where did you learn your Spanish? Why do you speak with a Cuban accent?"

His voice and body language, however, reveal curiosity rather than distrust. Assange has always asked questions— and was always willing to go all the way to get the answers.

It was during his youth that Assange started to take advantage of the opportunities that come from growing up in a First World country: literacy, sufficient money to buy a computer, and access to the Internet. Meet Mendax, the online pseudonym of the 16-year-old hacker Julian Assange. Today Assange is seen by many as the world's first great "ethical hacker." His hacker team, called "the international subversives" had strict rules for their activities: "Don't damage computer systems you break into (including crashing them); don't change the information in those systems (except for altering logs to cover your tracks); and share information." Others believe the pseudonym Mendax, which is Latin for "deceitful," is the most precise way of describing Assange's personality. Everyone, however, seems to agree that he was an extremely talented hacker.

In 2002, Assange entered the university. With his restless nature, he went through two different universities and jumped between natural sciences, philosophy and neuroscience. The grades he obtained were rather mediocre, but one particular experience proved decisive.

"I became critical of the academy. Mathematics in the university was financed by the US government and military establishment. We had to work with mathematical models that were used to make military bulldozers, such as were deployed in Iraq and employed by Israel to demolish Palestinian homes. There were quantum mechanical models that could be used for mass espionage on the Internet."

No academic title came out of Assange's university studies in Canberra and Melbourne. But the typical hacker outlook—rebellious, but apolitical—went through a deep metamorphosis. Faced with what Assange calls "the ivory tower's connections to economic power relations on the ground" and global geopolitics, Mendax merged with the political consciousness of Assange the university student.

The result was WikiLeaks.

In 2006, a year after Assange strolled out of campus for the last time, WikiLeaks was founded in the capital of Iceland, Reykjavik. During WikiLeaks' first years, Assange traveled between international conferences with geeky names like Chaos Communications Congress. WikiLeaks arranged meetings and Assange would talk to the journalists who bothered to listen. Meanwhile, the WikiLeaks staff silently stretched its probing tentacles through cyberspace in its search for secrets. Big secrets.

January 8, 2010 — the WikiLeaks Twitter account posts a request for help in decrypting a video about a "U.S. bomb strike on civilians." Three months later, the world witnessed a pristine video recording from 2007 of two Apache artillery helicopters attacking a group of defenseless Iraqis, among them two Reuters press photographers, with 30 millimeter anti-armor ammunition.

"The Collateral Murder video became the iconic video of the Iraq war," says Assange proudly.

But we had seen nothing yet. During 2010, WikiLeaks released three more enormous leaks: The Afghan War Diary, in which US military servicemen provide the naked truth about NATO's killing of Afghan civilians, lies, secrecy and support for a corrupt undemocratic Afghan regime; a similar package from Iraq, called the Iraq War Logs, and finally, Cablegate, a collection of cables sent between Washington and US embassies in 274 countries, dating from 1966 to 2010.

Assange explained how US foreign policy was exposed as violent and dishonest, how the revelations made the ground shake beneath corrupt and oppressive regimes and corporations all over the world and stimulated revolutions, as in Tunisia, and reformist movements in Ghana and Kenya.

WikiLeaks is "a rebel library of Alexandria," Assange declares, making a parallel to the largest known library of classical antiquity. **"With Cablegate, we have provided the largest geopolitical encyclopedia of how the world actually works that ever existed. It's really hard to think of anything in modern times that comes close to this."**

Assange paints in grandiose words, but insistently backs them up with numbers. All together, **the three releases contain more than 700,000 documents. With its 251,276,536 words, Cablegate alone constitutes the greatest package of classified material ever released.**

Has he read all the documents?

"No, but I've read thousands, many thousands."

"It's too much; it's impossible to read it all, or get the full overview of all the revelations. But the impact all over the world is enormous. Every single one of our releases causes thousands of reactions, and they always give people more insight," he says.

The chase begins. Assange has still not revealed how WikiLeaks got the Collateral Murder video decrypted. Presumably, one of his cryptographer friends had something to do with it. But in the Pentagon, eyes turned to a young American soldier on duty in Iraq. On May 26, 2010, Private Bradley Manning was arrested.

"We started to realize that the heat was really coming down on us," Assange says. And it certainly was.

"We were tipped off that we were being followed. Journalists reported about US pressure on different countries— Germany and Australia— to make them prosecute us legally. There were public calls for my assassination from leading American politicians; proposals for laws that WikiLeaks be declared a terrorist organization. The Pentagon announced that it had put together a task force of 120 defense and intelligence personnel. The CIA and the FBI had theirs, too," he says.

In the United States, WikiLeaks' domain name in California was shut down. Bank of America announced that all transactions dealing with WikiLeaks would be blocked. Visa, Mastercard, Paypal, Western Union and Amazon followed. German tax authorities started to investigate WikiLeaks.

"Friends of mine were stopped and interrogated in airports. People who only had remote connections to WikiLeaks started to lose jobs and contracts," he says.

But the FBI may have been closer than Assange imagined. In 2011, the Bureau sent a group of agents in a private jet to Iceland. Without the knowledge of the government of Iceland, the FBI agents hunted down suspected WikiLeaks allies and brought them to the US embassy in Reykjavik for interrogation.

During the two-and-a-half hour interview, only once did Assange display his characteristic impatience when he thinks a journalist says something stupid. The occasion was my interruption of a long argument about how powerful elites trick potential opponents into passivity by giving the impression that they have a greater capacity to harm than they actually have. "But you are afraid," I ask— or, rather, I state.

"That's a silly statement," Assange responds.

A short awkward silence follows.

"So you believe that those who are after you exaggerate their ability to harm you?"

"Those who want to harm WikiLeaks constantly exaggerate their ability to harm us. They are mostly incompetent people."

Is this the cocky Mendax, talking about helpless old policemen in their clumsy hunt for an agile young hacker in cyberspace? Has Assange forgotten that he's entering his seventh month holed up in a 50-square-meter embassy out of fear of ending up like Bradley Manning?

"This isn't about me. What happens to me is not important, beyond the practical difficulties it might create for WikiLeaks."

Assange goes back to a televised Pentagon press conference from 2010 to explain what he means. "They demanded that WikiLeaks hand over all the documents, eliminate all the copies and cut off all contact with whistleblowers in the US military. **Or else they would, and I quote, 'compel us to do so.'**"

But WikiLeaks didn't obey.

"Yes, they put great pressure on us, financial and legal measures that are still ongoing. But we haven't removed a single thing," says Assange.

He thinks the Pentagon has lost face, that their threats are degraded after WikiLeaks ignored their demands and continued publishing.

"The first time we took it seriously, but when they repeated the same demand afterwards, we just laughed about it. They might be able to take revenge on WikiLeaks, but they couldn't stop us."

"The left? The left is still stuck in the 1960s," Assange states drily. Ideologically, he is closer to the free market, even though he says markets always tend to evolve into monopolies unless they are forced to work freely.

Assange might not be afraid, but he is clearly taking a huge personal risk with his disclosure activities. There must be a driving force within him, and it is definitely not a political ideology.

Assange takes a deep breath. "I can answer long and theoretically, or short, depending on your audience."

Assange is service-oriented now. Or just very eager to be correctly understood when he is about to answer why a world full of freely competing [???] news media, political movements and research institutions really needs publishers of secret material like him. Assange wants to make a deeper point. WikiLeaks, he says, is about more than just scandalous revelations and splashy headlines.

"In the same way that the ability to solve physical problems is limited by our understanding of physical laws, the ability to solve societal problems depends on our insight into human institutions. All political theories on how the world is and how it should be are built on such an understanding."

By "institutions" Assange means governments, private companies and other networks of power groups. The problem, he explains, is that while institutions constantly change as they absorb new technology and make old theories outdated, the information about how they actually work is concealed, kept secret.

"Much of what we are being presented, and upon which we build our understanding of the world, is designed to make these institutions palatable for the outside world." **This is why only by knowing the internal communications of these institutions can we understand how they really work. So, if we want to make the world more just, if we want humanity to reach its heights and not its lows, then the first step is to get access to that information,**" he says.

"And then there's the media."

From high theoretical spheres, Assange brings the discussion down to earth again. Or rather down into the mud, to what was to become a dirty conflict between WikiLeaks and the mainstream media.

But it started as a sweet tango. WikiLeaks did the initial work; The New York Times, Der Spiegel and other leading news publications provided their best writers and huge readerships, maximizing the global impact of the revelations.

"I was quite impressed by their work and what we achieved together in the beginning," Assange admits.

Then it all went downhill.

Assange speaks with indignation about Western news media turning an American document about an Iranian missile purchase into "fear propaganda" by censoring the expert assessment in the same document which showed that the purchase did not constitute any threat, about Der Spiegel choosing not to publish information that shed some unfortunate light on Angela Merkel, about the terrible accounts of Task Force 373 and their killing of innocent Afghans— which The New York Times refused to publish— and about what Assange considers an intentional personal smear that reached its low point in August last year, when The New York Times wrote that he refused to flush the toilet.

"Media organizations start off small. But when they grow, they are invited to sit down with the powerful. Then they become part of the same powerful elite that they are supposed to be critically monitoring," he explains.

"It's shameful," Assange says, "that a handful of activists in WikiLeaks have published more secret documents than the entire establishment press, with all its billion-dollar budgets, technical competence and human resources, altogether."

June 19, 2012: Ecuador's government announced that Assange had sought refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and requested political asylum in Ecuador. Swedish prosecutors want him extradited to Sweden to question him about sexual assault allegations from two Swedish women. Both said they had voluntary sex with Assange in August 2010, but one claim, among other things, is that Assange ripped off a condom and continued intercourse without consent. *[That claim has been thoroughly discredited. --A.B.]* So far, the closest prosecutors have come to presenting evidence in the cases is a torn-up condom that later turned out not to have any trace DNA from Assange. Assange has offered to answer questions by telephone, or to go to Sweden, provided that that country guarantees that he will not be extradited to the United States, where alleged whistleblower Manning has been held under conditions that the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture deemed "cruel and inhuman." The Swedes rejected the offer.

So, why did Assange choose to apply for political asylum in a country popularly known as the "banana republic" par excellence of South America?

"Ecuador's president Rafael Correa is really a special person," Assange says, his voice filled with admiration. "He belongs to a new generation of leaders. People like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela have also achieved impressive things, but he is still a military leader. Correa is a US-educated PhD economist. A nationalist in the good sense of the word and a social reformer. This is a very interesting combination."

On August 15 last year, however, a lot of people doubted that this lifeline would be enough to save Assange. In response to Ecuador's granting political asylum to Assange the day before, the British government sent a letter wherein it threatened to revoke the diplomatic immunity of the embassy and go in to arrest Assange. International media described warnings about economic sanctions with catastrophic consequences for Ecuador if Assange was not sacrificed. Most analysts seemed to believe Ecuador would give in. Correa reacted by gathering the entire South American continent behind a declaration that unanimously condemned the threat and scared the British government into a humiliating retreat.

Assange smiles when asked what happened to the pale, hunched up and morally defeated refugee that I had read about in the British press lately. Life as a persecuted person may be rough, but Assange also has a lot of friends. The British movie director Ken Loach donated a running machine, and a former British intelligence agent gives Assange martial arts training at the embassy.

"I'm improving my boxing too, now," Assange says.

The mysterious boxing trainer—Assange does not provide his name—is not the only former intelligence agent who has sided with the Australian "rebel librarian." A recent letter to the British newspaper *The Guardian* in support of Assange was signed by an impressive list of former CIA agents and former colleagues from other agencies. On January 25, the CIA officer John Kiriakou was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison for blowing the whistle on waterboarding torture by the US military, while the

torturers continue to go free. These are hard times for talkative military and intelligence personnel in the US, and many see Assange and WikiLeaks as their voice.

In addition, a broad spectrum of intellectuals, musicians, politicians from the left and right, hackers and even celebrity feminist Naomi Klein have thrown their support behind Assange and demand that he get free passage to Ecuador. The EU parliament voted against the US-imposed banking blockade against WikiLeaks. Last week, Iceland's interior minister Ogmundur Jonasson revealed that he told the FBI agents to get out of Iceland when he found out about the illegal interrogations in the US embassy.

"We have support from all over the world. But the level of support is found in countries that have toppled bad governments in the past, and where the internal archives of the fallen regimes have been central elements in the public debate afterward," Assange explains, pointing to countries like the former apartheid regime of South Africa and former East Germany.

But the rape allegations, whether rooted in reality or not, have stuck to Assange's name now, it seems, and have undermined his support in some parts of Europe.

"You are not very popular in Sweden, are you?"

"Not in the media, but polls show that I have the support of about 55 percent of the Swedish people. That is right in the middle compared to other countries, and better than in the US and Great Britain," he says.

A lady whom I had first thought was an Ecuadorian embassy employee turns out to be part of the team of the world's possibly most famous judge, Baltazar Garzón, who has taken on the task of leading Assange's legal defense.

Garzón has already confronted Great Britain in another high-profile extradition case in the past. In 1998, the former military dictator of Chile, Augusto Pinochet, was arrested in London on the orders of Interpol. Garzón wanted him extradited to Spain to have him prosecuted for murder, torture and kidnappings committed during his 17-year dictatorship. The British [Thatcher] government, however, released Pinochet and let him return to Chile as a free man. Now Garzón is trying to convince the British government that Assange is innocent and does not deserve a harsher treatment—so far, in vain.

Nevertheless, Assange is still optimistic. "We are many people working hard to make the US drop persecution of WikiLeaks," he says, and seems to believe that the accusations from Sweden will also disappear if the US gives up its goal of crushing WikiLeaks.

"But right now, it does not really seem that the cases against you and WikiLeaks are about to disappear. Don't you have another plan to get out of here?"

I ask the question while peeking out from the tiny gap between the old-fashioned curtains in the room. It is no more than two meters from the window to the ground beneath, and it looks dark and abandoned. Earlier speculations had it that the Ecuadorians would attempt to smuggle Assange out in a diplomatic bag and into a speed boat waiting in the river Thames a good kilometer south of the embassy, and then into international waters.

Assange has a different escape route planned. It goes via the upcoming parliamentary elections in Australia. He will be a candidate for the newly founded WikiLeaks party.

"25 percent of the electorate says it will vote for me. I have supporters from the social democrats, the conservatives and the Green Party. And the support is uniform all over the country," says Assange.

And the election campaign has not even started. The Australian police has said Assange's legal problems abroad do not impede him from being a candidate in Australia.

Still, escape "in a British police car" is the option with the lowest odds, only 1.38, at the Irish bookmaker site Paddy Power, which takes bets on how the celebrity refugee will leave the embassy in the end. A seat in the Australian senate stands at 3.5.

As the bets keep rolling in, Assange makes the best out of life on 50 square meters. **Meanwhile, WikiLeaks continues pumping out secret documents.** In spite of mutual distrust, smearing and accusations of censorship, WikiLeaks and the establishment media hold on tight to each other. It still takes two to tango. WikiLeaks needs access to the public and newspapers need splashy headlines. According to Assange's most recent numbers, there is a WikiLeaks-based article in almost every second issue of The New York Times. The tones might have soured, but neither can afford to stop dancing.

This is an exclusive English translation of an interview published Saturday, February 16, 2013, in the Norwegian news outlet Dagens Næringsliv.

<http://truth-out.org/news/item/14835-resistance-from-a-cage-julian-assange-speaks-to-norwegian-journalist-eirik-vold>

'I take full responsibility'

*Philip Dorling
The Age
March 1, 2013*

The separate, but deeply entwined, stories of US Army private Bradley Manning and WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange have taken another step towards resolution.

Having taken responsibility for his leaking of hundreds of thousands of secret military and diplomatic reports to WikiLeaks, Manning now faces the prospect of a long prison sentence.

Assange's future is more uncertain. It is yet to be decided by his own choices, the decisions of prosecutors and courts in Sweden and perhaps the United States, and even possibly by Victorian voters in the September 14 federal election.

In a military court at Fort Meade, Maryland, Manning, 25, yesterday pled guilty to to wrongfully possessing classified military and diplomatic reports, communicating that information without authorisation to WikiLeaks, and that those actions were prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the US military. These offences could result in a prison sentence of up to 20 years.

However, Manning did not plead guilty to stealing classified information, "exceeding" his authorised access on military computer systems, violating the US Espionage Act or "aiding the enemy". The last offence is the most serious with Manning facing a potential life sentence if the charge is proved....

Where does this leave Julian Assange? The WikiLeaks publisher remains at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, having been granted diplomatic asylum on the grounds he is at risk of extradition to the United States on possible conspiracy or other charges relating to Manning's disclosures.

US Ambassador Jeffery Bleich this week declared it "ludicrous" to suggest that the US has any intention of seeking Assange's extradition from the UK or from Sweden where he is wanted for questioning about sexual assault allegations.

Assange claims that extradition to Sweden would facilitate his eventual extradition to the US.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr similarly dismissed the idea that the US wished to extradite Mr Assange. "Julian Assange being in the Ecuadorian embassy in Knightsbridge has nothing to do with the United States. To suggest that the Swedes are after him as a CIA conspiracy to get him to Stockholm and allowing him to be bundled off to Langley, Virginia is sheer fantasy."

Yet, notwithstanding repeated denials from both Bleich and Carr, there is an abundance of evidence that the US Government has been keenly interested in pursuing Assange.

On November 29, 2010, the day after WikiLeaks and its media partners began releasing more than 250,000 State Department cables, **US Attorney-General Eric Holder told a Washington press conference that the Justice Department was pursuing "an active, ongoing criminal investigation" into WikiLeaks.**

Australian diplomatic cables released to Fairfax Media have revealed that as early as December 7, 2010, the Washington embassy confirmed the Justice Department was **conducting an "active and vigorous inquiry into whether Julian Assange can be charged under US law, most likely the 1917 Espionage Act".**

The embassy further reported that media reports that a secret grand jury had been convened in Alexandria, Virginia, to consider evidence arising from the WikiLeaks investigation were "likely true".

The embassy continued to provide Canberra with regular updates through 2011 and 2012. including detailed reporting on the Manning court martial proceedings, the issuing of subpoenas to compel WikiLeaks associates to appear before the grand jury, and Justice Department efforts to access Twitter and other internet accounts to see if any intermediaries had been involved in communications between Assange and Manning.

In December 2011 embassy highlighted the prosecution's assertions that Manning had leaked to WikiLeaks "and, specifically that Assange may have actively assisted Manning's efforts to extract the enormous database of US State Department cables".

Other information revealed in Manning's pre-trial proceedings indicates that the Justice Department's WikiLeaks investigation has targeted at least seven civilians including the "founders, owners, or managers of WikiLeaks" for alleged offences including espionage.

Only this week documents relating to the Manning prosecution revealed that WikiLeaks has been the subject of Central Intelligence Agency reports.

Some commentators have asserted that a successful prosecution of Assange is impossible and that his fears are unjustified because the First Amendment free speech protections of the US Constitution would protect him as a journalist engaged in publication.

However, prominent US legal experts have argued a prosecution case could at least be constructed and pressed in spite of First Amendment protections.

Here it is important to understand that the likely issue would not be WikiLeaks' act of publication, but rather the circumstances of WikiLeaks' receipt of classified information and any advice or assistance Assange allegedly provided to Manning.

A prosecution for a conspiracy charge appears more likely, and more viable as an eventual extradition case, than a charge under the Espionage Act.

Neither Sweden or the UK would be at all likely to agree to extradition for an espionage offence. However a more narrowly constructed, non-political, charge could prove to be a different matter.

Significantly Manning's statement to the court yesterday added very little about his on-line exchanges with WikiLeaks.

Whether the US does intend to prosecute Assange remains to be seen. Ultimately it may boil down to a legal question of how far a journalist may go in encouraging, aiding or facilitating the unlawful disclosure of classified information.

Assange will presumably be keen to see what further detail and allegations concerning himself and WikiLeaks are revealed when the prosecution presents its case at Manning's full court martial in June.

So Assange won't be moving any time soon. However it appears inevitable that he will eventually have to leave Ecuador's embassy and face the sexual assault allegations that have been made against him in Sweden.

There appears to be little prospect that these matters will be dropped or that Swedish prosecutors will agree to interview him in the United Kingdom.

There is no diplomatic solution on the horizon. Neither Sweden or the United Kingdom have any inclination to offer Assange guarantees beyond the implementation of "due process". The US remains unlikely to reveal its hand until the Swedish allegations have been dealt with, one way or another. As Australia's Foreign Minister Carr made clear this week the Australian Government has washed its hands of Assange.

Assange has indicated he will run for the Senate in the September 14 election. Hypothetically, it may be that as a Senator elect, Assange will be more prepared to leave his current place of asylum and seek a resolution of the Swedish allegations before new Senators take up their seats in mid-2014.

Election to the Senate would afford Assange no legal protection, but it might weigh in the balance of any ultimately political decision by the US to seek his extradition.

If the US does eventually seek Assange's extradition and prosecution, such an action would certainly have a political downside.

Philip Crowley, who resigned as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's spokesman after publicly questioning the harsh conditions of Manning's imprisonment, observed some time ago "[a] prosecution of Julian Assange would come at a tremendous cost to the interests and values that [Americans] hold dear" and "carry some serious reputational costs" for the US government's image. *[So does murdering people, including U.S. citizens with drones, etc. But they do it anyway. --A.B.]*

<http://www.theage.com.au/world/i-take-full-responsibility-20130301-2fb1d.html>

DN: 2013-03-03



MORDMISSTANKARNA MOT OSCAR PISTORIUS

Visst gör det ont när hjältar faller

Det är en ocean mellan försvaret och åklagarsidans versioner av vad som hände natten till alla hjärtans dag i Oscar Pistorius hem när hans flickvän Reeva Steenkamp sköts till döds genom en låst toalettdörr. Ett fruktansvärt, fruktansvärt misstag, hävdar den dubbelamputerade OS-stjärnan som sköt mot det han säger sig trott vara en inbrottstjuv. Icke, menar åklagarsidan och hävdar att det finns en förklaring till att fotomodellen låst in sig på toaletten.

Vilken version som rätten finner mest trovärdig återstår att se. Men redan nu finns ett par saker att konstatera. **Det första som slår mig när jag tittar på sydafrikanska nyhetsklipp, läser tidningsartiklar och kommentatorsfält är likheten med Julian Assange och hans eventuella sexualbrott.**

Oscar Pistorius är en hjälte i en tid och i ett land som hungrat efter en ny berättelse efter den två decennier gamla om Nelson Mandela och demokratiseringen. Sydafrika har på sätt och vis blivit ett land som många andra, med korrupktion, fallande röstdeltagande och en rasism som inte riktigt vill ge sig.

Mitt i allt detta växer otåligheten och missnöjet. Allt skulle ju bli så bra. Regeringspartiet ANC har gett åtskilliga både vatten, elektricitet och andra förbättringar. Men inte i en takt och inte i en omfattning som gjort alla nöjda.

I detta läge stiger han så fram. Han som utan ben och mot alla odds tar sig till OS i London. Oscar Pistorius visar sydafrikanerna än en gång att ingenting är omöjligt. Han, som man kanske förväntat sig skulle sitta i rullstol, tävlar mot världens snabbaste män.

Det gör ont när en hjälte faller. Så ont att åtskilliga förnekar fallet. Precis som när det gäller Julian Assange, också hjälte för somliga, är det många som "vet" att Oscar Pistorius är oskyldig. Öppnar man sinnet för någon annan möjlighet är OS-stjärnan inte längre en hjälte och hans levnadsöde inte längre den hjältesaga landet längtat så efter. Och vad ska man då tro på när det inte kommer vatten ur kranen?

I sydafrikanska medier debatteras dödsskjutningen ur alla möjliga aspekter. En sådan rör sydafrikanska vapenlagar. Det har sagts att Reeva Steenkamp levte i dag om inte Oscar Pistorius haft skjutvapen hemma. Fast det är ju inte alls säkert. Rör det sig om ett medvetet partnervåld brukar det inte nödvändigtvis behövas vare sig vapen eller kulor. Köksknivar och knytnävar räcker långt.

Sydafrika är ett land med en våldsam historia och en våldsam nutid. När jag bodde där för tio år sedan hade vi, som alla andra, galler för alla fönster och dörrar. Det skapar en känsla av inlåsning. Polisen var och är i hög grad privatiserad. Ansvar för medborgarnas ägodelar och liv har förflyttats från staten till individen.

Från myndighetshåll hördes uppmaningen att inte stanna om man passerade en trafikolycka. Det kunde vara en "set-up" och ett vägrån. Visst. Men det kunde förstås också vara en trafik-olycka där människor dör medan vi kör förbi utan att stanna. Det är i denna ensamma, och kanske ibland lätt paranoida, samhälleliga kontext man ska se att Oscar Pistorius och andra sydafrikaner sover med en revolver under huvudkudden. Vill man göra något åt det är det sannolikt bättre att börja med poliserna som inte kommer än med pistolerna på nattduksborden.

<http://www.dn.se/ledare/signerat/visst-gor-det-ont-nar-hjaltar-faller/>

My film doesn't "abuse" Julian Assange. But in a story about Wikileaks, facts matter

A response to John Pilger from Alex Gibney, director of "We Steal Secrets: the Story of WikiLeaks".

*The New Statesman
26 February 2013*

How sad. John Pilger, who once had a claim to the role of truth-teller, has become a prisoner of his own unquestioning beliefs.

In a recent piece in the New Statesman, he attacked, with undisguised vitriol, my film on WikiLeaks and an essay by my executive producer, Jemima Khan, for "smearing" and "abusing" Julian Assange. He also implied that our motives were dishonest, perhaps because our views differed from his own. I initially thought to ignore Pilger's

fulminations. After all, Jemima's original essay was articulate and persuasive. But because he assails my film, because his piece is so full of factual errors and because his style is to bully— rather than to persuade— I thought it was important to set the record straight. In a story about WikiLeaks, an organisation that claims to be dedicated to the truth, facts matter.

The first fact that should be noted is this: John Pilger has not seen my film.

What is criticism without observation? It feels more like religious zealotry than reason. Would Pilger now insist that the proper role of a WikiLeaks supporter is to treat Assange as "the one" who cannot be questioned and to abandon what Assange calls "scientific journalism" in favour of blind faith?

Pilger says I "abuse" Assange. But had he seen my film, he would have witnessed many powerful sequences highlighting Mr Assange's original idealism and courage. Indeed, I was drawn to this tale because it was a David and Goliath story in which Assange stood up to governments and corporations with a singular determination to use transparency as a weapon to combat mendacity, corruption and crime.

Pilger attacks the title of my film. But he got even that wrong. It is not "WikiLeaks, We Steal Secrets" as Pilger wrote. It is *We Steal Secrets: the Story of WikiLeaks*. [Note: A few days after the original publication of Pilger's piece, the *New Statesman* corrected Mr Pilger's error.]

Why is the difference important? The made-up Pilger title— which was a better fit for his tendentious argument— implied that the film indicted WikiLeaks for "stealing secrets". In fact, "we steal secrets" is a quote taken from the film, uttered by the former CIA director Michael Hayden. Thus, the title of the film is intended to be, er . . . ironic. (Would Pilger have thought my title *Enron: the Smartest Guys in the Room* signalled my admiration for Ken Lay and Jeff Skilling?) Further, the intent was not to single out WikiLeaks but to set the story of WikiLeaks within a context of the way that governments— and now citizens also— steal, or leak, secrets, sometimes for good and sometimes for ill. The film is not just about Assange; it examines many parts of the WikiLeaks saga, including the story of Bradley Manning. Writ large, the film is about the internet itself, and the conflict about what should and what should not be secret in the digital age.

Now let's examine Mr Pilger's claim that Jemima and I misrepresented Sweden's attempt to hold Mr Assange to account for possible sex crimes. He says the "Swedes have refused all requests for guarantees that he [Assange] will not be despatched in a secret agreement". Gee, that sounds bad. The Swedes must be up to something.

But if Mr Pilger were to travel to the world of fact for a moment, he might see things differently. No government— including the UK— would selectively undo its laws for a particular individual, even if he is Australian, a former hacker and happens to have white hair. Extradition is a legal matter. Neither Sweden nor the UK would give anyone a guarantee prior to any request. Every request— if made— must be considered on its merits. Extradition is part of the rule of law and, as such, must apply to all individuals, even those who are friends with Mr Pilger. So, yes, the Swedes, up to now, have turned a deaf ear to all inquiries about hypothetical extradition requests.

Mr Pilger goes on to denigrate the possible accusations of sexual misconduct and rape— yes, rape— that are the concern of the Swedish prosecutors. Brushing aside any evidence, Mr Pilger pronounces the sex “consensual”, as if to say “that is that”. He quotes two women— yes, women! As if gender alone is proof of the rectitude of an argument— saying that the Swedes “manipulate rape allegations at will”

What Mr Pilger ignores is that the British courts have upheld the viability of accusations— if proven— as equally serious in the UK or Sweden. From the incomplete record of evidence that is now public, it appears that all of the exchanges between Assange and the two women may not have been so “consensual”. Of particular concern to the Swedish authorities were Assange’s aggressive behaviour and his various refusals to use a condom despite repeated requests by the women. As a hypothetical matter, this could have resulted in unwanted pregnancy or the transmission of the HIV virus. But don’t take my word for it. The UK courts have concluded that the alleged actions by Assange— if proven— would be a form of rape in the UK or Sweden. He has had three separate hearings in the UK and they have ruled Sweden’s extradition request as legal.

Neither Jemima Khan nor I would argue that Assange, at this moment, is guilty of a crime. Like any individual suspected of wrongdoing, he must be given due process every step of the way. Assange often likes to note that he has not been “charged” and ridicules the Swedes for not agreeing to question him via Skype. But, in fact, Assange is wanted for more than questioning. As the Swedish prosecutor, Marianne Ny, has stated, “The preliminary investigation is at an advanced stage . . . Subject to any matters said by [Assange], which undermine my present view that he should be indicted, an indictment will be lodged with the court [after questioning]. It can therefore be seen that Assange is sought for the purpose of conducting criminal proceedings and that he is not sought merely to assist with our inquiries.”

According to Swedish law, Assange must be present in Sweden for due process to continue. Put another way, in Ny’s formulation, he cannot be charged unless he is on Swedish soil. So Assange’s continued assertions that he hasn’t ever been charged have a kind of farcical— or even Orwellian— ring in a Swedish context. So long as he refuses to go to Sweden he likely can never be charged. Hello, Ecuador!

A key point of Jemima Khan’s piece— and a rather small section of my film— is that Julian Assange has undermined his high-minded principles by intentionally seeking to confuse them with his refusal to be held to account for possible sex crimes. Further, he has been silent regarding the vicious online attacks by his supporters on the Swedish women— including posting gun targets on their faces— even as he has been outspoken on the subject of his own persecution. Another fact: his “imprisonment” in the Ecuadorean embassy is self-imposed. There is no proof of a secret agreement between the US and Sweden to airlift Assange to Guantanamo (as one of his lawyers once suggested) if he leaves the Ecuadorean embassy. The film does not abuse or indict Assange in reference to the Swedish matter; it only raises questions about universal human rights (Swedish women have rights, too) and why Assange thinks that he should be above the law.

It is true— as my film points out— that WikiLeaks was the victim of an unfair embargo by Visa and MasterCard, and that Assange is likely the subject of a grand jury investigation by the US department of justice. At one time there was a rumour—

revealed in hacked emails of the company Stratfor and also mentioned in my film—that there was a sealed indictment naming Assange. But facts should prevail. There is no proof that any [US] charges have been filed or are even imminent. There is some indication that the US government may be looking at data theft charges. But my sources tell me that the DOJ is wary of charging Assange under the Espionage Act because, as a publisher, there would be little to distinguish his role from that of the Guardian or the New York Times. Both the Times and the Guardian have said, publicly, that they would rush to Assange's defence in the unlikely event that he is charged under the Espionage Act. So would I.

John Pilger's defence of his friend Assange— by denigrating the human rights of two women in Sweden— is reminiscent of the dark side of religious devotion. In fact, as a lapsed Catholic who has just produced a film on the cover-up of sex crimes by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, I recognise Mr Pilger's behaviour as a kind of noble cause corruption. As a point of comparison, what would we think if a cleric sought to elude accusations of sexual abuse because his overall mission was too holy to be questioned?

Jemima Khan wrote that Julian Assange runs the risk of becoming like Scientology's L Ron Hubbard. I think his behaviour more resembles that of the outgoing Pope, who, like Assange, is fond of giving speeches to assembled multitudes on balconies. In that context, John Pilger resembles Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who, we recall, referred to sex abuse survivors' cries for justice as nothing more than "petty gossip".

There are many people, including me, who admire the original mission of WikiLeaks. But those supporters should not have to stand silently by as WikiLeaks's original truth-seeking principles are undermined by a man who doesn't want to be held to account for accusations about his personal behaviour. To paraphrase Monty Python's Life of Brian, Julian Assange is not the Messiah; and he may be a very naughty boy.

Update 1/3/2013: John Pilger responds:

Alex Gibney's absurd online rant at me for defending Julian Assange hardly merits a response, except that it contains serious falsehoods.

For the record: far from writing about his film with no knowledge of it, I had read an entire leaked transcript of the film. Gibney's assertion that the UK courts ruled on the merits of the women's case is also false. The courts ruled only on the legality of the extradition documents lodged in the UK — documents based on a treaty that the UK and most of the EU will almost certainly repeal at the earliest opportunity. And far from dismissing the Swedish women's accusations out of hand, I sat through days of evidence in London courtrooms and, unlike Gibney, have reviewed all the discovered evidence including critical evidence of the women's SMS exchanges.

So what is this nonsense about? Assange refused to appear in Gibney's gratuitous film about WikiLeaks — a wise decision as Gibney's rant demonstrates.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/voices/2013/02/my-film-doesnt-abuse-julian-assange-story-about-wikileaks-facts-matter>

Response to Jemima Khan

Joseph Farrell
Justice for Assange
8 March 2013

This email is from WikiLeaks' Joseph Farrell to Jemima Khan, a former Assange supporter and UK celebrity. Khan took a role on Universal's \$2.5m budget documentary "We Steal Secrets" by Alex Gibney. WikiLeaks and others strongly criticised the title as being false, biased, and prejudicial to ongoing criminal proceedings in the United States. In response Khan attacked Assange in the new Statesman, likening his criticism of the film to the behavior of the infamous Scientology cult leader, L. Ron Hubbard. The film's director Alex Gibney then wrote an article likening Assange to the pope (in the context of promoting his film about paedophilia in the Catholic church). Khan's character attack was pushed by Reuters and others and resulted in 343,000 wepages according to Google. This email is the response to Khan. It was sent on 1 March 2013. It appeared on Martha Mitchell Effect's website after spreading on Twitter, on 7 March 2013. WikiLeaks has corroborated the email's authenticity.

* * *

Dear Jemima,

As you can imagine, when I read your article in the New Statesman I was very surprised. I was also shocked, but most of all, I was disappointed.

When you told me in September 2011 that Alex Gibney, who had been commissioned by Universal to do a WikiLeaks documentary, had approached you to offer you an Executive Producer position on his film I attempted to ask you subtly why you thought he was offering you the position. My exact words were: "Being called an Executive Producer on one of Alex Gibney's films is full of kudos and will certainly be very helpful in any further documentary projects. I am an inherent cynic (likely augmented by this work) but, if he is not asking for any production money, **then it is purely a matter of branding and using your name as an endorsement.**" Before approaching you, Gibney had already been trying desperately to get an interview with Julian for more than half a year, since February 2011, and had thus far been unsuccessful. I feared he might have been using you, not because he valued your opinions on the film, or because he was likely to ever ask you to produce anything else with him in the future, but because he needed access to Julian. In fact, just two months before the film premiered at Sundance you said to me that you were "getting my agent to insist I see the finished Gibney doc". That, in itself, struck me as an executive producer with very limited executive power.

Without access and without original interview footage, Gibney needed a tool to legitimise his film and add credibility to it. And, in the absence of the exclusive interview with Julian, what better way than to

have the journalist celebrity who is publicly known to be a friend of Julian named in the credits? I am certain you were aware of that risk, because when you told me you were accepting the Executive Producer role you said: "I will still try to persuade Julian (via you) to cooperate (as I have done in the past) not because I'm now officially involved in the film — it's not contingent upon any access to Julian — but because I genuinely think he needs friends not enemies now".

From the moment Gibney approached us we did extensive research into him. We looked deep and took advice from people who knew him and some who had worked with him. **Every colleague, ally, friend and even the documentarians we spoke to advised us against an interview with Gibney.** Yet we were open to talks, we were ready for dialogue, and we engaged with him and with Alexis Bloom, his producer. None of our meetings allayed our fears that their piece was not going to be the true story. They did not appear genuine to us and they seemed to have many prejudices about Julian and the organisation. Their angle favoured sensationalism from the beginning, an angle I would have thought you would oppose had you had any influence on the picture.

Julian has had significant relationships with hundreds of people. Your list of so-called alienated and disaffected allies is not long: your article mentions nine people, one of whom Julian has never actually even met.

You list Mark Stephens, an internationally little-known media lawyer who had a contractual dispute with Julian and who charged Julian more than half a million pounds for a magistrate's court case defence. **Yet you overlook** Gareth Peirce, "the doyenne of British defence lawyers"; Michael Ratner, President Emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights and other lawyers at the CCR; Baltasar Garzon, the Spanish judge; Jennifer Robinson, who left Mark Stephens' firm over the issue; Baroness Helena Kennedy QC; Geoffrey Robertson QC, the acclaimed human rights lawyer whose table you sit at regularly; John Jones; Julian Burnside SC and Julian's other lawyers in Australia; his lawyers in Ecuador; the Icelandic lawyers; the Danish lawyers; the Washington lawyers; or any of the rest of an international team of dozens of lawyers who represent or advise Julian and WikiLeaks.

You list Jamie Byng, who published an unprepared, unapproved, unfinished manuscript that had not been fact-checked without Julian's knowledge, but you do not mention Colin Robinson or John Oakes of OR Books, with whom Julian has published a successful and acclaimed book without any problems or disagreements. Neither do you mention the more than fifteen other publishers who are releasing his Cypherpunks book in various languages, or indeed the publishers of Underground with whom he has maintained a good relationship for more than fifteen years.

You list Daniel Domscheit-Berg, who sabotaged WikiLeaks' anonymous online submission system, first stole and then deleted more than 3,000 submissions evidencing, *inter alia*, war crimes, corruption and bank

fraud. He also started a rival organisation, OpenLeaks, a still-born branding exercise with zero publications. His entire livelihood is earned by constantly backstabbing the man who fired him.

You list a person, who you incorrectly describe as "the technical whizz behind much of the WikiLeaks platform", who was **in actual fact a technician contracted to upgrade our submission platform according to Julian's architectural design specifications. He was first referred to in Domscheit-Berg's book as "the architect"**, a propaganda term invented by Domscheit-Berg for his book well after he was suspended from WikiLeaks. The term is clearly designed as an attempt to steal Julian's creative authority. But you are correct that this is the way that he is portrayed in Daniel Domscheit-Berg's book, which contains numerous falsehoods. I am, as I have always been, at your disposal to clarify those stories that are promoted in an attempt to harm WikiLeaks and Julian and to give you the true facts. Had I known you had an interest in the architectural make-up of the submissions platform and its coding genesis, I could have explained this to you further in person.

You list the Guardian and the New York Times, the two organisations who broke their agreements with us. One of the contractual clauses that the Guardian broke was to disclose a password that unlocked a list to all the diplomatic cables, which it published in its book in an act of gross negligence. **Both the Guardian and the New York Times have written factually incorrect books about us to whitewash their deceitful actions, which they continue to profit from and promote. You don't, however, mention the 110 media partners with whom we have ongoing working relationships, some of whom have also written books about WikiLeaks but who donate all the profits to us, as a gesture and in solidarity to help us circumvent a banking blockade that has eroded the majority of our resources.**

Why don't you list the hundreds of activists, researchers and publishers who play a day-to-day role in WikiLeaks' operations — the technicians who maintain servers; the developers, mathematicians and cryptographers who build new search interfaces and oversee the internal security protocol; those who curate data for us; the investigators who corroborate submitted material; or the managers and administrators who plan and bring projects to fruition?

Why don't you list the allies and friends across the world who enjoy a close personal relationship with Julian and who are part of the same support community that you once were — the more than 150 people you spent time with at Julian's private 40th birthday party, to which Julian was generous enough to invite even Alex Gibney?

Is it because they do not seek acclaim in the press and because they do not say negative things about Julian, and hence have zero currency in the news?

As to falling out with Alex Gibney, Julian never fell out with him — **Gibney was never a friend in the first place so there was never any**

relationship to fall apart. Alex Gibney was just another one in a long list of people trying to cash in on Julian and WikiLeaks. You may remember me saying how utterly offensive I find it that there are all these people out there who are benefiting financially from Julian, while the organisation suffers a banking blockade and lawyers have eaten away all of his personal funds.

You asked me for a response to David Allen Green's article on 20th August 2012 and I told you that it was being produced. I told you that your request for this response did not go directly to Julian as you thought it had, but instead that it came to me. My email to you after we met said: "I will get you a response to the DAG article and, as I said, blame me, not him, for the lack of response." What you asked for was not as simple as you thought, which was that Julian could probably rattle off the legal sections and sub-sections by heart — the response was far more complicated than that.

I have attached it. It is 55,972 words long, which is roughly 70 per cent of the length of a doctoral thesis. Julian's legal defence committee prioritised this and asked a person to look into the arguments in depth, in order to produce a compelling response due to the harm caused by David Allen Green's misinformation. It was peer-reviewed and revised and took six months to produce for you — a time resource that does not come cheap to a defence committee that has to deal with simultaneous challenges, David Allen Green being just one. Something of this length and detail ought to have taken three years to produce.

I did not merely tell you that Julian was "very busy". You know that. What I did say was that he was very busy and that we were a very small core team. Your email asking for a response to the David Allen Green piece was written the day after Julian made his first speech in public since he had entered the embassy, four days after he formally obtained asylum and only five days after the embassy was surrounded by more than 50 Metropolitan police who were preparing to force their way into the diplomatic mission to get him. On top of this, we were still publishing the Syria Files and we had just begun a new release, the Detainee Policies. I told you that since the establishment of the Guantanamo Bay prison facility none of the world's media and none of the world's NGOs had released a single Guantanamo Bay Manual, and we had just released our third. During all of this, we were also dealing with the vitriol coming from the UK establishment media while Julian was having his asylum claim evidence reviewed. He was (and still is) in fear of being extradited onwards to the United States, he had not been outside in more than two months, and he was overseeing the publication of hundreds of thousands of documents.

Over a lunch you questioned this fear of extradition to the US, and when I asked you what you would do in his position **you refused to answer the question. I asked you more than six times what you would do in his shoes.** Having offered to cooperate with the Swedish

investigation non-stop for the past two years and been refused with no proper explanation, and believing that you would end up in an American prison for decades, in solitary confinement and under SAMs, what would you do? You never gave me a concrete answer. Instead, you skirted the question with another question and discounted the numerous legal opinions out there, favouring instead an article by David Allen Green. I reiterated that Julian had never said that it would be likely in practice that he would face the death penalty, although the Espionage Act permits this. But more to the point, and one that everyone always ignores, there was (and still is) the fear of being extradited to face life imprisonment and almost certainly torture or other inhumane and degrading treatment for his publishing activities.

I told you that the Swedish authorities could, if they wanted to, charge Julian in absentia. Even if they were to do that, they should, according to their own procedures, conduct an interview with him before requesting his extradition. I repeated that he remains available even in the embassy for questioning by the Swedish authorities should they wish to employ the standard procedures they use regularly in other cases.

I explained to you how the argument that "he is no more vulnerable to extradition to the US from Sweden than he is from the UK" is a red herring. I explained why **the US had not already requested his extradition from the UK, because this would create a case of competing extradition requests** that the Home Secretary would have to judicially review and prioritise one over the other, thereby creating political embarrassment for a major ally whichever way the decision went. I cited the US Ambassador's own admission that the US would wait to see what happened with the Swedish case before they made a move. I was careful to explain this with Jennifer Robinson present to add a legal perspective if needed. **However, in spite of this explanation, you allowed this claim not only to go into your article but also to remain in Gibney's film — expressed in remarks made by Baroness Helena Kennedy QC that have been misleadingly edited to remove their proper context. She has since said that she "did not expect that he [Gibney] would fillet my interview" and also says "I regret thinking I could present a sensible perspective".**

Irrespective of my explanations and those of two lawyers whose counsel you seek yourself, **you could have spoken to Julian in person. He did call you — more than once. You could have called back. You could have come to visit him to check on his well-being, as many others have done. On that note, you were never invited just for a "photo opportunity".** You were invited to the embassy by us in September but you heard that there was a paparazzi waiting outside the embassy. This is no great surprise following the biggest diplomatic incident in recent years. However, you knew about it beforehand and avoided it. Then I relayed a request from Vivienne Westwood's team, asking you if you would model her "I am Julian Assange" t-shirt at her fashion show. The request came after you had already said you were unavailable even to attend her

show. This was her idea and her request. She was trying to do something to help us and thought you would want to do the same. You were also invited to visit Julian shortly after he entered the embassy on 22nd June; for tea and cake on his birthday on 3rd July; for a sureties' get-together in late July; for afternoon tea on 11th September and again on the 9th October; and for a breakfast meeting on the 21st December. **All of which you declined. These are all times when you could have asked Julian in person about your issues.** As you will recall from your discussion the last time you saw him, in December 2011, he enjoys debate and disagreement. How do you know that Julian had not seen the Gibney film by the time it premiered? We do not steal secrets but people leak things to us. Irrespective of the "ironic" meaning behind the title of the film you claim it has, it will not be understood by the general public with that meaning. What they will see is a straightforward conjunction of a quote, a proper noun and the word "story", and they will read it as such. **It is tantamount to someone doing a documentary about you and calling it "I am a War Apologist: The Jemima Khan Story" because they had interviewed someone completely unrelated to you and quoted them saying "I am a war apologist".**

It is one thing to publicly disagree with someone, or even to distance oneself in public from a former ally, but it is quite another to use one's own publication to the further harm of a political refugee suffering the persecution of a superpower. I imagine you must have vetted the magazine cover, which claims that Julian is 'alone'. Julian is not alone. **That New Statesman front page was used to harm the entire WikiLeaks project out of disaffection. It was also an attempt to cast a shadow on all his allies. And yet you were the one who said: "he needs friends not enemies..."** Julian has both friends and enemies. He does not need or seek friends who only agree with him (in fact, I have not met one non-argumentative friend of his) but he certainly does not need friends who are in fact enemies.

From the point of view of defending a film in which you feature as "Executive Producer", your actions are straightforward: **your name is on the credits of a dated WikiLeaks documentary with a prejudicial title which features all the hostile people who haven't had anything to do with WikiLeaks in years. You chose a production credit over principle and in doing so attacked a vulnerable political activist and fellow journalist,** something which I know to be beneath you.

In disappointment,
Joseph Farrell

Note: The response to David Allen Green response is available at <http://justice4assange.com/extraditing-assange.html>

<http://justice4assange.com/Response-to-Jemima-Khan.html>

Video of John Pilger, [Jemima Khan](#), and Ken Loach discussing why we need WikiLeaks.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krEsVDPdh-4&feature=youtu.be>

Ipsos Global Advisory: Julian Assange and WikiLeaks

Global Citizens in 24 Countries Assess the Website and its Actions

April 26, 2011

A major analysis of world public opinion was released today by Ipsos— one of the world's largest market and opinion research companies. The report, titled "Ipsos Global Advisory: Julian Assange and WikiLeaks" is **based on 18,829 recent interviews in 24 countries around the world**. The report examines citizens' assessment of the WikiLeaks website and its actions. The full report is free of charge and may be downloaded here: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/download/pr.aspx?id=10833>

WikiLeaks has more US secrets, Assange says

*Philip Dorling
Brisbane Times
March 5, 2013*

Julian Assange has confirmed that WikiLeaks still holds classified United States government documents that it is yet to publish. However the transparency website will not release this material during the court martial of its source, US Army private Bradley Manning.

Speaking to Fairfax Media, Mr Assange said on Tuesday that Manning was "America's foremost political prisoner ... an activist who faces retribution for revealing the truth".

Manning last Thursday publicly accepted responsibility for providing WikiLeaks with hundreds of thousands of secret US military and diplomatic reports, telling a US military court that he did so to spark public debate on US foreign policy and military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Bradley Manning's plea was a very positive development for him," Mr Assange said. "For the first time he was able to speak about his motivation to reveal truths and stimulate public debate about war.

"The US Government has repeatedly sought to deny or suppress Manning's motivation for his actions, and the tabloid press has tried to strip him of any political motivation."

Manning's leaks of classified information to WikiLeaks took place between February and April 2010. He has pleaded guilty to a range of charges that carry a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment.

Despite Manning's guilty plea, US military prosecutors have confirmed their intention to pursue Manning on other more serious charges, including that of "aiding the enemy", which carries a potential life sentence.

Manning's civilian lawyer, David Coombs, has indicated Manning will "vigorously contest" these charges at his trial, which is scheduled to begin on June 3.

Mr Assange yesterday confirmed to Fairfax Media that WikiLeaks had received classified material from Manning that related to a February 2010 incident in which the US military had turned a blind eye to Baghdad police arrests and persecution of political opponents of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

In his statement last Thursday, Manning said that in early March 2010 he had been disappointed when his anonymous contact at WikiLeaks told him they "needed more information to confirm the event in order for it to be published or to gain interest in the international media".

Mr Assange said yesterday that WikiLeaks had decided not to publish the material at the time for "source-protection reasons" given that the person providing the material appeared to have been connected with the US military's handling of the incident.

Mr Assange said that notwithstanding Manning's courtroom admission of responsibility for the disclosure, protection of the source remained a consideration. "We still can't publish it. It would be a questionable action to do so now while Bradley Manning has a potential life sentence hanging over his head," he said.

Mr Assange declined to elaborate on Manning's admission that he also sent what he publicly described as "other government documents" to WikiLeaks.

Manning, who had access to top-secret US intelligence databases, said that in March 2010 he "read several documents from a section within (a) government entity. The content of two of these documents upset me greatly. I had difficulty believing what this section was doing".

He said he subsequently uploaded the two documents to WikiLeaks confidential electronic drop box.

It is alleged by prosecutors that Manning passed to WikiLeaks "more than one classified memorandum produced by a United States government intelligence agency".

On March 26, 2010, WikiLeaks published a Central Intelligence Agency "Red Cell" memo, dated March 11, on public relations strategies to sustain Western European support for the NATO military campaign in Afghanistan.

Subsequently, on August 25, 2010, WikiLeaks also released a second CIA memorandum, dated February 5, 2010, on foreign perceptions of "home-grown terrorism" in the United States.

Mr Assange yesterday said he "wouldn't go beyond what Manning has said" and "can't answer" whether the two published CIA documents were the documents referred to by Manning or whether WikiLeaks holds other intelligence agency material not yet published.

"I can't say anything that might suggest that someone had been responsible for, or was party to, any further disclosure," he said.

Mr Assange did confirm that WikiLeaks received videos and other documents relating to a May 2009 US air strike near Granai village in Afghanistan that killed between 90 to 150 Afghan civilians, including many children.

Manning, who admitted he sent the material to WikiLeaks in late March 2010, said the Granai attack involved "a significantly higher number of individuals, larger aircraft and much heavier munitions" than the July 2007 helicopter gunship attacks in Baghdad which were the subject of another video he passed to WikiLeaks and which the transparency group released in April 2010 under the headline "Collateral Murder".

Mr Assange said the Granai air strike material "documented a massacre, a war crime". He disputed previous media reports claiming WikiLeaks had been unable to open the encrypted video files.

"WikiLeaks obtained this material and scheduled it for release, but the opportunity to reveal these important records was lost when Daniel Domscheit Berg left WikiLeaks, taking this and other material with him, which he has said he later destroyed. WikiLeaks no longer has a copy," Mr Assange said.

A US military inquiry into the Granai air strike found that US air crews and troops on the ground did not follow rules of engagement devised to prevent civilian casualties. Videos of the air strikes have not been published.

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/wikileaks-has-more-us-secrets-assange-says-20130305-2fihd.html>

WikiLeaks comment on this article: "WikiLeaks does not confirm or deny sourcing even if alleged sources make admissions. This is because, if true, the admissions are forced. Today's article in the SMH elides qualifiers. Possible imputations about Mr. Manning were never stated."

Timeline: the Australian government's betrayal of Julian Assange

Support Assange & WikiLeaks Coalition

<https://sawcsydney.org/2012/12/timeline-the-australian-governments-betrayal-of-julian-assange/>

Christine Assange responds to Q&A while Foreign Minister Bob Carr sticks to the USA Script

WACA

March 10, 2013

Below is a copy of an email from Christine Assange which was sent to the executive producer of ABC's Q&A program, following the February 26th program in which US Ambassador Bleich and Foreign Minister Carr made factually incorrect statements about her son Julian Assange.

Christine is yet to receive a reply and Q&A has not publicly corrected the erroneous comments.

On the February 26th 2013 episode of Q & A, many factually incorrect statements were made about my son Julian Assange by the US Ambassador Jeffrey Bleich, FM Bob Carr & Malcolm Turnbull. I would like to correct a few of them:

- (1) Julian has not been charged in relation to sex allegations made by Sweden.
- (2) Both women are on the record as saying that sex was consensual & non violent.
- (3) Neither woman made an allegation of rape, the police did. The Chief Prosecutor of Stockholm Eva Finne dismissed the rape allegation & investigation as "baseless" in 2010. The dismissed rape investigation was appealed and revived by [another prosecutor at the request of a Swedish politician-lawyer --A.B.], (Julian's lawyer was not informed about the appeal and could not make submission).
- (4) It is untrue that due process being followed in Sweden. The police & new prosecutor Marianne Ny have unlawfully breached many of their own procedures from day one on this case; documented as requested in a legal brief by Julians lawyer Jennifer Robinson for a special meeting of MPs on March 2nd 2011:
wcentral.org/node/1418
- (5) It is untrue that Sweden proved the merit of its sex allegation case in the UK as none of the allegations are permitted to be tested. The issues were procedural as the European Arrest Warrant was being used in a highly unusual way.
- (6) It is false that Julian is avoiding facing the sex allegations by seeking Asylum with Ecuador On the contrary, he has been requesting to be interviewed by the Swedish prosecutor for the past 2 years, including while he was in Sweden and an offer to fly back in 2010, through the normal protocol in these cases of 'Mutual Legal Assistance' and at the Swedish or Ecuadorean Embassies in London. All these offers were refused despite Sweden continuing to interview others overseas including murder suspects?. Sweden will only interview Julian if he is first extradited to Sweden and placed under indefinite detention in a Swedish prison.
- (7) It is untrue that it is harder to extradite Julian to the US from Sweden than from the UK. Julian can be easily and speedily sent to the US under a little known section under the SWED/US Bilateral Treaty called 'Temporary Surrender'.

(8) It is untrue that Sweden does not extradite for political or military offences. Sweden was condemned by the UN and had to pay compensation for its complicity in the secret and unlawful rendition of 2 innocent Egyptian refugees to the CIA for torture several years ago.

<http://waca.net.au/christine-assange-responds-to-qa-while-foreign-minister-bob-carr-sticks-to-the-usa-script/>

Pentagon Papers lawyer on Obama, secrecy and press freedoms: 'worse than Nixon'

Career First Amendment and transparency advocate James Goodale sounds the alarm about the current president

*Glenn Greenwald
The Guardian
19 March 2013*

In 1971, when the New York Times decided to publish the Pentagon Papers leaked to it by Daniel Ellsberg, it knew it was triggering a major fight with the secrecy-obsessed Nixon administration. As expected, the Nixon administration sued the NYT in an attempt to ban it from publishing the documents, but the US Supreme Court, in a landmark decision for press freedom, ruled the prior restraint unconstitutional.

The paper's general counsel at the time, James Goodale, said that he counseled the paper to publish despite "the more likely scenario that everyone feared was the fact that they could have gone to jail," and he subsequently became an outspoken defender of press freedoms. He now has a new book entitled "Fighting for the Press" in which he argues, as the Columbia Journalism Review puts it, that "Obama is worse for press freedom than former President Richard Nixon was."

CJR has an amazing interview with Goodale, some relevant excerpts from which relate to many topics written about here:

Let's talk about some of the challenges to press freedom now.

The biggest challenge to the press today is the threatened prosecution of WikiLeaks, and it's absolutely frightening. . . .

"The one case that is troublesome and is still out there as we speak is the case of James Risen, who was a journalist who was leaked national security information in respect to the warrantless wiretapping program, which was disclosed by The New York Times.

"He's won his case, but most people are going to be surprised if he can win it on appeal. It's been sitting on appeal for a year. Now what's going to happen — if the shoe drops and we're back to Judy Miller, it means Risen goes to jail. And if in fact it doesn't turn out that way and it turns out well, we'll have the question of

whether the government will go to the Supreme Court **and we will always have the question whether it will turn out well for the next Risen. And who's behind this one? Obama."**

Could you talk a bit about President Obama's approach to classified information and press freedom?

Antediluvian, conservative, backwards. Worse than Nixon. He thinks that anyone who leaks is a spy! I mean, it's cuckoo."

Could you compare what we see in the Pentagon Papers and what we see in WikiLeaks?

Well, I think it's very much the same thing. We have a leak of classified information. And by the way — you've got to remember [Bradley] Manning's the leaker. Everyone says Assange is a leaker. He's not a leaker. He's the person who gets the information.

So why we're so concerned about the prosecution of Assange is what he did is the same as what the Times did in the Pentagon Papers, and indeed what they did with WikiLeaks. The Times published on its website the very same material WikiLeaks published on its website. So if you go after the WikiLeaks criminally, you go after the Times. That's the criminalization of the whole process.

So you think that if John McCain or Mitt Romney were the president and doing this, there would be a different response?

We'd be screaming and yelling and the journalists would be going crazy. And that doesn't speak well of journalists.

Read the entire excellent interview [here](#). This is from somebody who has worked on press freedom and excessive government secrecy for his entire career, including during the Bush years when he told PBS: "I think that Bush is as anti-press as the Nixon administration [was]". But citing Obama's unprecedented war on whistl-eblowers, targeting of core journalism, and expansion of radical secrecy doctrines, he's now sounding the alarm that Obama is worse to the point where basic press freedoms and transparency are seriously threatened.

UPDATE

One of the last chapters of Goodale's book deals specifically with Obama's record on press freedom and secrecy, while the other deals with the Obama DOJ's pursuit of WikiLeaks and Manning; and in those, he writes:

President Barack Obama has seamlessly carried forward the main ingredients of Bush's war against the press. . . . There is no easy way to explain why Obama the president is so different from Obama the candidate on national security matters. . . . Whatever the reason, Obama became a national security hawk. . . .

Obama is no better than Bush in many aspects of the war against the press—and in some respects he is worse. He has used the criminal system to plug leaks to

the press in an unprecedented fashion. He has watered down a proposed federal shield law. He has asked a New York Times reporter to disclose sources. But there may be more anti-press action to come from the Obama presidency. Obama is presently pursuing Julian Assange for publishing information leaked to him by Bradley Manning. **If he succeeds in this effort, he will have succeeded where Richard Nixon failed.**

Goodale is particularly compelling when **documenting in detail all of the positions Obama claimed to believe in on these issues while in the Senate, and the way he has systematically breached all of them.** None of this is new to readers here, of course, but the fact that Goodale is making this case, and making it with such ample documentation and detail, and so unblinkingly, is significant indeed.

Assange prosecutor quits while accuser sacks lawyer

*Philip Dorling
Sydney Morning Herald
March 28, 2013*

The top Swedish prosecutor pursuing sexual assault charges against Julian Assange has abruptly left the case and one of Mr Assange's accusers has sacked her lawyer.

The turmoil in the Swedish Prosecution Authority's effort to extradite Mr Assange comes as another leading Swedish judge prepares to deliver an unprecedented public lecture in Australia next week on the WikiLeaks publisher's case.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority want to extradite Mr Assange to have him questioned in Stockholm in relation to sexual assault allegations by two women.

Fairfax Media has obtained Swedish court documents that reveal high-profile Swedish prosecutor Marianne Nye has unexpectedly left the handling Mr Assange's case, effective from Wednesday, and has been replaced by a more junior prosecutor, Ingrid Isgren. The reasons for the change have not yet been disclosed.

One of Mr Assange's two accusers, political activist Anna Ardin, also applied to the Swedish courts on February 28 to replace her controversial lawyer Claes Borgstrom. **Ms Ardin complained that she found Mr Borgstrom spent much more time talking to the media than to her, referred her inquiries to his secretary or assistant, and that she had lost faith in him as her legal representative.**

As well as pursuing the prosecution of Mr Assange, Mr Borgstrom has been heavily criticised for his handling of another high-profile case involving an alleged mass murderer, with one prominent Swedish commentator describing him as doing "the worst defence counsel job in modern Swedish history".

Ms Ardin's engagement of a new lawyer, Elisabeth Massi Fritz, has now been approved.

News of changes in the Swedish prosecution of Mr Assange comes shortly before Swedish Supreme Court judge Stefan Lindskog delivers a keynote lecture on "the

Assange affair, and freedom of speech, from the Swedish perspective" at the University of Adelaide next Wednesday.

Speaking to Fairfax Media, Mr Assange condemned Judge Lindskog's planned discussion of his case.

"If an Australian High Court judge came out and spoke on a case the court expected or was likely to judge, it would be regarded as absolutely outrageous," he said.

"This development is part of a pattern in which senior Swedish figures, including the Swedish Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister and Minister for Justice, have all publicly attacked me or WikiLeaks."

Justice Lindskog is chairman of the Supreme Court of Sweden, the country's highest court of appeal. In announcing his forthcoming lecture, Adelaide University observed that "as one of Sweden's most eminent jurists, he is uniquely able to provide an authoritative view of the Assange affair".

In an article in today's *Australian Financial Review* the judge observes that he finds it "amusing how the Assange case offers possibilities of sharp turns when it comes to topics to be discussed. From, on the one hand, whether lies about condoms can result in a sexual crime to, on the other, the question of if telling the truth, by publishing classified information, can amount to a crime permitting extradition to the state that claims being harmed."

Greg Barns, a barrister spokesman for the Australian Lawyers Alliance, said it was a fundamental legal principle that judges do not speak publicly on matters that are likely to come before the courts or are yet to be decided.

"That a Swedish supreme court judge thinks this is acceptable tends to confirm the fears people have about the impartiality and robustness of the Swedish judicial system. It gives great currency to the belief that Mr Assange's case in Sweden has been heavily politicised. Federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus should be taking this matter up with his Swedish counterpart as a matter of urgency," Mr Barns said.

Mr Assange currently lives in the embassy of Ecuador in London where he has been granted political asylum on the grounds he is at risk of extradition to the United States to face conspiracy or other charges arising from WikiLeaks obtaining thousands of secret US military and diplomatic reports leaked by US Army private Bradley Manning.

Mr Assange was unsuccessful in legal appeals in the United Kingdom and Sweden, including to the Swedish Supreme Court, seeking to overturn a European arrest warrant. Mr Assange claims that extradition to Sweden would facilitate his eventual extradition to the United States.

WikiLeaks today claimed via Twitter that the judge's visit is part of a Swedish government campaign against Mr Assange following the recent visit to Australia of Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt. "The head of Swedish Supreme Court campaigning on a case they expect to judge with \$ from the embassy in the run up to an election," WikiLeaks tweeted.

Mr Assange has announced his intention to run as a Senate candidate in Victoria at the September 14 federal election.

Meanwhile the United States government has confirmed that its grand jury criminal investigation of WikiLeaks and Mr Assange is continuing. A US Justice Department spokesman for federal prosecutors in the Eastern District of Virginia has confirmed this week that a criminal investigation into WikiLeaks "remains ongoing" some three years after the transparency website first published classified US diplomatic reports and video of a helicopter gunship attack in Iraq.

Official confirmation of a continuing criminal probe came in response to inquiries from independent US journalist Alexa O'Brien about statements made in pre-trial hearings in the prosecution of Private Manning that the Justice Department is still investigating the "founders, owners, or managers of WikiLeaks".

O'Brien has won plaudits for her highly detailed coverage of the US military prosecution of Private Manning for leaking secret documents to WikiLeaks.

Michael Ratner, president emeritus at the New York based Centre for Constitutional Rights and lawyer for WikiLeaks and Mr Assange in the United States, said the Justice Department statement "publicly confirms what the WikiLeaks legal team have known for a long time — that there is an active, ongoing federal investigation of the WikiLeaks organisation".

"It is upsetting to see the Department of Justice pushing such vast resources at prosecuting a publisher for simply doing its job — telling us the truth about war," Mr Ratner said.

Australian diplomats in Washington have tracked the WikiLeaks investigation closely. One classified diplomatic cable from the Australian embassy in Washington in November 2012, released to Fairfax Media under freedom-of-information laws, explicitly refers to "the district court of the Eastern District of Virginia, where the WikiLeaks grand jury has been convened".

Earlier Australian embassy reports, also released under freedom of information, quoted senior Justice Department officials describing the WikiLeaks probe as "unprecedented both in its scale and nature".

However Foreign Minister Bob Carr has repeatedly asserted that the Australian government has no confirmation of a grand jury investigation and has seen no evidence of any intention by the US government to seek Mr Assange's extradition.

Last month Senator Carr and US ambassador to Australia Jeffrey Bleich dismissed any suggestions the US may wish to extradite the WikiLeaks publisher as "ludicrous" and "sheer fantasy".

On February 28, Private Manning pleaded guilty to 10 of 22 charges relating to leaking classified information to WikiLeaks, which could carry a prison sentence of up to 20 years. Military prosecutors have indicated their intention to pursue the remaining charges including that of "aiding the enemy", which could carry a life sentence.

Private Manning's court martial is presently scheduled to be held at Fort Meade, Maryland, in June, more than three years after his arrest at a US military base in Iraq in May 2010.

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/assange-prosecutor-quits-while-accuser-sacks-lawyer-20130328-2gwjk.html>

Possible correction: "It was also reported that the prosecutor Marianne Ny had left the case, but the Swedish Prosecution stated that this is not true, and that Ingrid Isgren has come onto the case as another investigator."

Source: <http://www.thisdayinwikileaks.org>

Assange Wins People's Choice Human Rights Award

Katie Rucke

Mint Press

March 28, 2013

For the past 11 years, the nonprofit organization, Global Exchange, has held an awards program honoring people across the globe for their work in human rights. This year's award winner, nominated and chosen by people around the globe, was WikiLeaks' Julian Assange.

The awards creator, Global Exchange, also selects an individual or group each year to be the honoree — the 2013 honoree is Noam Chomsky — but the group also has a "People's Choice Award" where regular citizens can nominate and vote for someone they believe deserves an award for their work as well, which is what Assange won.

Nominations began on March 6 and ended March 26; more than 60 individuals and groups were nominated, including Leonard Peltier, Jesse Ventura and political prisoner and whistleblower Bradley Manning, who was last year's winner.

Nominated by Eugene Craig, Assange received 1,956 votes — many more than others, such as Ventura, who received 11 votes.

Craig says he nominated Assange because the WikiLeaks founder "has done more to inform the world about U.S., British and NATO war crimes and propaganda in Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan and worldwide along with colluding governments in those war crimes than almost anyone else in nearly half a century.

"He helps expose Wall Street/corporate malfeasance and criminal acts; deceitful, corrupt politicians; and the lying, corporate-controlled mass media. He joins the ranks of other heroes like Mumia Abul-Jamal, Robert Fisk, Phil Agee and the wsws.org website," Craig wrote.

"In spite of personal risk and against the avalanche of government persecutions and character assassination, Julian Assange refuses to compromise his principles, sell-out or give in to establishment lies and deceptions. In the face of major disinformation campaigns

against him and WikiLeaks, Julian has put uncomfortable truths above comfortable conformity and self-interest. For these reasons and many more, he is a true Human Rights hero.”

According to the event’s website, the Human Rights Awards honors the achievements of groups and individuals whose work embodies the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights: peace, justice and equality.

As winner of the 2013 People’s Choice Award, Assange will receive \$1,000 in honor of his work and will be recognized at the awards gala celebration on May 9 in San Francisco. Honorees are invited to attend, but the Australian native likely won’t be in attendance.

Assange has spent the last seven months living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London after being granted asylum. If he were to decide to leave the premise, members of London’s Scotland Yard police force are positioned outside of the embassy, waiting with handcuffs, assault rifles and orders to arrest and deport Assange to Sweden, where he is accused of rape.

The U.S. government also has a few questions for Assange, who worked with active members of the U.S. military, like Bradley Manning, to spotlight human rights violations by the United States.

Some of the biggest exposures involving the U.S. include: “The Afghan War Diary, in which U.S. military servicemen provide the naked truth about NATO’s killing of Afghan civilians, lies, secrecy and support for a corrupt undemocratic Afghan regime; a similar package from Iraq, called the Iraq War Logs, and finally, Cablegate, a collection of cables sent between Washington and U.S. embassies in 274 countries, dating from 1966 to 2010.”

In a recent interview with a Norwegian journalist, Assange talked about the support he has received. “We have support from all over the world. But the level of support is found in countries that have toppled bad governments in the past, and where the internal archives of the fallen regimes have been central elements in the public debate afterward,” Assange explained.

Even in Sweden where Assange is wanted for rape allegations, he says he has the support of about 55 percent of the people. “That is right in the middle compared to other countries, and better than in the US and Great Britain,” he said.

<http://www.mintpress.net/assange-wins-peoples-choice-human-rights-award/>

Assange in Sweden: The Police Investigation

Change of Prosecutor

March 29, 2013

The following memo is dated 25 March 2013. Handwritten at the bottom is the decision the following day to approve the deferral for comments.

The prosecutor has been instructed to submit comments regarding the invoice from the plaintiff counsel at the latest by 28 March 2013 [sic].

The case will be handled by vice chief prosecutor Ingrid Isgren at the South prosecution office in Stockholm as of Wednesday 27 March 2013.

A deferral to submit comments until Friday 5 April 2013 has been submitted.

Åke Olsson

*The above memo comes from the office of Erika Leijnefors who previously was the assistant of Marianne Ny. **There is no specific mention Marianne Ny herself has been replaced.** The 'case' now assigned to Ingrid Isgren is mostly likely the case of 'Complainant A' (Anna Ardin).*

Anna Ardin's Request to Replace Claes Borgström

March 29, 2013

Case B-12885-10 28.02.13

URGENT

I want to replace my current plaintiff counsel Claes Borgström.

The reason I'm applying to replace my current plaintiff counsel is that he on some occasions has given me insufficient information about the investigation and the surrounding events. This even concerns shortcomings in following up events, and he **has prioritised speaking with the media instead of with me on occasions when I was in dire need of information and support. My inquiries to him have often been expedited by his legal assistant or secretary, or in some cases I received no response at all. I no longer feel any confidence in him.**

For these reasons, I now want to have Elisabeth Massi Fritz as my plaintiff counsel.

Claes Borgström's Cover Letter

March 29, 2013

The following is the cover letter for the invoice of Claes Borgström, sent to the Stockholm District Court, for services rendered for Anna Ardin.

Stockholm 2013-03-21 Stockholm District Court
Department 1
Box 8307
10420 Stockholm

Case B 22885-10, Unit 11: City prosecution office ./ . Julian Assange

Please find attached my invoice for my assignment as plaintiff counsel for Complainant A.

For the court to have a good understanding of the reasonableness of my request for compensation, there's cause to leave a few comments on the type of assignment I was given.

On 31 September 2010, prosecution director Marianne Ny and chief prosecutor Magnus Bolin at the Development Centre in Gothenburg decided to reopen complaint K246336-10 (Complainant A) and expand complaint K246314-10 (Complainant B).

Already in my application of 2010-08-24 to be appointed plaintiff counsel, I pointed out that the complainants would be in need of representation in their contacts with the police and prosecutors as well as with the media.

My main work in this case has of course been the customary tasks for a plaintiff counsel, but to a much greater degree than usual. Complainant A has been interrogated on several occasions, more than customary. The preliminary investigation has been extended and made further complicated by the fact that the suspect Julian Assange left Sweden, whereupon British courts ruled on the request from the Swedish prosecution authority for his extradition to Sweden in accordance with the European Arrest Warrant. It has been part of my assignment to continually inform the complainant of applicable legislation and the status of the judicial process in England. As the district court knows, Assange sought political asylum in Ecuador at the end of the summer of 2012. He remains ever since at the Ecuadorean embassy in London. This circumstance makes the situation more complex for the complainant and has demanded a number of contacts with her on my part.

I've had continual contact with prosecution director Marianne Ny and with investigator Mats Gehlin to obtain information about developments in the case, information I've then reviewed for the complainant. In all other circumstance, I refer to the work description on my invoice.

As I explained in my letter 2013-03-07 to the district court, it's been impossible to avoid contact with the media. But it should be emphasised that it's been of vital importance for the complainant that the plaintiff counsel has repeatedly contributed to debunking

false rumours which, amongst other things, have intimated that the complaint filed was disingenuous, that the complainant laid out a honey trap for Assange, that the purpose was to harm the WikiLeaks organisation, that she worked with the CIA, and so forth.

A public defender or plaintiff counsel will normally have limited contact with the media, and when the occasion arises, it's not ordinarily seen as something to be compensated within the framework of the assignment. The case in question however is unique as regards the attention of the media and the damage done to the complainant by the resulting publicity. One can establish without exaggeration that media from all over the world have continually sought me for comments on the latest developments in the case. They've repeatedly asked questions about, amongst other things, the personal responsibility of the complainant for what happened, the current situation, and so forth. Many journalists used the presumption that the complainants deliberately defamed the suspect to, in one way or another, achieve personal gain. It has been necessary to challenge these claims.

In the comments to The Law for Plaintiff Counsel § 3 it is stated, amongst other things, that 'the task of the plaintiff counsel is to mitigate the hardships in connection with the investigation of the crime and during the trial'. In The Plaintiff Counsel, Active Support in the Judicial Process (SOU 2007:6) the study expresses (Conclusion, chapter 9, page 23) as its opinion that 'the duties of plaintiff counsel are bound to the needs of the complainant both within and outside the judicial process'.

As is explained in my invoice, I estimate my time for contact with the media to at least 80 hours. With consideration for what's been mentioned above, I believe that in any case half of that time should be compensated within the framework for my assignment as plaintiff counsel. In my invoice for Complainant A I have therefore cited 20 hours work in connection with media contacts.

Posts in my invoice regarding only work, time wasted, and expenses for Complainant A have been marked by denoting 'Complainant A'. The time spent was 48 hours.

Remaining posts regard both Complainant A and Complainant B. The time spent was 44 hours and half of this, 22 hours, is taken up in the invoice. The remaining half will be invoiced for Complainant B.

I have not claimed compensation for work with my application to the Development Centre in Gothenburg to reopen the preliminary investigation or for related tasks. As is customary, such work is not considered for compensation within the framework for the appointment of plaintiff counsel (see amongst other sources Decision of High Court for West Sweden 2010-05-10 for case Ö 1671, and the decision of Svea High Court, department 8, 2011-08-25 for case Ö 6463-11).

Anna Ardin no longer wants the services of Claes Borgström

March 28, 2013

Claes Borgström has sent his final bill to the courts for representing Anna Ardin. The **bill totalled over USD 17,000 for what he estimated was 48 hours work**. Ardin

objected to Borgström wasting time with the media but Borgström insists it was necessary.

The document indicates Anna Ardin was interrogated on seven separate occasions by the Swedish police.

[Borgström's diary]

- 2010-08-23 Preparation for and visit by Complainant A
- 2010-08-24 Write to lower court regarding appointment as legal representative
- 2010-08-24 Review of complaint from 2010-08-20 with attachments
- 2010-08-24 Review of police memo 2010-08-22
- 2010-08-25 Review of decision of prosecution authority
- 2010-08-25 Review of interrogation 2010-08-26
- 2010-09-01 Review of prosecutor's decision in petition to reopen case
- 2010-09-01 Review of interrogation 2010-08-30 of Julian Assange
- 2010-09-02 Preparation for and conversation with Complainant A before and after police interrogation and representation during interrogation
- 2010-09-10 Preparation for and conversation with Complainant A before and after police interrogation and representation during interrogation (in my offices)
- 2010-09-10 Visit together with Complainant A to police for conversation with chief investigator and to submit mobile phone
- 2010-09-20 Visit by Complainant A
- 2010-10-11 Preparation for and conversation with Complainant A before and after police interrogation and representation during interrogation
- 2010-10-13 Review mail from Complainant A
- 2010-10-18 Write mail reply to Complainant A
- 2010-10-26 Preparation for and conversation with Complainant A before and after police interrogation
- 2010-10-26 Preparation for representation of Complainant A before and after police interrogation (in my offices)
- 2010-11-18 Review of lower court protocol
- 2010-11-23 Review of detention memo
- 2010-11-24 Review of high court protocol and ruling 2010-11-24
- 2010-11-26 Review of prosecutor's letter to lower court 2010-11-25
- 2011-01-10 Review of City of Westminster's Magistrate's Court's 'Provisional Skeleton Argument on Behalf of Mr Assange'
- 2011-01-11 Review of mail from Complainant A
- 2011-01-23 Review of mail from Complainant A
- 2011-02-01 Preparation for and visit by Complainant A
- 2011-02-23 Review of mail from Complainant A
- 2011-02-24 Review of City of Westminster Magistrate's Court 'Procedural Background and The Evidence'
- 2011-03-07 Preparations for and visit by Complainant A
- 2011-03-07 Representation of Complainant A at police interrogation
- 2011-04-27 Conversation with Complainant A before and after police interrogation
- 2011-04-27 Preparations for and representation of Complainant A for police interrogation
- 2011-07-18 Review of mail with Thomas Hammarberg regarding amicable settlement with Julian Assange
- 2011-07-25 Mail to Helena Kennedy regarding amicable settlement with Assange

- 2011-08-15 Preparations for and representation at police interrogation with Complainant A
- 2011-09-20 Preparations for and visit by Complainant A
- 2011-11-02 Review of decision of UK High Court
- 2011-11-21 Review of mail from attorney Per E Samuelson to Marianne Ny
- 2011-11-22 Review of mail from Marianne Ny to attorney Thomas Olsson
- 2011-11-23 Review of mail from Marianne Ny
- 2011-11-24 Review of mail from Per E Samuelson to Marianne Ny
- 2011-11-28 Conference with prosecutors and defendant at offices of Per E Samuelson regarding continuation of case
- 2012-03-26 Review of mail from Complainant A
- 2012-05-30 Review of ruling of UK Supreme Court, press summary, case details, and application to reopen appeal
- 2013-03-06 Review of lower court petition regarding Complainant A
- 2013-03-07 Reply to lower court petition regarding Complainant A

Source: <http:// Assangeinswedenbook.com>

Julian Assange: Swedish justice

Stefan Lindskog
Australian Financial Review
 30 March 2013

It has been reported in Swedish newspapers that Julian Assange fears that an extradition to Sweden may result in his subsequent extradition to the United States to face charges there. It has also been reported that Assange thinks he may be -sentenced to death if convicted in the US.

It is amusing how the Assange case offers possibilities of sharp turns when it comes to topics to be discussed. From, on the one hand, whether lies about condoms can result in a sexual crime to, on the other, the question of if telling the truth, by publishing classified information, can amount to a crime permitting extradition to the state that claims being harmed.

According to the Swedish act on extradition for criminal offences, a person present in Sweden, who in a foreign state is suspected of an act that is punishable there, may be extradited to that state.

Extradition is permitted, provided that the offence for which extradition is requested is equivalent to a crime punishable under Swedish law by imprisonment of at least one year. Thus, extradition requires (i) an offence punishable under the law of both countries (“dual criminality”) and (ii) that the offence is of a certain degree of seriousness.

But there are also other restrictions. Extradition may not be granted for military or political offences. Nor may extradition be granted if there is reason to fear that the person whose extradition is requested runs a risk of being subjected to persecution threatening his or her life, or freedom, or is serious in some other respect.

Nor may extradition be granted if it would be contrary to fundamental humanitarian principles, e.g. in consideration of a person's youth, or the state of a person's health.

Further, an extradition must not violate Sweden's obligations under the European Convention.

However, according to bilateral or multi-lateral treaties and other legal instruments, extradition can take place on more-- or less-- strict or lenient legal grounds.

Between members of the European Union, the European Arrest Warrant requires each national judicial authority to recognise, *ipso facto*, and with a minimum of formalities, requests for the surrender of a person made by the judicial authority of another member state. **That is why the courts in the UK did not really try the merits of a Swedish arrest warrant for Assange.**

If a person whose extradition is requested opposes extradition, it falls to the Supreme Court to examine whether extradition can be legally granted under the conditions laid down by law. **The Supreme Court then delivers its opinion to the government for use in its examination of the case.**

If the Supreme Court holds that there is any legal impediment to extradition, the government is not allowed to approve the request. The government can, however, refuse extradition even if the Supreme Court has not declared against it.

The reason for involving the Supreme Court is basically a variation of the blame game. **It is convenient for the government to declare that the request for extradition must be denied because the Supreme Court has ordered so.**

As I have stated, there are some bilateral treaties on extradition. And there are such instruments between Sweden and the US. I will leave the technicalities aside but, in summary, the following is of special interest in this case:

- a) The principle of dual criminality is applicable.
- b) In respect of an extraditable offence committed outside the territorial jurisdiction of Sweden, extradition shall be granted only if the Swedish courts would be competent to exercise jurisdiction in similar circumstances.
- c) Extradition shall not be granted when the offence is purely military.
- d) Extradition shall not be granted if the offence in Sweden is regarded as political or connected with a political offence. [*Who does the "regarding"?* --A.B.]

Does Assange face a risk of being extradited?

I do not know what crime, if any, Assange's involvement in the publishing of military and diplomatic documents would amount to, as regards to US law. I have read somewhere, though, that Assange may be charged for communicating national defence information to an unauthorised source, and aiding the enemy. That is, as I understand it, espionage or treason.

Now that raises some interesting questions.

The first question is: do we have an -equivalent criminalisation in Sweden? Yes, certainly. But I think that the question should rather be put this way: is the offence for which extradition is requested a crime under Swedish law? Well, **that could be debated**. What is classified under US law is probably not classified under Swedish law. And enemies to the US may not be enemies to Sweden. [*But nowadays they almost always are. --A.B.*]

Thus, the question is if the principle of dual criminality shall be applied based on the actual circumstances (documents classified under US rules and aiding US enemies) or on an equivalent Swedish situation (documents classified under Swedish rules and aiding Swedish enemies).

Further: what about the source privilege? Under Swedish law, it is with some exceptions not punishable to leak classified information to the media. There is, however, an exception as regards Swedish military secrets. Is the source privilege applicable when it comes to extradition?

Yes, probably. If, for example, a leakage to the press of business secrets in another jurisdiction is regarded as a crime and extradition from Sweden is sought, the application should be denied — notwithstanding that such leakage, in general, is criminalised also in Sweden.

The source privilege takes over. But what about foreign military secrets? Is the exception to the source privilege as regards military secrets applicable to only Swedish secrets or, in extradition cases, also to military secrets of the foreign state? There are further questions:

- a) Do you leak information to the enemy in a legal sense when you leak it to the world at large?
- b) It could also be asked if the offence is purely military or to be regarded as political.

Other questions could also be put. But I restrict myself to these queries and put them to you for your consideration.

Principles that govern

It is obvious that globalisation demands well-organised and far-reaching co-operation between states in order to efficiently fight cross-border crimes.

But co-operation means you must, in large measure, trust authorities in other jurisdictions. These are sensitive issues. They concern the rule of law.

During my years as a practising lawyer I learned to mistrust any organisation, including the state. When people come together and think of themselves as united with a -special task or goal, astonishing dynamics can cause strange things to happen. Thus, **I think that one shall not presume that the state, or any part of it, is always good. If**

anything should be presumed at all, it is to the contrary. It is sometimes necessary to view the different authorities of the state as heads of a vicious Hydra. You have to be attentive and to be prepared to fight the evil that a misled intent to do well can result in.

Now, if a foreign authority wants anything, you should be even more aware. Why? Not because other states are even more wicked than your own — I guess they are more or less the same. But because, when a state acts outside its borders, the presumption is— plainly put — that it shall mind its own business.

That applies to extradition, I think, especially when it comes to crimes that are not directed against individuals, but against the state. Generally, in my opinion a state that claims to have been offended— and therefore applies for extradition of the purported persecutor— should not be helped out. This is also, to a certain extent, reflected in Swedish legislation— including the agreements between the US and Sweden— in that extradition shall not be granted when the alleged crime is military or political in nature.

Leaked information

At the end of the day, many years from now, I think Assange will not, even in Sweden, be associated with his efforts to escape the laws of Sweden. He will be thought of as the person who made public some pieces of classified information to the benefit of mankind.

Crimes against humanity such as the [WikiLeaks images of Iraqi civilians being killed in a] helicopter shooting need to be made known. **The good made by leakage of such information cannot be underestimated. It should never be a crime to make crimes of state known.**

But leaks of that kind need not only facilitators like Assange. They also need conscientious brave men and women like Bradley Manning. Let us not forget him. Let us hope and pray that he will have a fair trial and -balanced sentence. I cannot judge to what extent leakage of all the documents was ethically defensible. But I strongly hold that part of the leak was to the good of society and should not be punished.

• *Stefan Lindskog is a justice of the Supreme Court of Sweden, the highest court in that country. The above is an extract from a speech titled The Assange Affair: freedom of speech and freedom of information, a global perspective, which he will be giving at 7pm on April 3 at Elder Hall, University of Adelaide.*

http://www.afr.com/p/lifestyle/review/julian_assange_swedish_judge_view_UKXfH1WonxwgZeaG0XnizI

New developments in the Assange case

Glenn Greenwald
The Guardian
2 April 2013

The government of Ecuador continues its attempts to obtain assurances from either Britain or Sweden that Julian Assange's appearance in Stockholm for questioning on sex crimes allegations will not be used to extradite him to the US. This week, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on several interesting new developments in the case in Sweden, including the fact that the high-profile prosecutor driving the case from the start has now "abruptly" left it. [Not according to the Swedish Prosecution Authority. --A.B.] Moreover, both Alexa O'Brien and Ryan Gallagher note that the Obama DOJ continues to say that its Grand Jury investigation of Assange and WikiLeaks is ongoing. Leaked documents from last year reflect that Australian diplomats believe the US is still intent on prosecuting WikiLeaks (a threatened prosecution which former New York Times General Counsel James Goodale recently described as "absolutely frightening" and "the biggest challenge" to press freedoms today).

Those of us who believe there is a valid fear that WikiLeaks will be prosecuted by the US for its journalism have long advocated— along with the Ecuadorians— that Assange immediately go to Stockholm to face the accusations against him in exchange for the Swedish government agreeing that his presence there will not be used as a pretext to turn him over to the US. In response, numerous WikiLeaks critics, led by *New Statesman* legal blogger David Allen Green, insisted that it would be impossible for the Swedish government to agree to this proposal because, as he put it last year, "any final word on an extradition would (quite properly) be with an independent Swedish court, and not the government giving the purported 'guarantee'."

As I've detailed previously on several occasions, that claim is absolutely false: even if Swedish courts rule that extradition is legally proper, the discretion lies with the Swedish government (as it does with most governments in extradition cases) to decide if extradition should occur. The final decision-maker on extradition is the Swedish government.

This week, Stefan Lindskog, a justice of the Supreme Court of Sweden, the highest court in that country, definitively settled that disagreement when he wrote an excellent column on the facts of the Assange case and explained (*emphasis added*):

If a person whose extradition is requested opposes extradition, it falls to the Supreme Court to examine whether extradition can be legally granted under the conditions laid down by law. The Supreme Court then delivers its opinion to the government for use in its examination of the case.

If the Supreme Court holds that there is any legal impediment to extradition, the government is not allowed to approve the request. *The government can, however, refuse extradition even if the Supreme Court has not declared against it.*

The evidence that this is true has long been clear. Like most governments, the Swedish government retains the power to refuse extradition even when its courts

find that it would be legally valid; that's because extradition entails more than just legalistic questions but also encompasses political considerations and questions of fairness and equity. That's why this always has been and remains the right solution: the Swedish government should agree that it will not use Assange's appearance on its soil as a ruse to turn him over to the US, and Assange should then board the next possible plane to Stockholm to face the accusations against him. That will ensure that the complainants in Sweden get the due process to which they are absolutely entitled for their serious accusations, while protecting Assange's rights against vindictive prosecution by the US for his journalism. Ecuador continues to try to bring about this solution with both Sweden and the UK.

Professor: Mismanagement of the Assange case devastating to Sweden's international reputation

Marcello Ferrada de Noli

Newsmill

2013-04-03

The mismanagement of the Assange case has been devastating to Sweden's international reputation and to the credibility of its legal system. The fact that one chairman of the highest court in Sweden is being sponsored by the Embassy of Sweden in Australia to opine publicly on a case that may come before his court has been widely commented in social media reaching millions of international viewers and participants, yet neither the Swedish media nor the Swedish authorities have mentioned the issue at all to the Swedish public. The silence is deafening.

[Incorrect. The controversy has been noted in Svenska Dagbladet, for example. --A.B.]

The University of Adelaide's Law School, Australia, has publicly announced that Justice Stefan Lindskog "Chairman of the Supreme Court of Sweden, Sweden's highest Court of Appeal will deliver a keynote public lecture on the Assange affair, and freedom of speech, from the Swedish perspective. As one of Sweden's most eminent jurists he is uniquely able to provide an authoritative view of the Assange affair."

It is of course not completely known what will be the final content of his address at Adelaide, scheduled for April the 3th, 2013. But the fact that the event has been announced as officially sponsored "in association with the Embassy of Sweden" indicates on the other hand a new interference by the Swedish government in the juridical case.

Stefan Lindskog has himself declared in *Financial Review* that his public note will be dealing with such political issues (i.e. human rights, freedom of expression) "from the Swedish perspective" and specifically relating to the case Assange. Considering that this is a case under investigation by ranks in the Swedish legal system; and that they have manifested they are studying the possibility of indictment (Assange HAS NOT been charged), the public statements of a chairman of the Supreme Court prior to that formal decision from the prosecutors is highly noteworthy.

It must be noted that Stefan Lindskog shares the opinion— as referred by Justice Marianne Lundius— that "the role of (Supreme Court) judges, by a matter of principle,

is not compatible with the role of engaging themselves in criminal investigations". This was said in the context of declarations with regard to the investigation of Olof Palme assassination. *[Making a speech does not constitute a criminal investigation. --A.B.]*

Since the instigation of this case against Mr. Assange, Swedish media has worked as an arm of the Swedish State *[no more so than in its reporting on many other issues --A.B.]* and perpetrated a Trial by Media, which has been widely marked by hearsay, misinformation, and attempted character assassination of Mr. Assange (see my article in Newsmill, English text, "(Swedish) Media reports on Assange are untruthful and identical").

I recently delivered an invited lecture on human rights at The University of Örebro, about some similar topics that are to be taken up by Stefan Lindskog in Adelaide. In the presentation I listed facts that seriously contradict the message of the "Swedish law and order" abiding principle that Justice Stefan Lindskog is generally conveying in his column "Julian Assange: Swedish Justice".

In the first place, the Prime Minister of Sweden, followed by prominent political leaders and journalists, has made declarations on behalf of the accusers of Assange *[Reinfeldt stated the general principle that "justice must take its course, which applies to all accusers, not merely the two in this case --A.B.]*, directly intervening in the process, which, as mentioned above, is still in the pre-investigation stage under one prosecutor *[who is assisted by at least one other prosecutor --A.B.]*.

Secondly, this prosecutor unilaterally decided to reopen the "case against Assange" at the initiative of the law firm run by the Swedish politicians Thomas Bodström (former Minister of Justice) and Claes Borgström (former Ombudsman on gender issues). They *[there is no evidence that Bodström was involved --A.B.]*, together with the prosecutor of the case, Marianne Ny, have been directly involved in government appointed committees studying the enhancement of the sexual-offences legislation in Sweden. However, when the prosecutor was reported for alleged irregularities in the case Assange, this was rapidly dismissed on technical grounds by the "Swedish legal system". *[Like it or not, Swedish prosecutors have a large, entirely legal degree of freedom in conducting their cases, as in many other countries. --A.B.]*

Thirdly, in Sweden, "according to the law", it is forbidden for prosecutors to reveal the identity or details in cases of sensitive accusations like the one against Assange. Once more I remind that these are only allegations under investigation, not charges, no trial. However, one prosecutor revealed the name of Julian Assange and details of the accusations directly to the tabloid Expressen, which ran a front page smear article on the basis of uninvestigated allegations. The prosecutor was reported by a human rights organizations, but the Swedish legal system dismissed the case against the prosecutor on technicalities. *[The decision was made by one small component of the Swedish legal system, most of which is not involved in the Assange case. --A.B.]*

Then we have the facts that are better known in the international community about the interrogation issue of Mr. Assange in London, a procedure that has been flatly denied, without any juridical grounds, by the Swedish prosecutors *[now there is more than one, apparently --A.B.]*. Swedish prosecutors are fully able to go abroad to pursue cases, including questioning. In fact, Swedish prosecutors and judges travelled during 2012 all the way to Africa to put up a hearing *in situ* (in Africa) regarding allegations against a person living in Sweden. *[Reference? --A.B.]*

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an initiative revealed after the visit of Foreign Minister Carl Bildt to Australia, is behind the unethical, opportunistic sponsoring [*the ethics are open to debate; the writer provides no basis for his accusation of opportunism --A.B.*] of Justice Stefan Lindskog, of the Supreme Court, traveling all the way to Australia in a bid to counter the international embarrassment Sweden has suffered through its own actions in the case Assange. They have chosen this route instead of ending the embarrassment by ethically (and totally according to the Swedish law praxis) conducting the interrogation of Assange in London, which is just a couple hours' flight from Stockholm. It is left to see whether Associate Professor Stefan Lindskog will have an independent stance in spite of the official embassy sponsoring, and whether such stance would or not represent prospective rulings of the Supreme Court. [*In his speech and the discussion afterward, Lindskog said several things of which the U.S. and the Reinfeldt government almost certainly did not approve. --A.B.*]

Let us make clear that Mr. Assange, through his legal representatives, has stated that it is his wish to clear the Sweden case and that he would come to Sweden if they guarantee no onward extradition to the United States. Indeed, Ecuador's decision for granting Mr. Assange asylum is based in part on Sweden's refusal to grant such assurances. In the case that Mr. Assange would face extradition from Sweden, it is the Supreme Court, chaired by Justice Stefan Lindskog, who would decide the legality of any extradition. If extradition is ruled legal, then it would be up to the government to decide whether to allow extradition. Nevertheless, there are cases in which the Swedish government has facilitated extrajudicial extraditions at the behest of the United States. These are the cases of "extraordinary renditions" authorized by the Justice Ministry and of the Foreign Office of Sweden. One of these cases was exposed and occasioned the sanctions [???] from the part of the UN against Sweden, for serious violations against the Absolute Ban on Torture, which Sweden had signed.

Justice Lindskog has announced he will be arguing around the extradition issue of Assange to the US. For that, he has prepared a long list of law-paragraphs that he presented in *Financial Review*. Let me just remind that in contrast with the legal wording of documents signed by Sweden on matters of extradition, we have the praxis of the Swedish government. These facts cannot possibly be washed away with a fancy lecture or a pseudo panel of arranged questions and deceptive responses. [*Again, the writer provides no basis for this interpretation of the intent and intellectual integrity of Lindskog's speech. --A.B.*]

Sweden is not a neutral country. Rather, it is now fully committed to Intelligence and military operations led by the US armed forces.

Sweden participated actively with logistical and engineering aid in the US bombardment of Iraq. Sweden participated in the military surveillance of the bombardments of Libya, an initiative from the government, which received the support of all the Swedish political parties represented in Parliament, from the conservatives (Moderater) to the Left Party (Vänster), and with the exception of Sweden Democrats (SD). Sweden is actively participating, under the command of US, in the military occupation of Afghanistan.

In connection to the above, WikiLeaks has exposed that the Swedish surveillance legislation (*FRA-lagen*) which, in spite of great controversy, the government put

forward in 2008, was a “made-to-order-job” directly requested by the US government. Most recently, a legislation initiative was put forth by the Swedish government aiming to protect the interests of the countries with which Sweden has ongoing collaboration. The proposed legislation is also known as the anti-WikiLeaks legislation.

Whatever the concrete formulation of an indictment of Assange in the US, it will be inevitably related to allegations of whistleblowing military secrets, etc. *[Only if the U.S. officials involved are stupid. Otherwise, they will most likely find or invent some other sort of “crime” with which to accuse Assange. --A.B.]* Sweden, as a close military partner with the US, has largely complied with and even collaborated on matters of renditions of individuals regarded as enemies of the US. Swedish reporters have revealed very recently, with sources independent of WikiLeaks, that Minister Carl Bildt has been an informant of the US government for decades. These episodes have irritated his old political partners of previous government coalitions, who claim they did not know, and that they do not approve of Bildt’s position as it has been revealed. However, it is none other than Carl Bildt who is deciding extradition and rendition matters in Sweden. Let’s recall that the recent rendition to the US of Swedes in Ethiopia, was done with the knowledge of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs *[of the former, SDP government which included Bodström --A.B.]*, and in spite that Swedish prosecutors have cleared these individuals from suspicions of being terrorists *[after the fact; but their “extraordinary rendition” was still a violation of Sweden’s legal obligations to them. --A.B.]*.

The words printed in the Swedish law books tell that agreements with foreign powers compromising sovereignty issues should be known and approved by the Swedish Parliament. The current praxis has been, however, that military intelligence endeavours such as gathering of information about Swedish nationals is nowadays controlled by agreements of officials of the Justice Ministry and of the Foreign Office of Sweden with US government Intelligence organizations. This, totally unknown by the Swedish Parliament, is one of the items exposed by WikiLeaks. A prominent journalist from Expressen, Mike Ölander, wrote about these Intelligence tasks led by the US that the “Swedish government officials got the impression that they were working under direct orders of the CIA”. *[This is actually old news which, long before WikiLeaks, has been discussed by Swedish academics, journalists and some politicians -- although not nearly enough. --A.B.]*

Sweden’s real praxis on political extraditions is not concerned with judges or legislation. *[The rules are followed in the vast majority of cases. But there are ample grounds to suspect that Assamge may be an exception. --A.B.]*

If we now examine the praxis of Sweden in the issues of political extraditions that Professor Stefan Lindskog will be referring in his address:

To start with, referring to the US requests on extraditions: Regardless of what is written in the multiple extradition agreements mentioned by Stefan Lindskog, the reality in Sweden regarding extradition is that, since over a decade, ALL THE CASES requested by the US of individuals in Swedish territory to be extradited to the US were approved by Sweden. *[Yes, but were any laws or ethical guidelines violated? --A.B.]* Additionally, there are further treaties ruling extraditions issues between US and Sweden, and which would enable Sweden to deliver Julian Assange to the US, such as in the case he would be requested as a witness in the trial against Bradley Manning. *[Reference? --A.B.]*

Does the government of Sweden really need any written law or agreement to comply with political requests of extraditions from the US, particularly in the frame of “terrorist” accusations— such as Assange has been named in the US, for instance Vice President Biden had likened Julian Assange to a “high-tech terrorist”; and his Republican counterpart Sarah Palin, former US Vice Presidential Candidate declared, “Julian Assange should be targeted like the Taliban”.

Sweden’s unsavoury behaviour regarding political extraditions can be traced through the historical record. Over half of the 4000 Russians refugees that Sweden secretly extradited at the request of Stalin were soldiers in the Red Army who fled to Sweden after being confined in German camps, for which they were refugees in Sweden (see “Interpellation 2001/02:12” of the Swedish Parliament; the corresponding link Interpellation 2001/02:12 Riksdagen has now been removed). Also in the post war year Sweden extradited ca. 150 Baltic soldiers to the Soviet Union, and they clearly were political refugees in Sweden. These extraditions proceeded despite there being “no legal ground for the extradition according to the Hague Conventions”, which Sweden had also signed. *[These cases, dating back to the chaos of World War II and its immediate aftermath, are hardly relevant to Assange’s. The writer might just as well cite cases from the 18th or 17th century. --A.B.]*

Episode after episode (see my article “In the history of Swedish extradition of political prisoners to foreign powers”) indicate that what Sweden signs about extraditions, what is “written in the law” and the jurists repeat, are in drastic contradiction with the praxis executed by Sweden in their secret agreements with foreign powers. *[Very selective history which, among other things, the granting of residence permits to U.S. deserters from the Vietnam War. --A.B.]*

During the last years Sweden has been taken countless times upon the European Court for the extradition/ deportation of political refugees that have face such ominous fate at arrival in their original countries, after being airborne there with the escort of Swedish police. In many cases the deported have encountered immediately arresting upon arrival. I know about also because I have professionally participated in the past with documentation on diagnostic assessments on behalf of those refugees, whose cases have eventually been taken to such European tribunals. *[This is a widespread problem throughout Europe and North America. Is there any indication that Sweden has been especially inhumane? What is the connection with the Assange case? --A.B.]*

Politically appointed judges

Further, in Sweden, the majority of judges in the lower courts (of the kind that would eventually try the Assange case if it goes to court) are appointed by the established political parties. *[The writer seems to be confounding professional judges with lay judges. There is a valid democratic rationale for the participation of the latter. --A.B.]* It must be understood here that those established parties— according to the Swedish praxis of political consensus on issues of foreign policy— are backing the government on geopolitical issues according to the Bildt doctrine, and it is alleged that the organization WikiLeaks and his founder Julian Assange are compromising the national interests of Sweden. In these lines, the Swedish military establishment spreads (i.e. the statements of Mike Winnerstig, at the time Deputy Director of Research, Swedish Defence Research Agency— institution under the Swedish Ministry of Defence) in the state

owned television the false notion that WikiLeaks and Assange are “blackmailing Sweden”, and also suggesting that WikiLeaks would be favouring Russian interests while focusing in the exposure of NATO. The state-owned Swedish National Television (SvT), in its turn, has equated Julian Assange “Sweden’s No. One Enemy”. *[Not that I am aware. It has broadcast at least one clearly biased documentary. --A.B.]* The Trial by Media against Assange has been compact. *[There have been, as usual, a few honourable exceptions. --A.B.]* So far no judge, no prosecutor, no legal authority whatsoever has protested about these events, and we therefore wondered: What guarantees of a fair trial could Assange expect in Sweden? *[Good question. But it deserves a more coherent preamble than this jumbled paragraph. --A.B.]*

Now Judge Lindskog have declared abroad, although— to the best of my knowledge— not in Sweden:

"At the end of the day, many years from now, I think Assange will not, even in Sweden, be associated with his efforts to escape the laws of Sweden. He will be thought of as the person who made public some pieces of classified information to the benefit of mankind. Crimes against humanity such as the [WikiLeaks images of Iraqi civilians being killed in a] helicopter shooting need to be made known. The good made by leakage of such information cannot be underestimated. It should never be a crime to make crimes of state known."

This may be a promising development. We will listen with much care and interest to Justice Stefan Lindskog’s keynote public lecture on the Assange affair. And we really hope that, in honouring the Swedish perspective, he will be addressing also the issues mentioned here. The mismanagement of the Assange case has been devastating to Sweden’s international reputation and to the credibility of its legal system. *[It certainly should have been. But what is the evidence that, in fact, it has been? --A.B.]* A positive outcome of Justice Lindskog’s public presentation would be to tell the international community the complete truth about this case. Justice Lindskog may have an outstanding opportunity to demonstrate that at least Swedish professors, such as him, have independent academic voices and are not, as otherwise customarily read in Swedish media, instruments and actors of an uncritical consensus, which definitely do not help this noble Nation. *[A non sequitur, to say the least. There is nothing noble to detect in any of the foregoing. --A.B.]*

- *Marcello Ferrada de Noli is PhD in Psychiatry (Karolinska Institutet) and Professor Emeritus of Public Health Sciences esp. Eoidemiology. Formerly Research Fellow in Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Publishes in Sweden Professors blogg, which has extensively treated the case Assange, including guest-contributions by Naomi Wolf, Andrew Kreig and Jen Robinson.*

<http://www.newsmill.se/artikel/2013/04/02/professor-mismanagement-of-the-assange-case-devastating-to-sweden-s-international>

The Assange Affair: freedom of speech and freedom of information, a global perspective

Public Lecture by **Justice Stefan Lindskog of the Supreme Court of Sweden**
with Julian Burnside QC, Professor George Williams, and other eminent panellists

Justice Stefan Lindskog will deliver a keynote public lecture on the Assange affair, and freedom of speech, from the Swedish perspective. Justice Lindskog is Chairman of the Supreme Court of Sweden, Sweden's highest Court of Appeal. As one of Sweden's most eminent jurists he is uniquely able to provide an authoritative view of the Assange affair.

Justice Lindskog will be joined in a panel discussion on freedom of speech in Australia.

Adelaide barrister, Claire O'Connor, will chair a panel comprised of eminent barrister and advocate for the protection of human rights, Julian Burnside QC, leading Australian constitutional law expert and public commentator, Professor George Williams, and other eminent panellists.

Event Details

3 April 2013
7:00pm - 9.00pm
Elder Hall
The University of Adelaide
North Terrace Campus

Video of Lindskog's speech: www.adelaide.edu.au/live/theassangeaffairapril2013.html

Threat to Assange confirmed (again)

*Guy Rundle
Crikey
April 4, 2013*

It was "sheer fantasy" that Julian Assange was in danger of being extradited from Sweden to the United States, Bob Carr declared in February. If anything, it was even less likely Assange could be extradited from Sweden than the United Kingdom.

Last night Swedish justice Stefan Lindskog — engaging in the highly unusual step of discussing publicly, and in detail, a case that might yet come before the Swedish justice system — described the case against Assange as "a mess" and, contrary to some media reports today, admitted the possibility that Assange might be extradited. Lindskog, perhaps purposefully hedging his bets on the issue of extradition, suggested it may be difficult for Assange to be legally extradited to the US under Swedish restrictions on extradition, but conceded Sweden had previously illegally rendered people to America.

In 2001 two Egyptian nationals, Ahmed Agiza and Muhammad al-Zery, were handed by the Swedish government to the CIA and transported to Egypt, where they were tortured. The current Swedish ambassador to Australia, Sven-Olof Petersson, knew of the rendition at the time as a Swedish foreign affairs officer. Lindskog last night expressed the hope that the Swedish government wouldn't act illegally in that manner again.

Carr's cavalier dismissal of the threat to Assange is consistent with his insouciant approach to the case. Carr has persistently denied there is a US investigation underway into Assange, despite the fact that as recently as last week a Department of Justice spokesman confirmed a WikiLeaks grand jury investigation is continuing.

The allegations made against Assange in Sweden are serious, and deserve to be resolved. But they should not be the pretext for yet another US government assault on whistleblowers and online activists — people it has persistently subjected to exemplary punishment and ongoing persecution. But the response of Carr, and the Gillard government, has been to turn its back.

www.crikey.com.au/2013/04/04/crikey-says-threat-to-assange-confirmed-again

Julian Burnside QC's response to Justice Lindskog's address

*Posted by Linda
SAWC
April 4, 2013*

On Wednesday 3 April, senior Swedish Supreme Court judge, Stefan Lindskog, delivered a public lecture at Adelaide university entitled, "The Assange Affair: freedom of speech and freedom of information, a global perspective". Below is Australian barrister and human rights advocate, Julian Burnside QC's response to Lindskog. Please note: this written version supplied by Julian Burnside differs in places to his speech in Adelaide, which can be heard at <http://vimeo.com/63258441>

Julian Burnside QC

Justice Lindskog's speech gives cause for optimism. It is good to hear him say that it should never be a crime to reveal the crimes of the State.

It is encouraging to hear his arguments supporting the idea that Assange should not be extradited from Sweden to America.

It is encouraging to hear that there are "interesting questions" about the matter of dual criminality.

But it would be regrettable if his optimism was to lull the Australian public into a sense of security. Because other circumstances give reason for real concern.

Assange has embarrassed the US government. Prominent Americans have called for him to be assassinated, or tried for espionage. Sweden has a witness surrender agreement with America.

The Swedish prosecutor has refused to go to England to question Assange, despite the fact that questioning Assange is the only purpose of the European Arrest Warrant in Assange's case.

So what is going on? A brief look at the chronology of events in 2010 might suggest an answer:

5 April: Wikileaks released the Collateral Murder video.

25 July: Wikileaks released the Afghan War Logs.

3 August: Mark Thiessen (a Bush speech writer) said Wikileaks was "a criminal enterprise".

14 August: Assange is in Sweden to give a speech; has sex with two Swedish women. They approach the police: not with any complaint, but to ask simply whether they can require him to be tested for communicable disease.

Mid August: Swedish police treat the enquiry as a complaint; prosecutor questions Assange.

25 August: Swedish prosecutor determines that, in relation to one of the women, there is no case; in relation to the other, it might be treated as minor sexual molestation.

15 September: Swedish prosecutor says Assange can leave Sweden, and he does.

Late November – "Cablegate": Wikileaks releases 390,000 documents which disclose among other things, 66,000 civilian deaths in Iraq which have been suppressed by USA; and 250,000 documents originating from US Embassies around the world, which include candid assessments of various foreign politicians.

Late November - early December: various prominent Americans make public statements about Assange and Wikileaks:

28 November 2010 – U.S. Rep. Peter King (chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee): "Moreover, the repeated releases of classified information from WikiLeaks, which have garnered international attention, manifests Mr Assange's purposeful intent to damage not only our national interests in fighting the war on terror, but also undermines the very safety of coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Department of Defence has explicitly recognized, WikiLeaks' dissemination of classified US military and diplomatic documents affords material support to terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al Shabaab."

29 November 2010 – U.S. Rep. Peter King, Regarding labelling WikiLeaks a terrorist organization: "The benefit of that is, we would be able to seize their assets and we would be able to stop anyone from helping them in any way," King said, appearing on MSNBC, "I don't think we should write it off that quickly and say we can't do it. They are assisting in terrorist activity. The information they are giving is being used by al Qaeda, it's being used by our enemies," he said.

30 November 2010 – Bill Kristol (well known conservative columnist):

“Why can’t we act forcefully against WikiLeaks? Why can’t we use our various assets to harass, snatch or neutralize Julian Assange and his collaborators, wherever they are? Why can’t we disrupt and destroy WikiLeaks in both cyberspace and physical space, to the extent possible? Why can’t we warn others of repercussions from assisting this criminal enterprise hostile to the United States?”

30 November 2010 – Kathleen McFarland (Fox News national security analyst; served in national security posts in the Nixon, Ford and Reagan administrations):

“WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange isn’t some well-meaning, anti-war protestor leaking documents in hopes of ending an unpopular war. He’s waging cyber war on the United States and the global world order. Mr. Assange and his fellow hackers are terrorists and should be prosecuted as such.

“The President needs to get on the phone with the Australians (who are eagerly awaiting our call) and ask them to pull WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange’s passport. Once he’s cornered and can no longer travel, they can find him and charge him with espionage. Then the president can ask the country he’s hiding in to extradite him to the United States and try him in a military tribunal.”

2 December 2010 – Jeffrey Kuhner (Washington Times columnist): “Julian Assange poses a clear and present danger to American national security. The WikiLeaks founder is more than a reckless provocateur. He is aiding and abetting terrorists in their war against America. The administration must take care of the problem – effectively and permanently.”

5 December 2010 – Newt Gingrich (Former Speaker of U.S. House of Reps.):

“Julian Assange is engaged in warfare. Information terrorism, which leads to people getting killed is terrorism. And Julian Assange is engaged in terrorism.” As such, Gingrich suggested, “He should be treated as an enemy combatant and WikiLeaks should be closed down permanently and decisively.”

6 December 2007 – Robert Beckel (Fox News Analyst and Deputy Asst. Sec. of State in Carter Administration): “A dead man can’t leak stuff. This guy’s a traitor, a treasonist [sic], and he has broken every law of the United States. And I’m not for the death penalty, so . . . there’s only one way to do it: Illegally shoot the son of a bitch.”

7 December 2010 – U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chair of the Select Committee on Intelligence: “When WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange released his latest document trove—more than 250,000 secret State Department cables—he intentionally harmed the U.S. government. The release of these documents damages our national interests and puts innocent lives at risk. He should be vigorously prosecuted for espionage.”

Meanwhile, on 3 December, a European Arrest Warrant for Assange was issued, seeking his extradition to Sweden.

On 16 June 2011, Assange went to the Ecuadorean Embassy to seek protection against the United States. Shortly afterwards, I visited him there and spent many hours putting together a letter to the Australian Attorney General. He later leaked that letter, thus waiving privilege in it. The letter set out in some detail the circum-stances which make him fear that extradition to Sweden will result in his removal to America, under the “Witness surrender” protocol between those countries. Those same circumstances later

persuaded the government of Ecuador that Assange faces a real risk of being sent from Sweden to America, if he is ever sent to Sweden.

After setting out those circumstances, I asked the Attorney General some fairly straightforward questions, including:

- 1) Has Australia asked the US authorities:
 - whether the FBI or any other US authority has investigated or is investigating Assange? And if so has it concluded its investigations?
 - whether it intends to seek to have Assange transferred from Sweden to the USA?
 - whether the US authorities have considered ways in which Assange may be transferred to the US?
- 2) If Australia has asked the US authorities any of these questions, what reply did Australia receive?
- 3) If Australia has not asked the US authorities these questions, will you ask the US authorities those questions?
- 4) Will you seek assurances from the US authorities that, if they seek to move Assange from Sweden to the USA (whether by transfer, extradition or any other means):
 - they will give you advance notice of their intention to get Assange into the USA?
 - they will give you an opportunity to consider whether the proposal to remove Assange to the USA is justifiable in the circumstances?
 - they will give you a reasonable opportunity to oppose the proposed move?

I conclude by noting that, in the letter I had posed some clear questions, and that I expected to receive clear answers. I said that, failing clear answers to the questions, I would be forced to one of two conclusions:

- that Australia is aware of American plans from which Assange needs protection; or that Australia has suspicions about American plans and prefers to turn a blind eye.

Neither of those conclusions is consistent with Australia's obligations to one of its citizens.

We received an answer signed by the acting Attorney General. It did not answer the questions: it barely acknowledged them.

It seems to me that the Gillard government has abandoned Assange, just as the Howard government abandoned Hicks and Habib.

If Assange falls into American hands, he is likely to suffer the fate of Bradley Manning, who has been held in solitary confinement for two years, much of the time held naked "for his own protection". Whether the Americans can dream up any plausible charge against Assange, it hardly matters that he may ultimately be found not guilty. He will have been personally destroyed, and Wikileaks will not likely survive.

The mainstream press around the world republished the most interesting material released by Wikileaks. By doing so, they gave the material much greater exposure than the original publication by Wikileaks. The proprietors and journalists of the mainstream press have not been threatened.

The freedom of the press, it seems, depends on whether the news outlet in question has the favour of the American government.

<https://sawcsydney.org/2013/04/julian-burnside-qcs-response-to-justice-lindskogs-address-on-assange-case-3-april-2013/>

SvD: 4 april 2013

HD-domarens föreläsning får kritik

En domare i Högsta domstolen (HD) i Sverige har hållit ett föredrag om fallet Julian Assange i Australien. Att ett justiteråd uttalar sig om ett fall som kan hamna i HD har mött kritik från Wikileaks-håll i Australien och från Assange. Domarens agerande kan påverka omvärldens syn på det svenska rättssystemet, enligt HD:s ordförande. Julian Assange vid Ecuadors Ambassad i London.

Sedan hösten 2010 pågår en förundersökning i Sverige, som utreder om Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange gjort sig skyldig till sexualbrott. Julian Assange, som undviker att överlämnas från Storbritannien till Sverige genom att hålla sig inne i Ecuadors ambassad i London, säger att orsaken till att han inte vill åka till Sverige är att han är rädd att Sverige utlämnar honom till USA.

Under en semesterresa i Julian Assanges hemland Australien har justitierådet Stefan Lindskog hållit ett föredrag om de juridiska aspekterna kring förundersökningen om sexbrott och vilka rättsaspekter som skulle spela in om USA skulle begära Assange utlämnad från Sverige.

Ett utdrag ur föredraget, som hölls på universitetet i Adelaide, har också publicerats i tidningen Australian Financial Review. Stefan Lindskog skriver bland annat "Det är roligt hur Assange-fallet visar möjligheter till skarpa svängar när det kommer till ämnena som diskuteras. Från, å ena sidan, om lögnen om kondomer kan vara ett sexbrott till, å andra sidan, frågan om att säga sanningen genom att publicera hemligstämplad information kan innebära ett brott som tillåter utlämning till den stat som anser sig skadad".

Justitierådets agerande har fått juristen Greg Barns, som är talesperson för organisationen Australian Lawyers Association och som driver kampanjen för att få Julian Assange vald till Australiens senat, att reagera.

– Att ett svenskt justitieråd tror att det är acceptabelt tenderar att bekräfta oron folk känner kring opartiskhet och stabilitet i det svenska rättssystemet. Det ger stort fog för att tro att Assanges fall har blivit starkt politiserat i Sverige, säger han till Sydney Morning Herald.

Greg Barns uppmanar också Australiens chefsåklagare att ta upp fallet med den svenska chefsåklagaren.

Också Julian Assange är kritisk till Stefan Lindskogs agerande.

— Utvecklingen är del av ett mönster där högt uppsatta svenskar, inklusive den svenska utrikesministern, statsministern och justitieministern, alla har attackerat mig eller Wikileaks offentligt, säger Wikileaksgrundaren enligt Sydney Morning Herald till Fairfax Media.

I ett mejl till SvD skriver Stefan Lindskog att det inte finns något hinder för att HD-domare på principiell nivå diskuterar rättsliga frågor "som är eller kan komma under rättslig prövning".

Stefan Lindskog poängterar också att han, om han skulle bli lottad på ett mål som rör Assange, har möjlighet att avträda om han tycker att något gör honom olämplig att döma i fallet.

Inte heller Högsta Domstolens ordförande Marianne Lundius ser Stefan Lindskogs föredrag och artikel som något som kan påverka domstolen om något fall som rör Assange någonsin kommer dit. Däremot menar hon att justitierådets medverkan kan påverka bilden av det svenska rättssystemet.

– I det här fallet kan det uppfattas som känsligare för att det är knutet till Assange, och att det fortfarande finns en arresteringsorder mot honom. **Det är väldigt viktigt att det finns ett förtroende för domstolen, säger Marianne Lundius.**

Assange är inte åtalad för något brott i Sverige. För att fallet ska kunna hamna i HD måste åklagaren först väcka åtal, och sedan måste fallet gå genom både tingsrätt och hovrätt innan någon av parterna har möjlighet att begära överprövning i HD. I så fall blir det i första hand en fråga om fallet alls ska tas upp i HD, eftersom domstolen bara tar upp de fall som döms bli prejudicerande.

Alla utlämningsärenden till Högsta domstolen, om personen som begärs utlämnad motsätter sig det. Men USA har hittills inte åtalat Assange för något brott, och inte heller försökt få honom utlämnad.

Efter en utdragen process beslutade högsta instans i Storbritannien i slutet av maj förra året att Assange ska överlämnas till Sverige för att utredningen ska kunna fortsätta. Han har dock inte kunnat föras till Sverige eftersom han sedan i juni befinner sig i Ecuadors ambassad i London. Assange har beviljats politisk asyl i Ecuador.

• *Karin Thurffjell*

Lindskog Hopes No More Illegal Rendition & London Interrogation OK

Thing2Thing
April 6, 2013

The Assange Affair, April 2013 – a public lecture by Justice Stefan Lindskog of the Supreme Court of Sweden, is streaming on the University of Adelaide website. Viewers are advised that the term "Affair" has largely been interpreted in the sexual sense.

The sponsors decided not to live-stream the other panel members, Julian Burnside QC, Jack Waterford of the Canberra Times and Professor George Williams AO, all of whom brought a significant contribution to this debate. Of equal interest is the Q & A with the audience, wherein Justice Lindskog was faced with some challenging questions.

He conceded that the robust Swedish judicial system he just promoted was powerless; not even consulted... when two Egyptian nationals, Ahmed Agiza and Muhammad al-Zery, were illegally rendered to Egypt and tortured. Sweden's Ambassador to Australia Mr. Sven-Olof Petersson admits that he however, had advance knowledge of the CIA rendition flight from Stockholm on December 18, 2001.

Lindskog also states during question time: "I would like to comment upon the possibility of the prosecutor to go to London. It is possible that the prosecutor could travel to London and interrogate him there. I have no answer to the question why that hasn't happened."

<http://thing2thing.com/?p=3560>

Government-sponsored presentation of Supreme Court judge in Australia increased doubts on Swedish legal system

Professor: Although international media widely reported that "Stefan Lindskog was critical of the Swedish criminal investigation", his public lecture in Adelaide — sponsored by the Swedish Foreign Office — was in the main an attempt to recover trust in the Swedish management of the Assange case [among other things, some of them noted in this article, by calling it "a mess"? --A.B.]. He said it is feasible to proceed with the interrogation Assange in London, and also while acknowledging that illegal extra-ditions to the US by the government occurred in Sweden, he declared he has the "hope" it will not be the case with Julian Assange. The risk for the extradition of Julian Assange to the US continues unabated.

*Marcello Ferrada de Noli
Newsmill
2013-04-08*

After the PR-event in Adelaide sponsored by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AAP ran a cable with the headline "Assange safe from extradition in Sweden, judge suggests"[1]. But this "breaking news" — a direct challenge to Mr. Assange's claim on the risk he would face if sent to Sweden — it was hardly a fair interpretation of Judge Lindskog's publicized speech at Adelaide Law School [*no, indeed -- which tends to invalidate the following sentence --A.B.*]. The PR-coup, which was media-dramaturgy reinforced with a cable purporting Lindskog was critical to the Swedish procedures (published by a variety of media, from Stars & Stripes to Aljazeera) [2], is sourced in an ambiguous text on the extradition issue prepared in advance and read by Justice Stefan Lindskog, for which presentation a live stream and video was made.

However, the actual declarations of Lindskog in the panel that ensued — where he acknowledges that illegal extraditions to the US ordered by the government have occurred in Sweden, and that he has the "hope" it will not be the case Assange—

remained unknown to the international public and journalists, for it was not sent live nor video-recorded or shared by the sponsors of the event.

Nevertheless, I have received partly a copy of the audio recording sent to me personally by Australian documentary-maker Catherine Vogan, who has reviewed materials directly recorded by the public in Adelaide[3], and partly details sent to me by Ken Sievers[4], who was attending the event and made the first question to Judge Lindskog.

This is my transcription of the audio recording:

Question at the end of the lecture (Ken Sievers) [5]: "I will put this question to Stefan Lindskog: Isn't it quite possible that, it could just happen that Julian Assange could be put on a plane and sent off to the US just like those two poor Egyptians? It is possible isn't it? Because these states, whatever lovely laws they have, they cannot always follow their own laws, isn't correct?"

Lindskog: "Well, it is correct, . . . but that case it did not pass the Supreme Court. It was wrong all the way. I think that this case, if it comes to extradition, it will pass the Supreme Court, and hopefully it will not be such . . ." [*This is a "PR coup"? More like a PR disaster. --A.B.*]

The lecture

Justice Stefan Lindskog's lecture in Adelaide had little, if anything, to do with the announced title "The Assange Affair: freedom of speech and freedom of information, a global perspective"; he elaborated much on the details of the sexual offences allegations against Mr. Assange, while playing down the criticism towards the Swedish legal system which have prevailed around the case. [*Parts of the speech sounded like harsh criticism to me, especially coming from a high-ranking Swedish jurist. --A.B.*] Consequently, and regardless the true and serious motivations of Justice Lindskog, his lecture has been instrumented to sustain the official posture of the Foreign Ministry Sweden, wishing to put forward that a) the case has no political implication and that it is based only on an investigation of "sexual offences"; b) onward extradition to US is not a risk and, therefore, Ecuador had no reason to grant Assange political asylum; c) Assange should therefore be sent to Sweden as prisoner. [*This is a highly questionable interpretation of Lindskog's speech. Better go to the source. --A.B.*]

However, the official theses crashed at multiple occasions during the presentation, and particularly during the discussions ensuing [*exactly --A.B.*]: Why would the government of Sweden persist in bringing Mr. Assange as prisoner to Sweden when simply interrogating him in London could resolve the deadlock? Corollary, why has Foreign Minister Bildt declared that such procedure is not juridical possible ("not permitted")? [6]

The chairman of Sweden's Supreme Court chapter 2, Stefan Lindskog, stated however in Adelaide: "I would like to comment upon the possibility of the prosecutor to go to London. It is possible that the prosecutor could travel to London and interrogate him there. I have no answer to the question why that hasn't happened." [7] [*Emphasis added. --A.B.*]

Justice Lindskog omitted those key issues on the international criticism of the Swedish legal system regarding the management of the Assange case

In his otherwise promotion [???] of the Swedish legal system, Lindskog referred to a few items touched upon in the international criticism, but he failed to address the real issues that have characterized this criticism in the context of the “Assange Affair”. Remarkably, he for instance never developed on the interferences in the legal process by PM Reinfeldt and other prominent politicians, or on the compact Trial by media — both aspects specifically mentioned by Judge Howard Riddle in the London Court verdict of February 2011. Namely, Judge Riddle concluded, “there is a negative publicity” on Assange in Sweden, and he includes statements by PM Fredrik Reinfeldt”. [8] *[Regrettable, but hardly remarkable. Riddle did not criticize his country’s government or press, either. --A.B.]*

Lindskog dedicated most of his lecturing time to describing detail after detail of how the women met Assange and of the intimate behaviour as reported by the accusers — details already known by the public through the leaked PM of the interrogations published in Internet. He referred to leaks made by the police, and he said that details of the leakages would not be known because “perhaps” no investigation has been done. And he developed long into the subject of restrictions on investigating leaks due to Sweden’s laws protecting sources, the so-called “source privilege”.

However, that is hardly the kind of “leakages” which has severely placed the Swedish legal system in mistrust. Lindskog did not say a word about criticism on the prosecutors involved in the case *[his remarks about the prosecutor’s refusal to interview Assange in London constitutes, in this context, scathing criticism --A.B.]*, one of which (the on-call prosecutor, on the 20 of August 2010) has — against accepted procedures — given to newspaper Expressen information on the identity, name, of Mr. Assange, together with details of the accusations and which resulted in Expressen famous smear-heading “Assange arrested in absentia for rape” [9]. This scandalous violation of the human rights of Mr Assange, who should be considered innocent unless otherwise judged in a court of law and who has not even been charged with any crime, is a breach of Sweden’s own legal praxis perpetrated by a Swedish prosecutor managing the case Assange in the Swedish legal system. The prosecutor is known by name and position. Thus, what she did is not a secret but it is illegal and it was not sanctioned. *[This is a relatively minor transgression, as it is highly unlikely that Assange’s identity would have remained secret for long, in any case. In any event, a complaint was filed against the leaking prosecutor, and was rejected by the relevant judicial authority. --A.B.]*

Those are the type of leaks in the Assange affair that have occasioned severe criticism and damaged the prestige of the Swedish legal system. And those behaviours could hardly be categorized under “source privilege”. In addition, Professor Lindskog even suggested that the world should take seriously as a “forerunner” Sweden’s example on the praxis of protecting “source privilege”. *[As well he might. It is one of the treasures of Swedish law. --A.B.]*

Swedish legal system, no different?

Lindskog declared, “Now, what about the hard Swedish laws on sex crimes? In Sweden, as in most developed countries, the attitude towards what should be regarded as a sexual crime has changed dramatically over the last years. “ Well, that is hardly

controversial. However, the problem that Judge Lindskog failed to address and that has been of great concern, is that the prosecutor responsible of the case, the prosecutor that decided to reopen the case, and lawyers in the law-firm instigating the reopening of the case, all of them have had participation in government-appointed committees in the reviewing and enhancing of the legislation-items about which the Assange case has been declared “a symbol” or “pilot-case”. Such positions have been put forward from clear ideological perspectives in the political struggle to further radicalize [*the writer’s value-laden term; many others in Sweden would say “improve” or “sharpen” --A.B.*] the Swedish legislation on sexual offences.[10] [*It is hardly illegal or unethical for judicial figures to apply the law as they see fit and proper. --A.B.*]

He went on to state that the Swedish legal system is no different than that of most of European countries; although he admitted one or two “differences” such as the absence of the institution of Jury. But to say that the legal system of Sweden is not different is inaccurate. Markedly differences, such as the institution of lay-judges (the political appointed judges)[11], were neglected by Justice Lindskog. He only said about this unique Swedish judicial construction, “And we have Lay judges but they have mild influence on the outcome”.

The above would qualify for Swedish understatement of the year in juridical matters. In fact, since the very beginning of the Sweden Versus Assange affair, and the international criticism that erupted, much has been focused in this issue. The topic “lay-judges” has been a highly debatable issue also in Sweden both within the ranks of professionals in the legal system[12] or in Sweden-based human-rights blogs[13]. [*Yes, it is the subject of debate, an important one. But it is a complex issue that would probably have consumed all the time, and perhaps more, available on this occasion. --A.B.*]

With regard to further differences, Judge Lindskog certainly knows that the prosecutors in Sweden have greater power than in peer institutions in Europe. Even the number of prosecutors in Sweden is unusually high. Sweden has more prosecutors per capita than Germany, Finland, Switzerland and Norway, and over the double of prosecutors per capita than for instance France, Italy, or Spain.

The list of peculiarities in the Swedish legal system is definitely longer than the referred above. And this is hardly a discussion of purely academic value. It can have consequences in the managing of criminal investigations. In this context, it should be added that in spite of a good overall appraisal of the Swedish legal system, the WJP Rule of Law Index rated Sweden No. 30 regarding Sub-factor 8 “Criminal Investigation System Effective” in the international index of 2012 — long after Botswana, Romania and Senegal! First positions in that ranking occupied by Denmark (No. 1) and Finland (No. 2). Sweden may still have a good and democratic legal system, but if we are talking about differences between European countries regarding aspects of the legal systems, we could hardly neglect whether there is substantial variances in the effectiveness of criminal investigations.

Extradition issues

Many things what Lindskog said in Adelaide were true or partly true. But some things were not accurate, and definitely, he did not tell the all truth known to him as the highest positioned member of the Justice system. Moreover, the issues he omitted do,

in fact, constitute the international criticism towards the Swedish legal system regarding the managing of the case Assange. As a result, instead of an effective “damage control” operation on behalf of the Swedish legal system, the government-sponsored event in Adelaide resulted in the opposite: the distrust may have increased. *[Indeed, and primarily because of what Lindskog in fact said, not what he — according to the writer — may have omitted. --A.B.]*

Together with emphasizing aspects of the investigation for sexual offences, Lindskog played down the issue of holding or facilitating extradition to the US, and he read from his script what sounded like rather cryptically formulated statements. For instance, he used “shall not be” extradited according to a certain legislation (indicating using of imperative form, of what it is supposed to happen according to that legislation). Thus, he left other options on the table while providing the media the opportunity to promote such equivocal “conclusions” such as the one referred above on that “Assange safe from extradition in Sweden, judge suggests”[14], or the dispatch “Swedish judge says Assange has little to fear”. [15] *[Lindskog cannot be held responsible for the stupidity and/or deceit of the press, no more than Julian Assange can. --A.B.]*

Other media, like in Italy La Repubblica, had a more cautious approach and, based in the video from the lecture in Adelaide, reported that “the extradition cannot be applicable in the case of Assange”. [16]

In fact, Lindskog also referred to other legislation they may prevail in the case, and to other possibilities. We can trust legislation, he referred elliptically, but can we trust governments? He nonetheless omitted to say clearly during his talk that, ultimately, it is the Swedish government that would decide on a controversial or sensitive extradition matter. *[Not true; he was very clear on that point. --A.B.]* As I demonstrated in my previous article in Newsmill, political extraditions in Sweden have little to do with laws or judges. In Sweden, one thing is the written law, but what is fact according to the historical praxis is often altogether different.

Moreover, Justice Stefan Lindskog uttered the important statement (quoted in the beginning of this text) in answering a question during the panel, where he clearly admits that extradition to the US can be possible even outside the interpretation or use of the law. *[Emphasis added. --A.B.]* The risk for the extradition of Julian Assange to the US continues unabated.

Finally — and to the best of my recall — Lindskog never talked about Sweden-US temporary surrender agreement, which is a risk to M. Assange that has been widely discussed in international condemnation of Sweden. Other aspects relevant to the above, and not touched upon by Justice Lindskog on the theme of political extraditions, are taken up in the referred the above referred Newsmill article “Mismanagement of the Assange case devastating to Sweden’s international reputation”.

Concluding

Minister Carl Bildt incorrectly claimed that the Sweden government couldn’t make a guarantee that Assange won’t be extradited because the decision rests with the judiciary. This is now proven as flagrantly inaccurate. The final decision for approving an extradition rests with the government. The question that remains is, why the

Swedish government persist in prolonging this case, whose deadlock could otherwise easily be ending by either:

- Giving guarantee from the part of the government that Mr. Assange will not forward extradited or to US authorities.
- Performing the interrogation with Mr. Assange in London.

In other words, what political forces, which governments, which processes are the main beneficiaries of this clearly artificially prolonging of the case?

Notes

[1] The Age – National Times, APP, 4/4 2013

[2] I.e., Stars and Stripes, 3/4 2013, The Scotsman, Aljazeera, The Times of India, 5/4 2013

[3] Catherine Vogan has published part of the material used here on the Australia-based site THING2THING.

[4] "I asked the first question. I started by reminding people of the fate of Ahmed Agiza and Muhammad Alzery in 2001. I stated that the Swedish state had obviously done something wrong because they later paid compensation to the men. I said my question was not to do with the law per se. I also referred to his remarks to the effect that states are not perfect beings; they are 'not always good'. So in this case the (Swedish) state had done something it should not have done but it did it anyway." Source: personal communication from Ken Sievers, 7/4 2013

[5] This was the first question addressed to Justice Lindskog

[6] See lawyer Jennifer Robinson declarations in Expressen— Almedalen, article "Carl Bildts besked till Julian Assange i Visby" by Annie Reuterskjöld 6/7 2012

[7] "Lindskog Hopes No More Illegal Rendition & London Interrogation OK", post by Cathy Vogan

[8] "But Riddle also says that there is "significant negative publicity" on Assange in Sweden, and he includes statements by PM Fredrik Reidfeldt" ("Men Riddle säger också att det finns "betydande negativt publicitet" om Assange i Sverige, och att det inkluderar uttalanden från statsminister Fredrik Reinfeldt. ") In: Karin Thurffjell, "Domare: Hurtig försöker vilseleda domstolen", Svd 24/2 2011

[9] See Expressen's article "Assange being arrested in absentia— for rape" by Diamant Salihu and Niklas Svensson; and Newsmill article "Assange stopped witch-hunt aganst Julian Assange", by Olle Andersson

[10] See my article Duckpond in Swedish legal system.

[11] Shall Sweden's politically appointed Judges decide the political case against the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange? Article in Professorsblogg

[12] See for instance the DN-debate article "The lay judges erodes confidence in the courts" ("Nämndemännen urholkar förtroendet för domstolar", DN, 19/3 2011) authored by Professor Claes Sandgren, former Dean at Stockholm University Law School, ambassador and member the International Commission of Jurists in Ginevra

[13] See for instance my article Shall Sweden's politically appointed Judges decide the political case against the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange?.

[14] APP, The Age, 4/4 2013

[15] ABC Radio Australia 4/4 2013

[16] "la etradizione no se puo applicare in el caso de Assange". In Giudice svedese: "Assange ha agito a beneficio umanità". La Repubblica, 4/4 2013

<http://www.newsmill.se/artikel/2013/04/08/government-sponsored-presentation-of-supreme-court-judge-in-australia-increased-d>

Förklaringen till mitt "märkliga beteende" i debatten kring Omar Mustafa

Anna Ardins blogg
13 april 2013

Jag har vid väldigt många tillfällen i de senaste dagarnas debatt anklagats för att bete mig märkligt. Att vara "inkonsekvent" som försvarar både kvinnors, homosexuellas, judars och muslimers rättigheter.

"Den märkligaste i den här debatten är Anna Ardin"

Jag har i kommentarer på bloggar, på twitter och i mejl kallats korkad, naiv, "så nära idiot man över huvud taget kan komma", muslimälskare, nigger lover, inte socialdemokrat, inte mänsklig, antifeminist, hemsk, vidrig, sjuk i huvudet och så vidare. Nima på Nordic dervish kallar mig "sosse bortom räddning". Människor har blockerat mig på facebook, tagit avstånd från mig och jag märker hur jag hamnar ute i kylan i olika sammanhang.

Så nu tänkte jag berätta varför jag betar mig så "märkligt" som att försvara Omar Mustafa.

När jag gick i lågstadiet så ritade en kille en bild på en gris. Han skrev den mobbade tjejens namn på bilden och skickade runt den i klassen. Folk fnissade och skickade vidare. Jag protesterade inte. Jag berättade inte för läraren. Jag sa inte till killen att han var taskig. Killen som ritade bilden var tuff, tjejen som kallades grisen hade fula kläder, "konstiga" föräldrar och inga kompisar. Jag minns hur jag övervägde risken för att tappa social status. Det var viktigt att hålla sig väl med de tuffa, annars kanske man själv blev mobbad. Om man höll god min kanske man själv skulle kunna stiga lite i rangordningen. **Det är snart 30 år sedan och det plågar mig ännu.**



Anna B blockade mig på facebook efter denna konversation.

Vid ett annat tillfälle på mellanstadiet var det en tjej som kallades kanin. "Jag ska sparka in dina jävla kanintänder" var en mening som upprepades ofta i klassen. Det var ett hot hon fick leva med, för hon hade faktiskt stora framtänder. Jag sa inget, jag var med henne ibland, jag var schysst. Men en gång tog min boll på gympan. Jag blev sur på henne, men hon fortsatte retas. "Ge mig bollen annars ska jag sparka in dina jävla kanintänder" sa jag. Meningen låg så bra i munnen. Den var så lätt att säga. Att jag också sa den spelade väl inte så stor roll när hon fick höra det så ofta. Men hon blev alldeles kall. Ingen av oss ville ha bollen efter det. Jag hade lika gärna kunnat slå henne i magen, och det kanske hade varit bättre. Jag tror aldrig att jag sa förlåt.

Jag höll alltså tyst och räddade min egen position i klassen när någon blev mobbad. Jag sa till och med själv taskiga saker till en som låg underst, jag hakade på i drevet. Människor hamnade under i rangordningen för att de var fattiga, hade en ensamstående mamma, en arbetslös pappa, var tjocka, hade glasögon eller var med i Jehovas Vittnen.

Jag har ångrat det där så himla mycket, och varit ledsen över vilken feg liten skit jag var.

Sen hände samma sak mig

För tre år sedan blev jag utsatt för ett övergrepp. Tidigare åsiktskamrater, politiska motståndare, Sverigedemokrater, antifeminister, judehatare, killens kompisar & mamma bestämde sig snabbt för att det var något skumt. Att jag ljög. Att förövaren var oskyldig. Den ena märkliga historien efter den andra radades upp i en gigantisk folktribunal med anonyma domare och vittnen som gissade hejvilt.

Saker jag sagt i andra sammanhang togs upp som svar på helt andra frågor. Allt jag eller någon som kunde antas stå mig nära sagt som kunde vrängas till min nackdel togs upp som bevis på min skuld, min brottslighet och omöjligheten att jag kunde tala sanning. Allt jag sagt som var till min fördel i det sammanhanget ogiltigförklarades eller förbigicks med tystnad. Men jag fick också stöd. Först någon enstaka, sedan fler och fler.

Och efter ett tag började det bli uppenbart att allt som sas om mig inte var sant.

Det började bli ok att tala med mig utan att riskera sitt eget skinn. Men utan de första som hade stått upp vet jag inte vart det hade landat. Kanske hade någon gjort allvar av något av alla hot jag fick. **Kanske hade jag varit tvungen att byta namn och bostadsort, och troligtvis hade jag ansetts som någon man förlorar både val och kunder på, vilket hade gjort det omöjligt för mig att både engagera mig och jobba, mer än bara de få månader jag fick gå under jorden.**

En av de allra första frågorna jag ställde som politiskt medveten var "kan man engagera sig för homosexuellas rättigheter trots att man inte är homosexuell själv"? För 20 år sedan, då jag blev tonåring och började förstå maktstrukturer, så var svaret inte självklart ja. Homo- & transrättigheter var nog ändå inte riktigt majoritetssamhällets problem. Homosexuella hade mycket att bevisa. Att de inte spred HIV och inte tänkte på barn. Om de skulle vara aktiva någonstans så fick de bevisa att de inte var lojala med homorörelsens avarter. Det skar i mig redan tidigt vilken orättvis behandling HBT-personer utsattes för och jag engagerade mig i många år i frågorna. Och vi har vunnit så många strider. Vi byggde en rörelse (kolla klippet, det är så man gör för att bygga en!) av människor som protesterade trots att de inte själva var drabbade. Det är mycket kvar på många orter, men nu går Kristdemokraterna i Pride-paraden. Stämningen är en helt annan, och det är jag otroligt glad över. Släkten är glad över **min lillasysters förlovning med sin tjej**. Det var släkter inte för 20 år sedan. Knappt ens för 5 år sedan. Det är stort!

Nu ser jag samma sak hända som på lågstadiet, mellanstadiet, mot homosexuella i mina tonår och i mobbingen mot mig för några år sedan. Man skickar runt en bild på något vidrigt och har skrivit Omar Mustafa på den. Människor skickar vidare för att rädda sitt eget skinn. Vissa tar på sig ledartröjan i mobbingen och sprider så mycket skit de bara kan. Medan andra bara sprider lite grann eller tittar på, med varierande grad av oro eller tillfredsställelse.

Människor som är arga på honom för något helt annat, att han tagit en plats i partistyrelsen de tyckte skulle gå till någon annan, att han är Palestinavän, att han är muslim. De flesta säger inte att de ska sparka in hans kanintänder utan de meningar som ligger så bra i munnen nu är att det är "viktigt med granskning". Att det inte är ok

med antisemiter (sic) i partistyrelsen. Att Omar måste ta avstånd från kvinnohat och homofobi. Men trots att han har tagit avstånd hur mycket som helst, fortsätter kraven att upprepas. Saker som inte har någonting med frågan att göra, som inkomster, publiceras. Det förekommer lögner, överdrifter, hot, dubbelbesträffningar och människor som bara frågar om och om och om igen samma frågor som Omar redan svarat på. Det är tydligt att det inte handlar om en vanlig granskning av en persons handlande eller icke-handlande. Det är en häxjakt där andra frågor och andras maktpositioner ligger i potten.

Omar Mustafa blev kritiserad av Expo för ett antal inbjudningar. Här går Mustafa Al-Sayed Issa igenom vilka dessa personer är. Jag blev sur redan då, eftersom jag tycker att kopplingarna är vaga, kraven högre på Omar än andra som bjuder in samma talare och jag står för att man bör bjuda in och tala med meningsmotståndare. Men det är diskutabelt. Det finns viktiga poänger vi bör diskutera i samhället hur hanterar vi den här typen av frågor, vilka strategier använder vi oss av, var går gränserna. Det är en diskussion. Det är en relevant och intressant diskussion. Tro & solidaritet och Expo har haft olika åsikter i frågan.

Oerhört orättvisa anklagelser

Men oavsett vad man tycker om strategierna så blir Omar ingenting av det han anklagas för på grund av dem. Han är inte homofob. Han är inte antisemit. Och han är inte kvinnohatare. Det är så sjukt att jag ska behöva skriva det. För det är faktiskt precis tvärtom. Han är en av de få socialdemokrater som aktivt arbetar mot antisemitism. Han är en av få organiserade och ledande muslimer som öppet sagt att han stöttar lagen om homoäktenskap. Och han har både rest runt och föreläst om allas lika rätt med ex RFSL Ungdom och var dessutom med och startade den diskrimineringsbyrå som bland annat stått för stora framsteg för transpersoners rättigheter. Det skulle en person som vill motverka andra minoriteters rättigheter inte göra, eller hur?

Det är hemskt att jaga och granska människor så som man jagat och granskar Omar. Det är ännu hemskare när man börjar ljuga om det man hittar. Det går inte att försvara sig när kritiken antingen är så svävande eller baserad på missuppfattningar och osanningar (se ex bilden ovan).

Jag ser likheterna med all annan mobbing jag både utsatt andra för och själv utsatts för. Så därför är det min förbannade skyldighet att svara emot när mobbarna sprider lögner och kräver hans avgång på grund av dessa lögner.

Det är så otroligt långt ifrån ok, så kränkande, så lågt och så fördomsfullt. Som socialdemokrat och medmänniska känner jag att jag inte kan göra annat än att säga emot.

Trots att jag framstår som en terrier. Trots att jag blir kallad både idiot, blir hotad och tappar delar av mitt eget inflytande. Helt enkelt trots att jag själv blir mobbad för det.

Men jag tänker inte upprepa mina pinsamma misstag från skoltiden. Jag har helt enkelt bestämt mig för att försöka sluta stödja mobbing. Visst, tjejen jag gick lågstadiet med var kanske överviktig, och kanske skulle skolsköterskan behöva prata med henne om att hon åt för mycket godis. Men vi hade ingen rätt att kalla henne grisen. Det var inte bra. Och tjejen på mellanstadiet tog förvisso min boll, men gympaläraren borde ha bett

henne att ge tillbaka min boll. Att skrika åt henne att jag skulle sparka ut hennes kanintänder var helt sjukt oproportionerligt, så elakt att det inte borde vara lagligt. Och det finns säkert en massa saker hos Omar Mustafa, precis som hos alla andra, som varken jag, majoriteten av svenska folket eller socialdemokraterna tycker är toppen. Men det handlar inte om det. Det handlar om respekt för varandra.

Jag är inte längre intresserad av att bevara en position någonstans om det innebär att jag måste trampa på människor som blir orättvist behandlade, bara för att mobben trampar. Och det är jag stolt över.

<http://annaardin.wordpress.com/2013/04/13/forklaringen-till/>

(Complete original article in Swedish follows)

The Assange Case as a Gender Trap

*Assange in Sweden
April 15, 2013*

Swedish attorney Raoul Smitt today posted an op-ed on the country's leading jurist website Dagens Juridik regarding the standoff at 3 Hans Crescent. Smitt has himself dealt with similar cases. He shows that not only is there no reason to not proceed with an interrogation of Assange by any means possible, but also that were it truly Marianne Ny's intention to prosecute, then such an interrogation would still be the best way to go forward.

Judicial Scandal

"The handling of the Assange case is a judicial scandal where gender thinking has clouded people's judgement. The judicial system has become a playground where logic and proportion have fallen sloppy dead.

"That those involved have lost their way goes to show that a lack of judgement, common sense, and integrity irrevocably leads to systemic collapse. And **it would be unreasonable in this context to refuse to recognise Assange's real fear of being turned over to the US where he'd risk a life sentence.**

"Good on our supreme court justice Stefan Lindskog who had the integrity to speak out about our international agreements— in this case with the US— on extradition, and thereby weigh in Assange's case and the ramifications of an extradition, with consideration for what the US claims he's done against that country.

"Stefan Lindskog didn't choose sides— he merely explained our agreements and the various circumstances that may apply. This was hardly controversial, yet one sees how polarised the case has become. Those who criticise Lindskog are guilty of the same messy thinking that characterises the way the Assange case has been handled."

Moyne & Trustor

“A few years ago, I was public defender for Lord Moyne, one of the suspects in the so-called Trustor scam, the investigation of which was the biggest of its kind in our country’s history.

“Lord Moyne, a British citizen, was looking at several years in prison— a prospect that Assange, by way of comparison, doesn’t risk if convicted [*in the Swedish case—A.B.*].

“But Lord Moyne offered to be interrogated at the Swedish embassy in London. **This was a good solution both pragmatically and judicially, if indeed the idea is to move things forward with a modicum of consideration for the suspect. The suspect, lest we forget, may actually be innocent.**

“The Swedish prosecutor, using the interrogation of Moyne at the Swedish embassy in London, decided to prosecute. Thus the goal of the interrogation— to determine if there was a basis for prosecution— was thereby achieved.

“But as those who followed the case may remember, the district court did not share the prosecutor’s opinion, and Lord Moyne was acquitted, and the verdict was not appealed. **The pragmatism demonstrated by the prosecutor was sound, and the decision to interrogate Lord Moyne in London was the right one, even for the suspect.**”

A Shadow Over Sweden

“The difference in how the Assange case is being handled is fundamental in nature— **but then too, there were no gender issues in the Trustor case.**

“Further, there are circumstances which, as with the Trustor case, point to Assange being acquitted— **with reservation for recent developments in our judicial system whereby criminal courts may evidently now convict when no evidence at all is available (see High Court ruling B2420-12). And because of the way the prosecution authority has chosen to handle the Assange case, it should be difficult— or most likely impossible— to have a “fair trial”.**

“Of course things would have worked out better had the prosecutor interrogated Assange in Sweden. But this cannot take from the criticism of the prosecution authority which today casts a shadow over our country. It can be noted that an acquittal would not affect Sweden’s ruling on temporary surrender of Assange to the US.”

Translation source: <http://assangeinswedenbook.com>

"Assangeaffären — genusfälla eller gräddfil? Heder åt Stefan Lindskog och hans integritet!"

Dagens Juridik
2013-04-15

DEBATT – av advokat Raoul Smitt

Handläggningen och förundersökningen av det så kallade Assangefallet är en **rättsskandal där genustänkande har grumlat omdömet**. Rättsväsendet har blivit en tummelplats där alla proportioner har offrats.

Att omdömet svikit hos de inblandade visar enkom att brist på omdöme, sunt förnuft och integritet osvikligen leder till rättshaveri. **Det vore i sammanhanget för övrigt orimligt att fränkänna Assange en verklig fruktan för att bli utlämnad till USA där han skulle riskera att dömas till ett livslångt fängelsestraff.**

Heder åt justitierådet Stefan Lindskog som har integritet att lyfta fram våra internationella överenskommelser— i detta fall med USA— om utlämning och därvid väga in Assanges handlingar och den betydelse en utlämning kan innebära med hänsyn till de gärningar USA anser att han begått mot landet.

Stefan Lindskog har därvid inte tagit ställning i sak utan redogjort för gällande överenskommelser och de omständigheter som kan få betydelse vid tillämpningen. Så långt är det föga kontroversiellt men visar hur polariserat fallet blivit. De som kritiserar Lindskog får nog anses utgöra del av **den allmänna tankesörja som präglar Assangefallets handläggning**.

För ett antal år sedan var jag offentlig försvarare för Lord Moyne, anedd som en av de huvudmisstänkta i den så kallade Trustorsvindeln, då Sveriges största ekobrottsutredning genom tiderna.

Lord Moyne, brittisk medborgare, riskerade ett mångårigt fängelsestraff— ett förhållande som Assange i jämförelse inte behöver riskera vid en fällande dom i Sverige.

I Trustormålet erbjöd sig Lord Moyne att inställa sig till förhör på svenska ambassaden i London. Detta var en bra lösning, pragmatiskt såväl som rättsligt— om nu syftet är att driva saken framåt och med viss hänsyn till den misstänkte. Denne kan ju till exempel vara oskyldig.

Genom förhören som sålunda kunde ske på ambassaden fann åklagaren att grund fanns för åtal. Syftet med förhören uppnåddes således— det vill säga att fastställa om grund för åtal förelåg.

Som de flesta vet som följde rättegången så delade inte tingsrätten åklagarens bedömning och Lord Moyne frikändes och domen vann laga kraft. Den pragmatik som sålunda präglade åklagarens handläggning vad avser förhören i London var riktig och korrekt även ur den åtalades synpunkt.

Skillnaden mot handläggningen vad avser Assange är fundamental— men så förelåg det heller ingen genusfråga vad avser Lord Moyne.

Det finns vidare omständigheter som, i likhet med vad som var fallet med Lord Moyne, talar för att Assange vid en prövning skulle bli frikänd— dock med reservation för den på senare tid framväxande rättsutvecklingen som innebär fällande domar i brottmål även vid avsaknad av objektiva bevis (se bland annat Svea hovrätts domskäl i mål B2420-12). Det torde vidare genom den handläggning som åklagarmyndigheten i Assangeutredningen har valt vara svårt— till och med troligen omöjligt— att få till stånd en "fair trial".

Självfallet hade det varit bäst om Assange inställt sig till förhör i Sverige. Det minskar dock inte kritiken mot åklagarmyndighetens rättshaveri som även internationellt kastar en skugga över Sverige. Det kan noteras att en frikännande dom för övrigt inte skulle påverka frågan om Sveriges beslut att utlämna Assange till USA.

<http://www.dagensjuridik.se/2013/04/assangeaffaren-genusfalla-eller-graddfil>

Subject: Anna Ardin får och tar plats
Date: 15 Apr 2013
From: Al Burke <editor@nnn.se>

I SVT's nyhetsprogram ABC (lokallyheter om Stockholm) i kväll fick Anna Ardin i över 8 minuter förklara syftet med en demonstration vid SAP:s huvukontor som hon var med och anordnade (se nedan). Det var ett ovanligt långt inslag, särskilt med tanke på att programmets totala längd är bara 15 minuter. Jag tyckte att hon gjorde ett bra intryck.



Anna Ardin (t.v.) interjuvas i ABC-nyheterna 2013-04-15

Former Aus. attorney-general speaks up for Assange, WikiLeaks

Linda Pearson
Green Left Weekly
April 16, 2013

The Sydney Support Assange and WikiLeaks Coalition (SAWC) interviewed former Australian attorney-general, Kep Enderby QC, about Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. Enderby first contacted SAWC to offer his support for our campaign last year. In July, he wrote a statement read out at a rally for Assange and WikiLeaks in Sydney.

Enderby became involved in civil liberties and human rights activism while working as a lawyer in London in the 1950s. **He championed the cause of African-American singer and radical, Paul Robeson, who was being denied his passport by the US government.**

Enderby returned to Australia in 1954 and became a founding member of the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties (NSWCCL) when it formed in 1963. He was elected to the Australian House of Representatives in 1970 and became a minister in Gough Whitlam's Labor government in 1972. He held the position of attorney-general when the government was dismissed by Governor-General, John Kerr, in 1975.

After leaving politics, Enderby served as New South Wales Supreme Court Judge for 10 years.

Enderby told us that he supports the work of Assange and WikiLeaks because he believes that, "if politicians who are in power can get away with it, they will lie to you". **He said: "They don't believe in human rights, they don't believe in civil liberties... they're all about keeping power."**

Enderby said the US government, in particular, is "notorious for their lies". He added: "It hasn't been much better in this country. We have become the lapdog of the United States."

As examples, Enderby pointed to the Iraq war, which was waged on the basis of false claims about weapons of mass destruction and supported by the Australian government, and to the case of Australian David Hicks, who was held in Guantanamo Bay prison for five years without trial.

Asked about the importance of the role played by whistleblowers in a democracy, Enderby said "you can't trust governments" and "you can't trust the media". He said this was particularly the case in Australia, which has a monopolised media. **Lying comes naturally to them, it sells papers and makes for votes."**

Enderby said governments use lies to generate fear, in order to win votes and create a pretext for attacks on civil liberties and human rights. He cited the "war on terror", which has been used to generate a wave of Islamophobia and to justify a raft of excessive "security" legislation after September 11, 2001.

The laws gave Australia's secret police, ASIO, unprecedented "special powers", including the power to question and detain individuals not suspected of any offence for up to seven days without charge or trial.

Enderby became the subject of an ASIO investigation himself, along with other members of NSWCCCL, when the organisation was only a few months old. Public concern about this investigation and the extent of ASIO's powers led the Whitlam government to establish the Hope Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security in 1974.

Enderby criticised the US government for putting itself forward as “the protector of human rights”, while carrying out acts of torture, extraordinary rendition and extra-judicial assassination via drone strikes. **He said: “The Americans rule the world these days, and it’s not a very nice world”.**

Enderby described the treatment of WikiLeaks source Bradley Manning at the hands of the US government as “scandalous” and said, “Julian Assange is next on the list”.

Manning has been held in pre-trial detention for nearly three years, with 11 months of that spent in solitary confinement. He was kept in a six-by-eight-foot cell with no windows or natural light and was often forced to sleep naked.

Last year, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, concluded that the US was guilty of subjecting Manning to “cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in violation of article 16 of the convention against torture”.

If extradited to the US, Assange could be subjected to the same treatment as Manning—or worse. This is despite, as Enderby pointed out, “there was no crime in what Julian Assange did” when he published US documents.

Enderby said in the case of Assange, “the Americans just want to get him.” He added: “I think that’s just obvious to anyone who studies the subject and thinks about it.”

However, the Australian government continues to deny that the US government wants to prosecute Assange. It refuses to acknowledge the evidence on the public record that shows that a US grand jury has been convening in Virginia since 2010 for the purpose of indicting Assange on espionage charges.

Asked why our government takes this position, Enderby said: “I think the Australian government will do what the Americans want them to do... I’m not proud to be an Australian when I watch what’s happened over the years, **the way Australia toadies up to the Americans all the time.**”

He made the point that Australian governments have always been beholden to an imperial power. Before the US it was Britain, and, Enderby said, “we haven’t changed much”.

Enderby fears that if Assange was ever able to return to Australia and was subject to a US extradition request, “the Australians would hand him over”. However, he said that pressure from the Australian public could prevent that happening.

He believes that apathy must be overcome to mobilise the level of public support which eventually led to David Hicks’ release from Guantanamo Bay. Enderby said that without that public support, Hicks would have been “kept there forever”.

The Australian government claims that it is doing all it can to help Assange. However, Enderby said that it should be putting pressure on the British government to “not take any steps to arrest Julian Assange in London”.

He said it could also negotiate Assange's release from Britain, as the Howard government did to secure David Hicks' release from Guantanamo. But Enderby commented, "this government we have at the moment doesn't seem to be prepared to do that at all".

On the Swedish allegations against Assange, Enderby said: "The Swedish government is obviously under some kind of pressure. Why couldn't they have gone to London to ask questions?"

On Assange's Senate election bid, Enderby said that he thinks that if Assange sought to become a senator, the public support generated would make it harder for the Australian government to extradite Assange to the US.

However, when asked whether Assange would be better becoming a senator or remaining as Editor-in-Chief of WikiLeaks, Enderby said: "I think the success he's had so far as a whistleblower should continue."

<http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/53834>

The Death of Truth

Chris Hedges
Truthdig/The Nation
May 6, 2013

LONDON—A tiny tip of the vast subterranean network of governmental and intelligence agencies from around the world dedicated to destroying WikiLeaks and arresting its founder, Julian Assange, appears outside the red-brick building on Hans Crescent Street that houses the Ecuadorean Embassy. Assange, the world's best-known political refugee, has been in the embassy since he was offered sanctuary there last June. British police in black Kevlar vests are perched night and day on the steps leading up to the building, and others wait in the lobby directly in front of the embassy door. An officer stands on the corner of a side street facing the iconic department store Harrods, half a block away on Brompton Road. **Another officer peers out the window of a neighboring building a few feet from Assange's bedroom at the back of the embassy. Police sit round-the-clock in a communications van topped with an array of antennas that presumably captures all electronic forms of communication from Assange's ground-floor suite.**

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), or Scotland Yard, said the estimated cost of surrounding the Ecuadorean Embassy from June 19, 2012, when Assange entered the building, **until Jan. 31, 2013, is the equivalent of \$4.5 million.**

Britain has rejected an Ecuadorean request that Assange be granted safe passage to an airport. He is in limbo. It is, he said, like living in a "space station."

"The status quo, for them, is a loss," Assange said of the U.S.-led campaign against him as we sat in his small workroom, cluttered with cables and computer equipment. He

had a full head of gray hair and gray stubble on his face and was wearing a traditional white embroidered Ecuadorean shirt. "The Pentagon threatened WikiLeaks and me personally, threatened us before the whole world, demanded that we destroy everything we had published, demanded we cease 'soliciting' new information from U.S. government whistle-blowers, demanded, in other words, the total annihilation of a publisher. It stated that if we did not self-destruct in this way that we would be 'compelled' to do so."

"But they have failed," he went on. "They set the rules about what a win was. They lost in every battle they defined. **Their loss is total.** We've won the big stuff. The loss of face is hard to overstate. The Pentagon reissued its threats on Sept. 28 last year. This time we laughed. Threats inflate quickly. Now the Pentagon, the White House and the State Department intend to show the world what vindictive losers they are through the persecution of Bradley Manning, myself and the organization more generally."

Assange, Manning and WikiLeaks, by making public in 2010 half a million internal documents from the Pentagon and the State Department, along with the 2007 video of U.S. helicopter pilots nonchalantly gunning down Iraqi civilians, including children, and two Reuters journalists, effectively exposed the empire's hypocrisy, indiscriminate violence and its use of torture, lies, bribery and crude tactics of intimidation.

WikiLeaks shone a spotlight into the inner workings of empire—the most important role of a press—and for this it has become empire's prey. Those around the globe with the computer skills to search out the secrets of empire are now those whom empire fears most. If we lose this battle, if these rebels are defeated, it means the dark night of corporate totalitarianism. If we win, if the corporate state is unmasked, it can be destroyed.

U.S. government officials quoted in Australian diplomatic cables obtained by The Saturday Age described the campaign against Assange and WikiLeaks as "unprecedented both in its scale and nature." The scope of the operation has also been gleaned from statements made during Manning's pretrial hearing. **The U.S. Department of Justice will apparently pay the contractor ManTech of Fairfax, Va., more than \$2 million this year alone for a computer system that, from the tender, appears designed to handle the prosecution documents. The government line item refers only to "WikiLeaks Software and Hardware Maintenance."**

The lead government prosecutor in the Manning case, Maj. Ashden Fein, has told the court that the FBI file that deals with the leak of government documents through WikiLeaks has **"42,135 pages or 3,475 documents."** **This does not include a huge volume of material accumulated by a grand jury investigation.** Manning, Fein has said, represents only 8,741 pages or 636 different documents in that classified FBI file.

There are no divisions among government departments or the two major political parties over what should be Assange's fate. "I think we should be clear here. WikiLeaks and people that disseminate information to people like this are criminals, first and foremost," then-press secretary Robert Gibbs, speaking for the Obama administration, said during a 2010 press briefing.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat, and then-Sen. Christopher S. Bond, a Republican, said in a joint letter to the U.S. attorney general calling for Assange's prosecution: "If

Mr. Assange and his possible accomplices cannot be charged under the Espionage Act (or any other applicable statute), please know that we stand ready and willing to support your efforts to ‘close those gaps’ in the law, as you also mentioned. ...”

Republican Candice S. Miller, a U.S. representative from Michigan, said in the House: “It is time that the Obama administration treats WikiLeaks for what it is— a terrorist organization, whose continued operation threatens our security. Shut it down. Shut it down. It is time to shut down this terrorist, **this terrorist Web site, WikiLeaks**. Shut it down, Attorney General [Eric] Holder.”

At least a dozen American governmental agencies, including the Pentagon, the FBI, the Army’s Criminal Investigative Department, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Diplomatic Security Service, are assigned to the WikiLeaks case, while the CIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence are assigned to track down WikiLeaks’ supposed breaches of security. The global assault— which saw Australia threaten to revoke Assange’s passport— is part of the terrifying metamorphosis of the “war on terror” into a wider war on civil liberties. It has become a hunt not for actual terrorists but a hunt for all those with the ability to expose the mounting crimes of the power elite.

The dragnet has swept up any person or organization that fits the profile of those with the technical skills and inclination to burrow into the archives of power and disseminate it to the public. It no longer matters if they have committed a crime. The group Anonymous, which has mounted cyberattacks on government agencies at the local and federal levels, saw Barrett Brown— a journalist associated with Anonymous and who specializes in military and intelligence contractors— arrested along with Jeremy Hammond, a political activist alleged to have provided WikiLeaks with 5.5 million emails between the security firm Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor) and its clients. Brown and Hammond were apparently seized because of allegations made by an informant named Hector Xavier Monsegur— known as Sabu— who appears to have attempted to entrap WikiLeaks while under FBI supervision.

To entrap and spy on activists, Washington has used an array of informants, including Adrian Lamo, who sold Bradley Manning out to the U.S. government.

WikiLeaks collaborators or supporters are routinely stopped— often at international airports— and attempts are made to recruit them as informants. Jérémie Zimmerman, Smári McCarthy, Jacob Appelbaum, David House and one of Assange’s lawyers, Jennifer Robinson, all have been approached or interrogated. The tactics are often heavy-handed. McCarthy, an Icelander and WikiLeaks activist, was detained and extensively questioned when he entered the United States. Soon afterward, three men who identified themselves as being from the FBI approached McCarthy in Washington. The men attempted to recruit him as an informant and gave him instructions on how to spy on WikiLeaks.

On Aug. 24, 2011, six FBI agents and two prosecutors landed in Iceland on a private jet. The team told the Icelandic government that it had discovered a plan by Anonymous to hack into Icelandic government computers. But it was soon clear the team had come with a very different agenda. The Americans spent the next few days, in flagrant violation of Icelandic sovereignty, interrogating Sigurdur Thordarson, a young WikiLeaks activist, in various Reykjavik hotel rooms. Thordarson, after the U.S. team

was discovered by the Icelandic Ministry of the Interior and expelled from the country, was taken to Washington, D.C., for four days of further interrogation. Thordarson appears to have decided to cooperate with the FBI. It was reported in the Icelandic press that he went to Denmark in 2012 and sold the FBI stolen WikiLeaks computer hard drives for about \$5,000.

There have been secret search orders for information from Internet service providers, including Twitter, Google and Sonic, as well as seizure of information about Assange and WikiLeaks from the company Dynadot, a domain name registrar and Web host.

Assange's suitcase and computer were stolen on a flight from Sweden to Germany on Sept. 27, 2010. His bankcards were blocked. WikiLeaks' Moneybookers primary donation account was shut down after being placed on a blacklist in Australia and a "watch list" in the United States. Financial service companies including Visa, MasterCard, PayPal, Bank of America, Western Union and American Express, following denunciations of WikiLeaks by the U.S. government, blacklisted the organization. Last month the Supreme Court of Iceland found the blacklisting to be unlawful and ordered it lifted in Iceland by May 8. **There have been frequent massive denial-of-service attacks on WikiLeaks' infrastructure.**

And there is a well-orchestrated campaign of character assassination against Assange, **including mischaracterizations of the sexual misconduct case** brought against him by Swedish police. Assange has not formally been charged with a crime. The two women involved have not accused him of rape.

Bradley Manning's heroism extends to his steadfast refusal, despite what appears to be tremendous pressure, to implicate Assange in espionage. If Manning alleges that Assange had instructed him on how to ferret out classified documents, the U.S. might try to charge Assange with espionage.

Assange sought asylum in the Ecuadorean Embassy after exhausting his fight to avoid extradition from the United Kingdom to Sweden. He and his lawyers say that an extradition to Sweden would mean an extradition to the U.S. If Sweden refused to comply with U.S demands for Assange, kidnapping, or "extraordinary rendition," would remain an option for Washington.

Kidnapping was given legal cover by a 1989 memorandum issued by the Justice Department stating that "the FBI may use its statutory authority to investigate and arrest individuals for violating United States law, **even if the FBI's actions contravene customary international law**" and that an "arrest that is inconsistent with international or foreign law does not violate the Fourth Amendment."

This is a stunning example of the security and surveillance state's Orwellian doublespeak. The persecution of Assange and WikiLeaks and the practice of extraordinary rendition embody the shredding of the Fourth Amendment, which was designed to protect us from unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause.

Two Swedes and a Briton were seized by the United States last August somewhere in Africa— it is assumed to have been in Somalia— and held in one of our black sites. They suddenly reappeared— with the Briton stripped of his citizenship— in a

Brooklyn courtroom in December facing terrorism charges. Sweden, rather than object to the extradition of its two citizens, dropped the Swedish charges against the prisoners to permit the rendition to occur. The prisoners, The Washington Post reported, were secretly indicted by a federal grand jury two months after being taken.

The persistence of WikiLeaks, despite the onslaught, has been remarkable. In 2012 it released some of the 5.5 million documents sent from or to the private security firm Stratfor. The documents, known as “the Global Intelligence Files,” included an email dated Jan. 26, 2011, from Fred Burton, a Stratfor vice president, who wrote: “Text Not for Pub. We [the U.S. government] have a sealed indictment on Assange. Pls protect.”

WikiLeaks’ most recent foray into full disclosure includes the Kissinger files, or the WikiLeaks Public Library of U.S. Diplomacy. The files, which have built into them a remarkable search engine, provide access to 1.7 million diplomatic communications, once confidential but now in the public record, that were sent between 1973 and 1976. Henry Kissinger, secretary of state from September 1973 to January 1977, authored many of the 205,901 cables that deal with his activities.

In the files it appears that the late Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi may have been hired by the Swedish group Saab-Scania to help sell its Viggen fighter jet to India while his mother, Indira Gandhi, was prime minister.

In 1975 Kissinger during a conversation with the U.S. ambassador to Turkey and two Turkish and Cypriot diplomats assured his hosts that he could work around an official arms embargo then in effect. He is quoted in the documents as saying: “Before the Freedom of Information Act, I used to say at meetings, ‘The illegal we do immediately; the unconstitutional takes a little longer.’ [laughter] But since the Freedom of Information Act, I’m afraid to say things like that.”

The documents, along with detailing collaborations with the military dictatorships in Spain and Greece, show that Washington created a torture exemption to allow the military government in Brazil to receive U.S. aid.

The documents were obtained from the National Archives and Record Administration and took a year to be prepared in an accessible digital format. “It is essentially what Aaron Swartz was doing, making available documents that until now were hard to access or only obtainable through an intermediary,” Assange said in the interview.

Swartz was the Internet activist arrested in January 2011 for downloading more than 5 million academic articles from JSTOR, an online clearinghouse for scholarly journals. Swartz was charged by federal prosecutors with two counts of wire fraud and 11 violations of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. The charges carried the threat of \$1 million in fines and 35 years in prison. Swartz committed suicide last Jan. 11.

Assange, 41, works through most of the night and sleeps into the late afternoon. Even though he uses an ultraviolet light device, he was pale, not surprising for someone who has not been out in sunlight for nearly a year. He rarely gives interviews. A treadmill was tilted up against a wall of his quarters; he said he sets it up and tries to run three to five miles on it every day. He has visits from a personal trainer, with whom he practices calisthenics and boxing. He is lanky at 6 feet 2 inches tall and exudes a raw,

nervous energy. He leaps, sometimes disconcertingly, from topic to topic, idea to idea, his words rushing to keep up with his cascading thoughts. He works with a small staff and has a steady stream of visitors, including celebrities such as Lady Gaga. When the Ecuadorean Ambassador Ana Alban Mora and Bianca Jagger showed up late one afternoon, Assange pulled down glasses and poured everyone whiskey from a stock of liquor he keeps in a cabinet. His visitors chatted at a small round table, seated in leatherette chairs. Jagger wanted to know how to protect her website from hackers. Assange told her to “make a lot of backup copies.”

It is from this room that Assange and his supporters have mounted an election campaign for a seat in Australia’s upper house of Parliament. Public surveys from the state of Victoria, where Assange is a candidate, indicate he has a good chance of winning.

Assange communicates with his global network of associates and supporters up to 17 hours a day through numerous cellphones and a collection of laptop computers. He encrypts his communications and religiously shreds anything put down on paper. The frequent movements of the police cordon outside his window make sleep difficult. And he misses his son, whom he raised as a single father. He may also have a daughter, but he does not speak publicly about his children, refusing to disclose their ages or where they live. His family, he said, has received death threats. He has not seen his children since his legal troubles started. The emotional cost is as heavy as the physical one.

Assange said he sees WikiLeaks’ primary role as giving a voice to the victims of U.S. wars and proxy wars by using leaked documents to tell their stories. The release of the Afghan and Iraq War Logs, he said, disclosed the extent of civilian death and suffering, and the plethora of lies told by the Pentagon and the state to conceal the human toll. The logs, Assange said, **also unmasked the bankruptcy of the traditional press and its obsequious service as war propagandists.**

“There were 90,000 records in the Afghan War Logs,” Assange said. “We had to look at different angles in the material to add up the number of civilians who have been killed. We studied the records. We ranked events different ways. I wondered if we could find out the largest number of civilians killed in a single event. It turned out that this occurred during Operation Medusa, led by Canadian forces in September 2006. The U.S.-backed local government was quite corrupt. The Taliban was, in effect, the political opposition and had a lot of support. The locals rose up against the government. Most of the young men in the area, from a political perspective, were Taliban. There was a government crackdown that encountered strong resistance. ISAF [the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force] carried out a big sweep. It went house to house. Then an American soldier was killed. They called in an AC-130 gunship. This is a C-130 cargo plane refitted with cannons on the side. It circled overhead and rained down shells. The War Logs say 181 ‘enemy’ were killed. The logs also say there were no wounded or captured. It was a significant massacre. This event, the day when the largest number of people were killed in Afghanistan, has never been properly investigated by the old media.”

Operation Medusa, which occurred 20 miles west of Kandahar, took the lives of four Canadian soldiers and involved some 2,000 NATO and Afghan troops. It was one of the largest military operations by the ISAF in the Kandahar region.

Assange searched for accounts of reporters who were on the scene. What he discovered appalled him. He watched an embedded Canadian reporter, Graeme Smith of the Toronto Globe and Mail, use these words on a Canadian military website to describe his experiences during Operation Medusa:

In September 2006 I had one of the most intense experiences of my life. I was on the front lines of something called Operation Medusa. It was a big Canadian offensive against the Taliban who were massed outside of Kandahar City. The Taliban were digging trenches and intimidating locals, and the Canadians decided to sweep in there in big numbers and force them out. And I was travelling with a platoon that called themselves the “Nomads”.

These were guys who had been sent all over, you know, sort of, a 50,000 square kilometer box out to the very edges of Kandahar City, and so they were moving around all the time; they were never sleeping in the same place twice and they’d even made up these little patches for their uniforms that said “Nomads” on them.

The Nomads took me in and they sort of made me one of them. I spent what was originally supposed to be just a two or three day embed with them, stretched out into two weeks. I didn’t have a change of underwear. I didn’t have a change of shirt. I remember showering in my clothes, washing first the clothes on my body, then stripping the clothes off and washing my body, and that was just using a bucket as a shower.

It was an intense experience. I slept in my flak jacket a lot of nights. We were under fire together, you know, we had RPGs whistling in. One time I was standing around behind a troop carrier and we were just sort of relaxing— we were in a down moment— and I think some guys had coffee out and were standing around and I heard a loud clap beside my right ear. It was like someone had sort of snuck up behind me and sort of played a prank by clapping beside my ear. I turned around to say hey that’s not really funny, that’s kind of loud, and all of the soldiers were lying on the ground because they know what to do when an incoming sniper round comes in, and I didn’t because [laughs] it was my first time under fire. So I threw myself to the ground as well.

They had sort of made me one of them and so they gave me a little “Nomads” patch that I attached to my flak jacket and you know as a journalist you try to avoid drinking the Kool-Aid, but I did feel a sense of belonging with those guys.

“The physical demeanor of this man, the way he describes life in the great outdoors, led me to understand that here was someone who had never boxed, been mountain climbing, played rugby, been involved in any of these classically masculine activities,” Assange said. **“Now, for the first time, he feels like a man. He has gone to battle.** It was one of many examples of the failure by the embedded reporters to report the truth. They were part of the team.”

Assange is correct. The press of a nation at war, in every conflict I covered, is an enthusiastic part of the machine, cheerleaders for slaughter and tireless mythmakers for war and the military. The few renegades within the press who refuse to wave the flag and slavishly lionize the troops, who will not endow them with a host of virtues including heroism, patriotism and courage, find themselves pariahs in newsrooms and viciously attacked— like Assange and Manning— by the state.

As a reporter at The New York Times, I was among those expected to prod sources inside the organs of power to provide information, including top-secret information. The Pentagon Papers, released to the Times in 1971, and the Times' Pulitzer-winning 2005 exposure of the warrantless wiretapping of U.S. citizens by the National Security Council used "top secret" documents—a classification more restricted than the lower-level "secret" designation of the documents released by WikiLeaks. But as the traditional press atrophies with dizzying speed—effectively emasculated by Barack Obama's use of the Espionage Act half a dozen times since 2009 to target whistle-blowers like Thomas Drake. In addition, former CIA official John Kiriakou was prosecuted and imprisoned on charges of violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act.

The cables that WikiLeaks released, as disturbing as they were, invariably put a pro-unit or pro-U.S. spin on events. **The reality in war is usually much worse.** Those counted as dead enemy combatants are often civilians. Military units write their own after-action reports and therefore attempt to justify or hide their behavior. Despite the heated rhetoric of the state, no one has provided evidence that anything released by WikiLeaks cost lives. Then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in a 2010 letter to Sen. Carl Levin conceded this point. He wrote Levin: "The initial assessment in no way discounts the risk to national security. However, the review to date has not revealed any sensitive intelligence sources and methods compromised by the disclosure."

The New York Times, The Guardian, El Pais, Le Monde and Der Spiegel giddily printed redacted copies of some of the WikiLeaks files **and then promptly threw Assange and Manning to the sharks. It was not only morally repugnant, but also stunningly shortsighted.** Do these news organizations believe that if the state shuts down organizations such as WikiLeaks and imprisons Manning and Assange, traditional news outlets will be left alone? Can't they connect the dots between the prosecutions of government whistle-blowers under the Espionage Act, warrantless wiretapping, monitoring of communications and the persecution of Manning and Assange? Don't they worry that when the state finishes with Manning, Assange and WikiLeaks, these atrophied news outlets will be next? Haven't they realized that this is a war by a global corporate elite not against an organization or an individual but against the freedom of the press and democracy?

And yet Assange is surprisingly hopeful—at least for the short and medium term. He believes that the system cannot protect itself completely from those who chip away at its digital walls.

"The national security state can try to reduce our activity," he said. "It can close the neck a little tighter. **But there are three forces working against it. The first is the massive surveillance required** to protect its communication, including the nature of its cryptology. In the military everyone now has an ID card with a little chip on it so you know who is logged into what. A system this vast is prone to deterioration and breakdown.

"**Secondly, there is widespread knowledge not only of how to leak, but how to leak and not be caught,** how to even avoid suspicion that you are leaking. The military and intelligence systems collect a vast amount of information and move it around quickly. This means you can also get it out quickly. There will always be people within the system that have an agenda to defy authority. Yes, there are general deterrents, such as

when the DOJ [Department of Justice] prosecutes and indicts someone. They can discourage people from engaging in this behavior. But the opposite is also true. When that behavior is successful it is an example. It encourages others. *[Is this the third "force"? --A.B.]* This is why they want to eliminate all who provide this encouragement.

"The medium-term perspective is very good," he said. "The education of young people takes place on the Internet. You cannot hire anyone who is skilled in any field without them having been educated on the Internet. **The military, the CIA, the FBI, all have no choice but to hire from a pool of people that have been educated on the Internet. This means they are hiring our moles in vast numbers.** And this means that these organizations will see their capacity to control information diminish as more and more people with our values are hired."

The long term, however, may not be as sanguine. Assange recently completed a book with three co-authors— Jacob Appelbaum, Andy Müller-Maguhn and Jérémie Zimmermann— called "Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet." It warns that we are "galloping into a new transnational dystopia." The Internet has become not only a tool to educate, they write, but the mechanism to cement into place a "Postmodern Surveillance Dystopia" that is supranational and dominated by global corporate power. This new system of global control will "merge global humanity into one giant grid of mass surveillance and mass control." **It is only through encryption that we can protect ourselves, they argue, and only by breaking through the digital walls of secrecy erected by the power elite can we blunt state secrecy.** "The internet, our greatest tool of emancipation," Assange writes, "has been transformed into the most dangerous facilitator of totalitarianism we have ever seen."

The U.S., according to one of Assange's lawyers, Michael Ratner, appears poised to seize Assange the moment he steps out of the embassy. Washington does not want to become a party in two competing extradition requests to Britain. But Washington, with a sealed grand jury indictment prepared against Assange, can take him once the Swedish imbroglio is resolved, or can take him should Britain make a decision not to extradite. Neil MacBride, who has been mentioned as a potential head of the FBI, is U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Virginia, which led the grand jury investigation, and he appears to have completed his work.

Assange said, "The grand jury was very active in late 2011, pulling in witnesses, forcing them to testify, pulling in documents. It's been much less active during 2012 and 2013. **The DOJ appears ready to proceed with the prosecution proper immediately following the Manning trial.**"

Assange spoke repeatedly about Manning, with evident concern. He sees in the young Army private a reflection of his own situation, as well as the draconian consequences of refusing to cooperate with the security and surveillance state.

Manning's 12-week military trial is scheduled to begin in June. The prosecution is calling 141 witnesses, including an anonymous Navy SEAL who was part of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. Assange called the Navy SEAL the "star diva" of the state's "12-week Broadway musical." Manning is as bereft of establishment support as Assange.

“The old media attempted to remove his alleged heroic qualities,” Assange said of Manning. “An act of heroism requires that you make a conscious act. It is not an unreasoned expression of madness or sexual frustration. It requires making a choice—a choice that others can follow. If you do something solely because you are a mad homosexual there is no choice. **No one can choose to be a mad homosexual. So they stripped him, or attempted to strip him, of all his refinements.**”

“His alleged actions are a rare event,” Assange went on. “And why does a rare event happen? What do we know about him? What do we know about Bradley Manning? **We know that he won three science fairs. We know the guy is bright. We know that he was interested in politics early on. We know he’s very articulate and outspoken.** We know he didn’t like lies. ... We know he was skilled at his job of being an intelligence analyst. **If the media was looking for an explanation they could point to this combination of his abilities and motivations. They could point to his talents and virtues.** They should not point to him being gay, or from a broken home, except perhaps in passing. Ten percent of the U.S. military is gay. Well over 50 percent are from broken homes. Take those two factors together. That gets you down to, say, 5 percent— 5 percent on the outside. There are 5 million people with active security clearances, so now you’re down to 250,000 people. You still have to get from 250,000 to one. You can only explain Bradley Manning by his virtues. Virtues others can learn from.”

I walked for a long time down Sloane Street after leaving the embassy. The red double-decker buses and the automobiles inched along the thoroughfare. I passed boutiques with window displays devoted to Prada, Giorgio Armani and Gucci. I was jostled by shoppers with bags stuffed full of high-end purchases. They, these consumers, seemed blissfully unaware of the tragedy unfolding a few blocks away.

“In this respect, our townfolk were like everybody else, wrapped up in themselves; in other words, they were humanists: they disbelieved in pestilences,” Albert Camus wrote in *The Plague*. “A pestilence isn’t a thing made to man’s measure; therefore we tell ourselves that pestilence is a mere bogey of the mind, a bad dream that will pass away. But it doesn’t always pass away and, from one bad dream to another, **it is men who pass away, and the humanists first of all, because they have taken no precautions.**”

I stopped in front of the four white columns that led into the brick-turreted Cadogan Hotel. The hotel is where Oscar Wilde was arrested in Room 118 on April 6, 1895, before being charged with “committing acts of gross indecency with other male persons.” John Betjeman imagined the shock of that arrest, which ruined Wilde’s life, in his poem “The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel.” Here’s a fragment:

A thump, and a murmur of voices—
 (“Oh why must they make such a din?”)
 As the door of the bedroom swung open
 And TWO PLAIN CLOTHES POLICEMEN came in:

“Mr. Woilde, we ’ave come for tew take yew
 Where felons and criminals dwell:
 We must ask yew tew leave with us quietly
 For this is the Cadogan Hotel.”

The world has been turned upside down. The pestilence of corporate totalitarianism is spreading rapidly over the earth. The criminals have seized power. It is not, in the end, simply Assange or Manning they want. It is all who dare to defy the official narrative, to expose the big lie of the global corporate state. The persecution of Assange and Manning is the harbinger of what is to come, the rise of a bitter world where criminals in Brooks Brothers suits and gangsters in beribboned military uniforms—propped up by a vast internal and external security apparatus, a compliant press and a morally bankrupt political elite—monitor and crush those who dissent. Writers, artists, actors, journalists, scientists, intellectuals and workers will be forced to obey or thrown into bondage. I fear for Julian Assange. I fear for Bradley Manning. I fear for us all.

http://www.truthdig.com/dig/item/the_death_of_truth_20130505/

Alex Gibney, Wikileaks Documentary Director, Says Critics Are 'Part Of A Propaganda Machine'

*Mike Hogan
Huffington Post
9 May 2013*

Alex Gibney has directed his share of controversial documentaries. But only when he took on Wikileaks did he get his very own abusive hashtag.

"The Wikileaks organization and its followers are very much part of a propaganda machine," Gibney says. "Anything you say critically, you'll get slammed. It's not, like, we dispute a few issues here. It's hashtag #FuckAlexGibney."

It's unlikely that many Wikileaks supporters, who unveiled the #FuckAlexGibney meme during this year's Sundance Film Festival, have seen Gibney's film, "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks." But they know its depiction of the organization's founder, Julian Assange, isn't 100 percent complimentary, and that's apparently enough. *[No, it's not. But Gibney is not immune from criticism on other grounds. --A.B.]*

"What I find remarkable, and this is why it becomes sort of a propaganda organization, is that Assange hasn't seen the film, even though he's denounced it," says Gibney, whose 2007 film "Taxi to the Dark Side" won the Oscar for Best Documentary. *[Assange has read the script, has heard Gibney's highly dubious assessment of his character, the sources he has chosen to rely on, etc. --A.B.]* "Oliver Stone denounced the film and me on Twitter, even though he hasn't seen the film. It's kind of pathetic. Think about it: 'Oh, it's got to be bad because it's critical of Julian.'"

It's not as if the film's depiction of Assange is 100 percent negative. "He had brass balls to do what he did, and I think it's important," Gibney says of Assange. "But in the course of making the film, I was dismayed by the kind of self-regard and narcissism that seemed to overcome him." *[Definitins of "self-regard... narcissism...overcome"? Can those terms not be applied to Gibney? --A.B.]*

Under Assange's leadership, Wikileaks joined forces with The New York Times *[not really --A.B.]*, the Guardian and other news organizations to expose some of the world's

most carefully kept secrets. A shocking video of U.S. forces calling down airstrikes on a group of misidentified Reuters journalists in the streets of Baghdad, released on April 5, 2010, was followed by huge dumps of Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, State Department cables and Guantánamo Bay prisoner files.

The leaks turned the lanky, prematurely gray Assange into a celebrity-- which may have led to his downfall. A pair of sexual encounters with female admirers in Sweden in 2010 led to a criminal investigation after the women compared notes and allegedly grew concerned that he may have exposed them both to HIV. **(Gibney's film suggests a weirder possibility: that Assange, who reportedly has fathered four children with various women, may have a thing for spreading his seed around the world.)**

Assange and his supporters have suggested that the accusations are part of a conspiracy to lure him to U.S. soil, where he may face charges under the Espionage Act. Going into filming, Gibney, who had previously made a documentary about the Eliot Spitzer prostitution scandal, was inclined to agree.

"From the outside, it seemed like there was some kind of CIA dirty trick because of the timing and everything else," Gibney says. "But I came to the conclusion that this was not at all a 'honey trap.' This was bad behavior. For a long time, I wasn't even sure I should deal with Sweden. It's like, why is that relevant to the transparency agenda? But he made it relevant. He was the one who purposely conflated it."

Gibney generally admires that transparency agenda-- the belief that secrets are anti-democratic and should be exposed when possible. That's why he finds it especially confounding that Assange and his followers seem to be discouraging people from seeing his film and making up their own minds.

"It's funny to me that they often make a big deal out of 'This is not sanctioned by Wikileaks' -- as if being sanctioned by Wikileaks is a prerequisite to seeing the film. [*When did "they" say that? --A.B.*] I just did a film about the Vatican ['Mea Maxima Culpa']. Who would say, 'This isn't sanctioned by the Vatican, so don't see it?' How ridiculous is that?"

To Gibney, the criticism smacks of hypocrisy. "Wikileaks was supposed to be about the truth -- about the objective truth. It's not supposed to be about slamming people you don't like or slamming people who say you are wrong. That's what the CIA does."

Eventually, Gibney persuaded one of Assange's accusers to appear in the film. Her identity disguised, she describes being smeared by Wikileaks supporters and expresses her frustration with Assange's refusal to appear in Sweden to answer the charges against him. (Assange and his followers have a litany of justifications for his decision to hole up in the Ecuadorian embassy in Britain rather than face those charges, and a lively debate about their merits continues.)

One person Gibney never managed to interview on-camera was Assange himself. They met several times, but Gibney has said Assange demanded to be paid for a formal interview. Gibney refused, and began focusing more on Pfc. Bradley Manning, the soldier who has confessed to transferring the biggest troves of secrets to Wikileaks in the first place.

"He had been vilified early on as a flake ... who wasn't thinking about what he did and just dumped everything," says Gibney, who came to believe that Manning had instead acted out of "political conviction."

Gibney's irritation with the Wikileaks attacks on his film pale in comparison to the righteous indignation he feels toward the Obama administration, which has charged Manning with "aiding the enemy," punishable by death. "I find it frankly despicable," he says. "I think they're scapegoating him for a lot of things that were failures inside the military, inside the chain of command."

Gibney points out that Manning, whose military trial is set to begin next month, has pleaded guilty to 10 lesser charges, effectively acknowledging that he was the source for Wikileaks' greatest hits. "I'm not saying that privates should be running out and leaking every bit of classified information they come across," Gibney says. "Manning took an oath not to do that, and he broke that oath and he pled guilty to it. There should be consequences, but not death."

Ultimately, says Gibney, the episode offers a disheartening look at the hypocrisies of another cherished liberal icon: President Barack Obama. "The Obama administration has been ruthless on the issue of secrets. They've gone after whistleblowers in a way that's unprecedented," Gibney says. "The Obama administration is supposed to be the grand experiment in full-on open democracy, and it's just not that way. They've taken the executive power that Bush and Cheney assumed and they've acceded more of that to themselves. They've gone further."

Correction: An earlier version of this story suggested that Assange asked Gibney for \$1 million in exchange for an interview. Gibney mentioned that figure in the film, but did not specifically say that Assange asked for that amount. Rather, Gibney said it was the market rate for an interview with the Wikileaks founder.

* * *

Note: For reality check on this article, see above:

John Pilger, "WikiLeaks is a rare truth-teller...."; 14 February 2013

Joseph Farrell, "Response to Jemima Khan"; 8 March 2013

'I was targeted after I made Assange sex crime claim' says accuser of Wikileaks founder

Swedish woman tells of her ordeal after making allegations against WikiLeaks founder

*Kevin Rawlinson
The Independent
12 May 2013*

One of the Swedish women who accused Wikileaks founder Julian Assange of sex crimes has spoken out about the ordeal she said she suffered at the hands of her alleged

abuser's mother and other supporters. *[By her own account, she originally had no intention of filing a complaint against Assange. It was the police and prosecutor who did that "on her behalf". Her own claims of an "assault" — a gross mischaracterization, given what she actually alleges — came later. --A.B.]*

The woman *[Anna Ardin --A.B.]*, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said that she became a target for both her former allies and opponents who, along with her alleged abuser's acolytes *[sic --A.B.]*, turned against her and presumed she was lying about the allegations she made. *[No "presumption" is necessary. Her mendacity is evident from her own words and actions. See "Reality check" below. --A.B.]*

"Three years ago I was the victim of an assault. Former allies, political opponents, the Sweden Democrats, anti-feminists, Jew-haters, the man's friends and mother quickly decided that there was something fishy. That I lied," she wrote on her blog.

The woman added: "The perpetrator was innocent. One remarkable story after another lined up in a giant court of public opinion with anonymous judges and witnesses who guessed wildly." *[The relevant details are documented in the police interviews, which have long been publicly accessible. --A.B.]*

It is believed to be the first time the woman has spoken about her experience at the hands of her alleged abuser's supporters. *[Her own friends and allies have "spoken about her experience" often and loudly. --A.B.]*

In the blogpost, she did not name the man she said attacked her. But the date she gave for the incident coincides with the time she alleged Mr Assange assaulted her. *[Assange can evidently be named without regard to legal or ethical niceties --A.B.]* The name of the blog's author also matches that of a woman widely identified as one of the complainants in Assange case.

And her claims of attacks by supporters of her abuser match the experiences of the women who accuse Julian Assange of crimes defined as sexual assault and rape in Swedish law. *[The designation of the latter alleged offence in Swedish law is "minor rape", entailing no violence or coercion; it does not apply to Ms. Ardin. The other, lesser offence is more accurately translated as sexual "molestation". --A.B.]*

She wrote that, after the alleged assault, everything "that I, or someone who could be assumed to be close to me, had said that could be turned to my disadvantage was raised as evidence of my guilt, my crime and my being incapable of telling the truth. Everything I had said that was to my advantage in that context was deemed invalidated, or was met with silence". *[Ms. Ardin has indeed been treated badly by various Internet trolls and others. The same and worse has happened to Assange, as the article might well have deigned to mention. --A.B.]*

But she added that, after a period of time, people belatedly began to stand up for her. *[She had a lot of reflexive support right from the start. --A.B.]* And she wondered what would have happened without that support, adding: "Perhaps someone would actually have carried out some of the threats I received. Perhaps I would have had to change names and move away.

"And probably I would have been regarded as someone you lose elections and customers through, which would have made it impossible for me to both get involved and work beyond the few months when I did go underground."

Numerous articles have appeared online speculating both about the veracity of the women's claims, and the some have claimed agenda lies behind them. And some of the Assange supporters who have turned up to the west London embassy building for his public appearances have been known to bring placards denigrating the Wikileaks founder's accusers.

Mr Assange's mother Christine Assange has also launched attacks on those who have opposed her son for his refusal to go to Sweden. In January, she referred to protests against Assange's scheduled videolink appearance at Oxford University as a "witchunt" [sic]. Writing on Twitter, she called them "rabid irrational frenzied 'feminists'." [None of which constitutes a personal attack on Ms. Ardin, suggesting that this paragraph is a gratuitous attack on Christine Assange. --A.B.]

In March this year, *The Independent* exclusively revealed that representatives of the Ecuadorean government held secret talks with the Labour Party in a bid to strike a deal which would see Mr Assange sent to Sweden after the next general election. Diplomats hoped that, should Labour form the next government, they would agree to allay Mr Assange's fears of onward extradition to America, thereby making it more likely he would agree to face the Swedish prosecutor.

Neither Julian, nor Christine Assange responded to requests for comment on Sunday. [On the evidence of this article, they were wise not to do so. --A.B.]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/i-was-targeted-after-i-made-assange-sex-crime-claim-says-accuser-of-wikileaks-founder-8613006.html>

* * *

Reality check on the "victim's" claim that she was "assaulted"

Göran Rudling notes that there are discrepancies between what Anna Ardin tells the police about her sexual encounter with Assange, and what she tells her friends. Referring to the remark overheard by Boström at Ms. Ardin's crayfish party, Rudling poses the question: "Would you say to someone who had assaulted you that you felt 'dumped' afterwards?"

There are many similar questions raised by Ms. Ardin's behaviour, which included the following:

- The day after the "assault", Ms. Ardin co-operated in seeming harmony with Assange at the Broderskapet seminar.
- After the seminar, she volunteered to arrange a crayfish party for Assange.
- At that party, she said that it was quite all right for him to continue living with her.
- She also Twittered to a friend that it was "just amazing" to be sitting with "the world's coolest, smartest people".
- The next day, she volunteered to serve as Assange's press secretary at a meeting with the Pirate Party.
- It is not until the following Thursday, after she had spoken with Sofia Wilén, that she chose to stop sleeping in the same room with Assange.

- The next day, Friday, she told friends that Sofia Wilén had been raped by Assange; but there is no mention of any such crime in the interviews with Ms. Wilén and her friends.
- Shortly before or after the police interview, Mrs. Ardin attempted to erase three Twitter messages which indicated that she remained on friendly terms with Assange.
- She also asked the Pirate Party to remove her name from a press release about the meeting at which she had volunteered to serve as Assange's press secretary.
- In the telephone interview with the police on August 21st, she omitted all information tending to establish Assange's innocence. She said nothing about the crayfish party she arranged on his behalf, nor about the Twitter messages, her voluntary role as press secretary, her conversations with Donald Boström, etc.

Anna Ardin's credibility is further damaged by the results of a technical investigation of the condom she supplies to the police, stating that it is the one used by Assange. There is a large slit at the tip; but the national crime lab was unable to detect any traces of DNA from anyone, clearly indicating that it had not been used.¹⁶

It is also evident that, with such a large break in the material, the condom would almost immediately have bunched up at the base of the penis during intercourse. Yet, according to Ms. Ardin's testimony, it was otherwise intact and still in place when Assange withdrew from her afterward.

It is therefore difficult to avoid the suspicion that Ms. Ardin supplied the police with an unused condom which she or an accomplice damaged in an attempt to incriminate Assange — not realizing that it would be tested for DNA.

- From *Suspicious Behaviour* at: <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/summary.htm>

Don't forget about my rights, says Julian Assange 'sex victim'

Lawyer tells of woman's suffering a year on from WikiLeaks founder's flight to embassy

*Kevin Rawlinson
The Independent
23 May 2013*

A lawyer for one of the women who have accused Julian Assange of sex crimes has called for more pressure to be placed on Ecuador to allow the WikiLeaks founder to face Swedish justice.

While Mr Assange remains in the Ecuadorean embassy in London after losing his court action against extradition to Sweden to face trial, a lawyer has told The Independent that his alleged victim's rights "should not be forgotten in this process". Mr Assange has spent almost a year in the embassy in Knightsbridge. Elisabeth Fritz, representing one of Mr Assange's two accusers, said that Sweden "should put pressure on Ecuador to get Assange to be sent to Sweden".

The women accuse the Australian whistle-blowing activist of sexual offences when he was in Stockholm in 2010. Mr Assange denies the accusations and has argued they are part of a wider smear campaign designed to discredit WikiLeaks.

The 41-year-old has said that if he is handed over to Sweden he will be passed on to the US for trial over WikiLeaks' release of diplomatic cables and claims he could face the death penalty. But Ms Fritz said her client's wait for a public hearing had been long and her "suffering big". She said Mr Assange's claims about extradition were "merely a way to circumvent various countries' systems and laws" to "evade responsibility".

Swedish authorities have said they are waiting for Britain to act on the arrest warrant issued for Mr Assange in November 2010. His final appeal against extradition to Sweden was rejected by the Supreme Court in June last year – four days before he took refuge in the embassy.

"Assange's behaviour and [the] procrastination of the investigation in this case complicates the suffering of my client when the preliminary investigation does not go forward," said Ms Fritz. "The investigation in Sweden must be conducted in a conventional manner and prompt way according to the Swedish legal system, even if the suspect [is] called Assange."

This week it emerged that GCHQ, the intelligence agency, had asked staff to behave more professionally after Mr Assange obtained internal emails saying he may have been framed over the sexual assault charges. "It is definitely a fit-up ... Their timings are too convenient right after Cablegate," wrote one GCHQ officer in an email to a colleague last September.

Mr Assange's lawyer, Per Samuelsson, told The Independent: "We have said the prosecutor should go to London to interrogate Mr Assange or do it via video link or sworn affidavit, but she has refused. The lawyer should argue with the prosecutor not Mr Assange."

Julian Assange reveals GCHQ messages discussing Swedish extradition

WikiLeaks founder uses subject access request to access British agency chatter, which allegedly calls extradition 'a fit-up'

*Giles Tremlett and Ben Quinn
The Guardian
20 May 2013*

Authorities at GCHQ, the government eavesdropping agency, are facing embarrassing revelations about internal correspondence in which Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is discussed, apparently including speculation that he is being framed by Swedish authorities seeking his extradition on rape allegations.

The records were revealed by Assange himself in a Sunday night interview with Spanish television programme Salvados in which he explained that an official request for information gave him access to instant messages that remained unclassified by GCHQ.

A message from September 2012, read out by Assange, apparently says: "They are trying to arrest him on suspicion of XYZ ... It is definitely a fit-up... Their timings are too convenient right after Cablegate."

The messages appear to contain speculation and chatter between GCHQ employees, but Assange gave little further explanation about exactly who they came from.

The WikiLeaks founder, who has spent the past 11 months in the Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid arrest and extradition to Sweden, claimed GCHQ had been unaware that it might have anything on him that was not classified.

"It won't hand over any of the classified information," he said. "But, much to its surprise, it has some unclassified information on us. We have just received this. It is not public yet," he added.

A second instant message conversation from August last year between two unknown people saw them call Assange a fool for thinking Sweden would drop its attempt to extradite him. The conversation, as read out by Assange, goes: "He reckons he will stay in the Ecuadorian embassy for six to 12 months when the charges against him will be dropped, but that is not really how it works now is it? He's a fool... Yeah ... A highly optimistic fool."

"This is what the spies are discussing amongst themselves," Assange told the Spanish television presenter Jordi Evolé.

The Cheltenham-based agency said: "We can confirm that GCHQ responded formally to the subject who made the request. The disclosed material includes personal comments between some members of staff and do not reflect GCHQ's policies or views in any way.

GCHQ is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. However, it is understood that Assange's request was a subject access request, a mechanism under the Data Protection Act that can be used by individuals to obtain personal information that bodies hold about them.

On its website, the agency says : "As one of the UK's intelligence and security agencies, we gather and analyse digital and electronic signals from many channels, from all corners of the world".

"Converting this information into intelligence material, we play a significant role in informing national security, military operations, police activity and foreign policy."

AB: 2013-05-20

<p>”Kallar mig för en dåre”</p> <p>► Julian Assange anklagar den brittiska underrättelsetjänsten</p>	
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AB: 2013-05-20

Assange: "De kallar mig för en dåre"

I spansk-tv släpper han information där de svenska misstankarna mot honom beskrivs som "en konspiration".

Brittiska underrättelsetjänsten GCHQ ska ha i intern kommunikation ha kallat de svenska anklagelserna mot Julian Assange för en "gillrad fälla", skriver The Guardian. Anklagelserna kommer från Assange själv som i en intervju med den spanska tv-programmet Salvados säger att han begärt ut kommunikation om hans fall från GCHQ – som de inte ens visste var tillgänglig.

Enligt ett meddeladande från september 2012 ska tjänstemännen på den brittiska myndigheten ha diskuterat de svenska misstankarna.

"De försöker häkta honom för misstankar om XYZ ... Det är definitivt en fälla ... Deras tajming är alldeles för läglig direkt efter Cablegate", uppger Assange att tjänstemännen sagt enligt The Guardian.

Under programmet avslöjar han också hur den brittiska underrättelsetjänsten diskuterat kring honom och hur han gömt sig på Ecuadors ambassad i London. "Han tror att han ska stanna på Ecuadors ambassad i sex eller tolv månader och sedan släpps misstankarna mot honom, men det är inte riktigt så det funkar, eller hur? Han är dåre... Ja ... En väldigt optimistisk dåre" säger Assange att de sagt om honom, enligt The Guardian.

– Det här är vad spionerna diskuterar sinsemellan, säger han i programmet.

Assange säger att han utnyttjat en lucka i den brittiska offentlighetsprincipens regler för hur en person kan begära ut data som finns lagrad om dem, skriver The Guardian.

– De lämnar inte ut någon hemligstämplad information, men till deras förvåning hade de information om oss som inte var hemligstämplad, säger Assange i tv-programmet, enligt tidningen.

Enligt GCHQ är den information som Assange hänvisar till personliga kommentarer från anställda som myndigheten på inget sätt står för, skriver The Guardian.

Assange accuser calls for Swedish pressure on Ecuador

AFP

22 May, 2013

STOCKHOLM — One of the two Swedish women who have accused WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange of sex crimes urged Sweden's government on Wednesday to put pressure on Ecuador to hand him over to the Swedish justice system.

"Sweden must put pressure on Ecuador to get Assange handed over to Sweden," Elisabeth Massi Fritz, a lawyer for one of the two accusers, wrote in a statement.

"There has been much speculation in the media, much of it incorrect. This is not about any kind of conspiracy as some media outlets have claimed. My client is a plaintiff and a victim," she said.



Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London. Photo: Sean Dempsey/Scanpix

The two women accused the Australian activist of rape and sexual assault [*No, they did not --A.B.*] in 2010, when he was in Stockholm on WikiLeaks business. Assange has denied the accusations, arguing they are part of a smear campaign to discredit his whistleblowing website.

He is wanted for questioning in Sweden, but has been holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy in London since June 2012 after he was granted asylum but denied free passage by British authorities out of the country.

Assange fears that if he is handed over to Sweden he will be passed onto the United States for his controversial diplomatic memo leaks. He claims he will face the death penalty in the US.

"I can say that Assange's claims about his extradition to the US, where he according to his own account would face the death penalty, is merely a way of circumventing the law in various countries to avoid taking responsibility for the acts he is currently suspected of committing," Massi Fritz wrote. [*Good of her to clear that up.-- A.B.*]

Sweden has repeatedly said it is waiting for Britain to act on the Swedish arrest warrant issued for Assange. The government has insisted it will not interfere in the judicial process, and prosecutors have refused to question Assange outside of the Scandinavian country.

Assange's other accuser wrote in April about her ordeal on her blog, speaking out for what the Swedish media said was the first time. The women's names have not been officially disclosed or published in the Swedish media but they have been circulated widely on the Internet as the Assange accusers.

<http://dunyanews.tv/index.php/en/Crime/174983-Assange-accuser-calls-for-Swedish-pressure-on-Ecu>

'We Steal Secrets' Documentary Focuses on Personalities of Assange, Manning Over Significance of WikiLeaks

Kevin Gosztola
Firedog Lake
May 23, 2013

Academy Award-winning director Alex Gibney held a special screening for his new documentary, *We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks*, in Washington, DC, on May 21. Gibney also participated in a question and answer session after the film that was moderated by POLITICO's Josh Gerstein.

First, the title reinforces widespread perceptions created by the United States government that the WikiLeaks organization is out to "steal" secrets. Gibney has claimed that the title is "ironic." Actually, the US government steals secrets. Former NSA director Michael Hayden says this in the film, but this aspect of US government operations takes up only a few seconds of the film. He does not explore how US government agencies are actually the ones engaged in stealing so **the "irony" does not come through at all.**

The opening of the film charts the rise of WikiLeaks—why editor-in-chief Julian Assange was "obsessed" with secrets, how the organization took on bank corruption in Iceland and who worked together to release the "Collateral Murder" video showing a 2007 Apache helicopter attack that killed two Reuters employees in Iraq. The expansion of the surveillance state after the September 11th attacks and the rise of what William Arkin and Dana Priest explored with their "Top Secret America" project provides a bit of context.

Pfc. Bradley Manning, who provided information to WikiLeaks, is introduced through what he said in his chats with hacker and government informant Adrian Lamo. Lines from the chat are typed across the screen. It becomes apparent that Lamo invited Manning to confide in him.

The film highlights Lamo's decision to turn Manning into federal authorities, how he was viewed by others in the military, who he was socializing with in Boston, how he considered becoming a woman and some of the mental issues he was confronting while stationed as an intelligence analyst in FOB Hammer in Iraq.

Chat logs, suggestions and descriptions of Manning's outbursts in the military are not particularly endearing to whatever contribution he has made to global society as a whistleblower, but Gibney never outright suggests that Manning's mental health issues led him to leak classified information. He does include chat logs that show how Manning challenged the handing over of detainees to the Iraqi Federal Police, who would be tortured, because they had done nothing wrong and were just opponents of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Manning's arrest and his confinement at Quantico are highlighted as well, with Gibney taking the story of Manning all the way up to his court martial.

In the second half of the film, Gibney broaches the issue of the sexual allegations that Assange has faced. It focuses on what led individuals that had worked with him to

become alienated. His personality and ego, according to Gibney, along with a desire to keep his own secrets while trying to force the release of secrets from government and corporations, transform him into a character that drags WikiLeaks downward. And, as the film comes to an end, arguments are introduced that one of the downsides of WikiLeaks for Manning was not being able to communicate with the organization and explain what he was doing so he could not feel isolated. Loneliness is apparently the hallmark of a whistleblower and, as this can make one unstable, WikiLeaks bears some level of responsibility for not being able to comfort Manning.

As someone who has extensively covered the story of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange and Bradley Manning, there are multiple aspects of the film that happen to be misleading, disingenuous or seem to be the product of a director who has an axe to grind.

Gibney recounts in the film that he tried “over many months to get an on-camera interview with Assange.” He says, “After meetings and emails, I was finally summoned to the Norfolk mansion for a 6-hour negotiation. But Julian wanted money.” He states that Assange said the market rate for an interview with him was \$1 million for an interview or he wanted Gibney to “spy” in his “other interviews and report back to him.”

This makes it seem like Assange demanded \$1 million or else he would not appear in the film. As the New York Times noted in a correction, “While [Gibney] says that he rejected the demands, and that the market rate for an interview was \$1 million, he does not specifically say that he rejected a demand from Mr. Assange for a \$1 million fee for an interview.” **Also, the “spying,” according to WikiLeaks, which claims to have a recording of a meeting with Gibney, was a request to inform Assange of any details he might come across related to the United States’ investigation into WikiLeaks.**

A “Most Wanted Leaks” list compiled by WikiLeaks is presented as an effort to “bait whistleblowers.” Cast in this manner, audiences might think WikiLeaks was doing something wrong, but WikiLeaks was committing no crime by compiling a list of documents or recordings it thought deserved to be in the public record.

It was not only put together by WikiLeaks. [A] tweet from May 15, 2009, shows the organization accepted nominations. These apparently came from human rights groups, lawyers, historians, journalists and activists. As highlighted in the film, it reinforces arguments military prosecutors have made that this is evidence the organization “solicits” leaks in order to criminalize the organization. Nothing in the film indicates that Gibney is aware of this.

Gibney made the decision that he would show the allegations against Assange were not ridiculous. There is nothing wrong with that, except the people who speak about the allegations are providing hearsay. He highlights a torn condom that was pictured in a Swedish police report released to the press. What Gibney neglects to mention is “two forensic laboratories were unable to find conclusive evidence of Mr Assange’s DNA” on this condom, according to the Sydney Morning Herald.

Director Alex Gibney Responds to 'We Steal Secrets' Review

Kevin Gosztola
Firedog lake
May 24, 2013

The following is a response I received from Alex Gibney, director of the new documentary on WikiLeaks, "We Steal Secrets." I have not added any comments to this response. It appears unedited as a kind of rebuttal to my review.

I will also take the time to note that, despite my strong criticisms, it is worth it to view the film. While it may inform the public of what exactly Gibney argues, claims and explores, no transcript of narration or interview segments can fully communicate how the stories of Bradley Manning and Julian Assange are presented in the film. One has to see the clips, hear the music, watch how it all is edited, etc, to fully appreciate the power of this movie.

* * *

Thank you for your balanced review. While you would expect that I don't agree with all of it (I don't), I do respect the careful attention to detail that you have employed on this story. You have my admiration for the careful reporting that you have done over the last few years and my appreciation for taking the time to engage with my film seriously. Accordingly, I feel that it makes sense to send you a response.

1) It is true that Julian did not ask me for \$1 million dollars. He asked me for money and then said (I took it as a point of negotiation) that the market rate for an interview with him was \$1 million. I said exactly what happened. But the NY Times correction (which was done at my request but was inartfully phrased) should not be read to mean that Julian did not want to be paid a lot of money for an interview. He did. I'm sure we might have made a deal at, say \$100,000. But I don't pay for interviews.

Likewise, your interpretation of what happened next is incorrect. While Julian did ask me to seek out details of the criminal investigation, he asked me and my producer to give Julian "intel" on all the other interview subjects as a *quid pro quo* for his participation. By "intel" he meant details about their testimony and, in some cases, transcripts. That was a non-starter for me and I found it an "ironic" stance for someone who is supposed to be so interested in source protection.

2) RE: Sweden: You are correct that the purpose of the section was to show that the allegations leveled at Assange were not "ridiculous," which is how they were being treated by Assange. You mention the condom and dna. There is some doubt as to what condom is pictured on screen, so it seemed pointless to add detail about dna. Only some of the testimony and evidence has been leaked. There is much to come. Perhaps the Swedish courts will find him innocent of all charges. My point was only to show that there is sufficient "cause" for legal proceedings— that it wasn't a joke. The British courts agreed: they stated twice that if the allegations were proven, they would be crimes in the UK as well as Sweden. [*They based their judgements on the misleading descriptions of the Swedish prosecutor. --A.B.*]

Mr. Fowler's account of events is incorrect. Alexa O'Brien recently published a British court timeline— on which Wiki and Sweden agree!— that makes the circum-

stances surrounding his disappearance and failure to appear look even worse. *[An explanation of this assertion is in order. --A.B.]* You are also wrong about the process of “interviewing” Assange. (For a complete recitation of this, I refer you to my piece in the *New Statesman* responding to John Pilger.) The Swedish prosecutor is prepared to charge Assange but cannot do so unless he is “arrested,” which must happen in Sweden. *[That has been refuted by a Swedish Supreme Court judge and many others. --A.B.]* The only questioning that the Swedish prosecutor needs to do is to give Assange the opportunity to provide information which would prevent her from arresting him, which she clearly plans to do (if he ever goes to Sweden). *[She has said both that she has no such plans and, when it became convenient to say so in connection with the British proceedings, that she does have such plans. --A.B.]*

The suggestion re: the motivation for JA possibly wanting to make women pregnant against their will is not “wildly lunatic.” If a Swedish prosecutor is alleging that Assange may have tried to make the women pregnant against their will (the basis of a possible charge) is it not relevant to understand his past practices? *[The reference to “past practices” is apparently based on the dubious testimony of Daniel Domscheit-Berg and nothing more reliable. --A.B.]*

3) Manning and Assange. You indicate that I asserted that Manning definitively spoke to Assange. But I did not. The film clearly states that the address was listed under Assange in Manning’s computer. Manning certainly thought he was talking to Assange. But the film does not state that as a fact.

4) I feel that your final conclusions about the film are unfair. The film makes the importance of the issues of transparency, secrecy and surveillance very clear. It is also very clear about Manning’s political motivations. It is also untrue to say that I dumped on Assange because he did not give me an interview. That is just wrong.

As many reviewers have noticed, Assange is cast in a very good light for most of the film. I do think that it is important to reckon with people as human beings rather than as political caricatures. In the case of Manning, in particular, his flaws and his great strengths— in other words his humanity— make his actions all the more powerful. You may feel free to criticize me for recognizing and celebrating his humanity. I am not sorry. Manning is a hero in this film precisely because— through his own words— we know him, not as a propaganda poster, but as a poignant, flawed and inspiring human being.

Best Regards,
Alex

P.S. You may have noticed that WikiLeaks has “leaked” an [annotated transcript](#) of the film. Sadly, what is missing from the transcript are ALL of Bradley Manning’s words. That could be the result of malicious editing. More likely, a WL supporter made a bootleg audio recording of the film. That audio recording would not have picked up Manning’s words since, as you know, his words are printed on-screen. But WL could not admit this because then WL would not get credit for a mighty hack, only a low-tech recording. Sad.

What “We Steal Secrets” leaves out

Nathan Fuller
Bradley Manning Support Network
May 24, 2013

Alex Gibney’s “We Steal Secrets” chronicles WikiLeaks’ front-page, world-shocking 2010 leaks from inception to publication to aftermath, framing WikiLeaks’ work as a meteoric rise giving way to a self-incurred implosion.

While I find fault with this view, and even its premise that WikiLeaks has failed and died (the site continues to publish Stratfor emails and Kissinger files, it just won an important Swedish [*presumably a reference to the judicial ruling in Iceland --A.B.*] victory to resume accepting donations through Visa interlocutors, and the Freedom of the Press foundation continues to funnel anonymous contributions its way), I’d rather let others dissect its portrayal of Assange and WikiLeaks and instead focus on how it characterizes Bradley Manning.

Earlier this year, we took issue with some of director Alex Gibney’s comments associating whistleblowing with alienation, pathologizing Manning’s leaks and undermining his political values. Producer Sam Black emailed to assure us that, in fact, Bradley Manning is “a hero in the film. He is the moral and emotional center of a complex story about what should and should not be secret.”

Though the movie does laudably transition away from its opening focus on Julian Assange by reminding viewers that Manning is the courageous whistleblower who deserves at least as much public attention, Manning’s story only makes it into about a quarter of the two-hour film, which quotes journalists, former WikiLeaks members, high-ranking government officials, and fellow soldiers.

The time that is spent on Manning leaves much to be desired, and what it leaves out is as much to blame as what it includes. **Ultimately, the resulting portrait of Bradley Manning is one of pity more than empathy**, one that makes us feel bad for Manning rather than take a serious interest in his beliefs and his plight.

Near the end of the film, journalist James Ball says, “Whistleblowing is an isolating act,” because it forces one to make public things that your peers and friends want to keep secret. **But the film’s portrayal reverses that succession, seeming to imply that whistleblowing follows from alienation, not the other way around.**

The filmmakers could have avoided this pat and familiar narrative with mere patience: a few short months after production was finished, PFC Bradley Manning provided the most salient, film-ready testimony a director could want— his 10,000-word statement explaining his Army work and decision to release documents to WikiLeaks.

In that statement, Manning passionately articulates his reasoning:

I felt that we were risking so much for people that seemed unwilling to cooperate with us, leading to frustration and anger on both sides. I began to become depressed with the situation that we found ourselves increasingly mired in year after year. The [war logs] documented this in great detail and provide a context of what we were seeing on the ground.

He shines light on his mindset at the time and his political convictions:

I felt this sense of relief by [WikiLeaks] having [the information]. I felt I had accomplished something that allowed me to have a clear conscience based upon what I had seen and what I had read about and knew were happening in both Iraq and Afghanistan everyday.

He vividly conveys his revulsion:

The most alarming aspect of the video to me...was the seemingly delightful bloodlust the Aerial Weapons Team seemed to have. They dehumanized the individuals they were engaging and seemed to not value human life, and referred to them as quote-unquote "dead bastards," and congratulated each other on their ability to kill in large numbers....For me, this seemed similar to a child torturing ants with a magnifying glass.

Gibney couldn't have necessarily known that such a statement was coming. But he would've been given this windfall of valuable audio had he not worked to release the film so early. The film is slated to premiere today. Bradley Manning's trial will begin on June 3, in just over a week. If this were a civilian case, would the release of a major film about its defendant just days before his trial began appear unreasonable? Is Gibney trying too hard to get the story out there just in time for Manning to make the news again?

With the leaked audio published by the Freedom of the Press foundation, Gibney could have used those words above to take a holistic view of Manning while giving real credence to his political motivations. **Instead, he relied on fellow soldiers' memories and the infamous chat logs with Adrian Lamo.**

Gibney did make some good use of those chat logs, highlighting a major turning point for Manning in the Army that many forget or minimize: his refusal to be complicit in the detention of innocuous Iraqi dissidents that he knew would be tortured and possibly killed. But beyond this incident, Gibney left us wanting for Manning's observations and motivations. Why not include his comments on the first world exploiting the third, on almost criminal backroom deals?

The film simply focuses too much on Manning's personality, and since it relies heavily on Adrian Lamo's reflections and Manning's fellow soldiers' recollections, the remaining **portrait is that of a gender-confused weirdo prone to outbursts.** It affords extensive time to Jihreah Showman, a government witness in Bradley's Article 32 hearing in December 2011, to recount Manning's emotional flare-ups, and at one point during her interview, Gibney leaves an unflattering photo of Manning up for 10 seconds. Is this really getting to the heart of what Manning's case and struggle are about?

Gibney isn't necessarily malicious: he doesn't really blame Manning for his behavior, implying rather that he probably shouldn't have been deployed to Iraq in the first place. The view is not one of scorn, but one of pity. In so doing, Gibney subtly removes Manning's agency, characterizing him more as honorable victim than brave whistleblower.

In one portion, Gibney wonders why Manning's chain of command wasn't reprimanded further for allowing him to release these classified documents so easily.

Why not take them to equal task for telling him to shut up when he brought Iraqi corruption to their attention? Why not take the government to further task for failing to prosecute the criminals that Manning exposed? Gibney only hints at these questions where a deeper exploration is desperately needed.

The problem isn't that 'We Steal Secrets' fails to cheerlead for Bradley Manning's every move. It's that it conflates nuance with the government's emphasis on personal issues over political convictions.

Sitting behind Bradley in the courtroom for a year and a half, it's obvious that he's not interested in our pity, but certainly needs our support.

<http://www.bradleymanning.org/featured/what-we-steal-secrets-leaves-out>

This Day in WikiLeaks

2013-05-25

Controversy over Alex Gibney's film "We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks" continues after WikiLeaks published a full, annotated transcript a few days ago.

<http://wikileaks.org/IMG/html/gibney-transcript.html>

Justice for Assange made a detailed list of 10 talking points about the film, pulling information from WikiLeaks' annotated transcript.

<http://www.swedenversusassange.com/We-Steal-Secrets-Talking-Points,79.html>

Michael Ratner on "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks"

Law and Disorder

May 27, 2013

Our own Michael Ratner delivers a critical review of the film documentary "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks" by director Alex Gibney. The [annotated transcript](#), reveals errors, rank speculation and a focus on personality that detracts from the important revelations by Manning and published by WikiLeaks. Bradley Manning's 12-week trial commences on Monday (3 June), and the film may have been released to take advantage of that date. Manning may face life in prison and could potentially face the death penalty. Julian Assange remains in the Ecuadorian embassy legitimately fearful that extradition to Sweden is a one way ticket to the US and potential for life in prison.

Attorney Michael Ratner, attorney in the US for Julian Assange and Wikileaks:

[The film] does a great disservice to Bradley Manning and Julian Assange. I think it trivializes the incredible courage that both of them had as well as what was revealed by the documents.

Julian Assange declined an interview by Alex Gibney and no one currently associated with Wikileaks participated in the film. This may explain in part Gibney's poor treatment of Julian Assange.

What grabs you immediately is the title, "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks." Wikileaks is a publisher. Yet the title implies that the story of Wikileaks is the story of it stealing secrets. That implication plays into the government's theory that somehow Wikileaks and Julian Assange are co-conspirators with Bradley Manning in taking secrets. The film does so in other places as well.

A second criticism is that part of the film focuses on Bradley Manning's psychological problems and implies that those are the basis for Manning's revelation of documents.

Gibney has said as much in interviews given after the film: "I think it raises big issues about who whistleblowers are, because they are alienated people who don't get along with people around them, which motivates them to do what they do." In fact, Manning gave an incredibly moving political explanation for each leak of documents; an explanation not covered in any detail in the film.

Third, Gibney claims Wikileaks is dead. Nothing could be more of a fable. Since December 2011 Wikileaks has released the SpyFiles, the Stratfor emails dubbed the GIFiles, the Syria Files and in April 2013 both Cablegate and 1.7 million Kissinger Cables in an easily searchable Plus Public Library of US Diplomacy.

Fourth, somehow, **Gibney claims there are no charges filed against Julian Assange.** How does he know that? It's a secret Grand Jury, and if there's an indictment, it's going to be a sealed indictment because an indictment is not made public when a person is not in custody. In fact, there is significant, irrefutable evidence of an on going investigation and its likely there is a sealed indictment.

Gibney diminishes the risk to Julian Assange if he were sent to the United States because he wants to claim that Assange is in the embassy to avoid going to Sweden to answer questions about sexual misconduct allegations. But it does not work. Were Sweden to guarantee Assange would not be sent to US he would go there to answer questions.

Assange has also offered to answer those questions in the embassy. Sweden has refused. In the end, the problem is the United States. **Gibney, in his effort to demean Assange, needs to play down the huge risk he faces in the US.**

<http://lawanddisorder.org/2013/05/7549/>

Ecuador says UK violating human rights of WikiLeaks' Assange

*Alexandra Valencia
Reuters
May 28, 2013*

Ecuador's foreign minister on Tuesday accused the British government of trampling on the human rights of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange by refusing to allow him to travel to Ecuador, which granted him political asylum almost a year ago....

Ecuador's socialist president, Rafael Correa, angered the UK by granting Assange asylum in August on concerns that the former computer hacker might be further extradited from Sweden to the United States. Ecuador's government late last year said the Australian citizen was suffering from lung problems.

"By not granting him safe passage they are violating the human rights of a citizen, and every day that passes the effects of that violation hurt the person more and more," Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino told Reuters in an interview.

"It's a whole year that this gentleman has spent without feeling the sun and that's really serious... because this decision has been taken by a state that says it protects human rights."

Ecuador argues that Assange's deportation to Sweden is part of a scheme by the U.S. government to have the former computer hacker extradited to American soil so that he can face charges over WikiLeaks' release of thousands of U.S. diplomatic cables.

U.S. and European government sources say the United States has issued no criminal charges against him, nor launched any attempts to extradite Assange.

Assange, whose platinum hair and high-flying friends made him a household name around the world, is said to be living a cramped life inside the modest diplomatic mission. He eats mostly take-out food and uses a treadmill to burn off energy and a vitamin D lamp to make up for the lack of sunlight.

Patino said the Ecuadorean government is preparing a document in which it will argue that Britain is legally "obliged" to give Assange permission to leave the embassy and travel to South America.

He said that talks with the British government over Assange's fate continue and that he hopes to discuss the issue with British Foreign Minister William Hague in "a matter of weeks or months."

Assange said last year he expected to wait six months to a year for a deal that would allow him to leave the embassy.

We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks — Fact Check #1

*Jesselyn Radack
Firedog Lake
May 29, 2013*

This is the first in a series of fact-checks on "We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks" by Academy Award-winning documentarian Alex Gibney. It is the "first" of my fact-checks because there are so many distortions and inaccuracies in this film, it is difficult to know where to begin. Luckily, the title itself provides a good place to start.

I've run the title by numerous people with divergent views on WikiLeaks. None of them have seen the film. All of them said that the title alone means that WikiLeaks

steals secrets. Universally, people will draw this conclusion from the title because the logical consequence here is the implication. The title is a material consequence, a single statement formed from the logical connection of two different phrases. The two phrasings are taken as logically equivalent, which serves a truth function that Gibney wants the audience to believe.

The fact of the matter is that WikiLeaks does not steal secrets. As it makes clear on its website, like “other media outlets conducting investigative journalism, we accept (but do not solicit) anonymous sources of information.” **The “We Steal Secrets” line is actually from former NSA and CIA director Michael Hayden, who the movie presents as a pillar of transparency even though he is the father of warrantless wiretapping (secret surveillance of U.S citizens),** one of the biggest scandals of the Bush administration.

By implying that WikiLeaks is a lawbreaker and not a publisher, it fits the film’s narrative of putting WikiLeaks in some “other” category than a *bona fide* media outlet—a position taken by the mainstream media. The mainstream media, despite profiting from publishing substantial WikiLeaks content, has tried strenuously to differentiate itself from, and as better than, WikiLeaks because it is “more selective” and “fact-checks its content”—two persistent myths created and propagated by the mainstream media because 1) WikiLeaks scooped them 2) the New York Times and Washington Post apparently blew it because, as Pfc. Bradley Manning testified recently, he approached them before going to WikiLeaks, and 3) the mainstream media, while trying to delegitimize WikiLeaks, was forced to reprint much of the WikiLeaks material because of its newsworthiness.

Interestingly, in the Manning case, the government has taken the position that it sees WikiLeaks and the mainstream media as one and the same. If one accepts the logical sleight of hand in Gibney’s misleading title, therefore, all media (print, radio, television, online, etc.) steal secrets, including this film.

• *Jesselyn Radack is the National Security & Human Rights Director of the Government Accountability Project, a leading whistleblower organization, and a contributing editor at Firedoglake. She became a Department Of Justice whistleblower when she disclosed the FBI had committed an ethics violation in their interrogation of John Walker Lindh (the “American Taliban”) without an attorney present, and the DOJ attempted to suppress that information.*

The Unlikely Activist

SARAH LYALL
N.Y. Times
May 29, 2013

Jemima Khan may live the grand life of an English aristocrat, but behind the famous boyfriends and the important hair is a serious political journalist and a budding documentary film producer. Her latest project? Taking on WikiLeaks.

The address is unremarkable and the street unexciting, but to slip past the nondescript front gate is to enter an alternative universe, a leafy enclave of secluded houses smack



Jemima Khan in the sitting room of her Fulham house, which she decorated herself.

in the center of southwest London. This is where Jemima Khan lives, in a house with soaring ceilings that used to be a factory for old-style taxi carriages.

It was a shock to find this little slice of privilege within a shout of the bustling, thrusting Chelsea soccer stadium; it was a different sort of shock to meet Khan, who presents her own misleading facade. Wearing skinny jeans and a large letter-sweater-style cardigan, she was all long slender legs, glossy flowing hair, radiant English skin and articulate charm. She offered tea, apologized for the state of her dog-distressed cushions, took off her boots, curled up on the sofa next to Brian — the dog in question — and tossed out a barrage of questions meant to disarm and deflect.

She prefers to be interviewer rather than interviewee, she said apologetically, particularly in light of how mean-spirited the British papers can be about someone with her background, and how they can twist words into different meanings. “I haven’t done any interviews for quite a while,” Khan said. “I am naturally quite an open person, and I always end up saying too much.”

But she has made an exception in the service of “We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks,” a film about the online antisecrecy group and its founder, Julian Assange, that was directed by Alex Gibney (“Client 9: The Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer”) and of which Khan is an executive producer. Khan has been involved with Assange’s case since he was arrested in December 2010, and she helped post bail for him, but the movie examines him and his work with a cool dispassion.

As she talks about her own work, Khan realizes there is a bit of a perception problem, a slight disconnect — her charmed upbringing and potentially frivolous existence at odds with, as becomes increasingly clear, the serious-minded, hyper-busy reality of her working life.

The tabloids persist in calling her “socialite Jemima Khan,” as if that were an official title, like “doctor,” and Khan, 39, has indeed appeared often in the party-photos sections of glossy magazines and Web sites. Her father was the late financier Sir Jimmy Goldsmith; her mother is Lady Annabel Goldsmith, a legendarily charming hostess whose first husband, Mark Birley, named Annabel’s nightclub after her. The two had 10 children between them; Jimmy Goldsmith was an inveterate keeper of mistresses (in fact, Annabel was his mistress before she became his wife) who fathered children with four different women. Life around the dinner table was complicated, noisy and filled with vociferous debate about the issues of the day.

Khan was a serious student, “which is why I don’t understand why my children have to be coerced and virtually waterboarded into doing their revision,” she said, laughing, using the British expression for “studying.” But at 19 she dropped out of college to marry the Pakistani playboy / cricket star-turned-politician Imran Khan, who exuded charm and exoticism. It was a bit of a shock for everyone.

“A born-again Muslim twice my age who lived in Lahore and wanted to be in Pakistani politics isn’t any father’s idea of a perfect son-in-law for their teenage daughter,” Khan said wryly. “But they both married against their parents’ wishes and eloped,” she added, of her parents, “so they weren’t exactly in a position to intervene.”

Marry she did. She moved with her new husband to Pakistan, learned Urdu, had two sons and threw herself into political and social causes, becoming a public figure in her own right, her every outfit and utterance dissected and obsessed over. The couple divorced after nine years, growing apart but remaining good friends, whereupon Khan returned to London and embarked on a passionate romance with the actor Hugh Grant. (She remains good friends with him, too, as well as with the literary agent Luke Janklow, another recent ex, she said, adding that she is happily single now.)

Along the way, Khan somehow pulled off the neat trick of reinventing herself from *Hello!* magazine stalwart to serious person consumed by serious issues. She went back to school, finished her undergraduate degree and then studied modern trends in Islam at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Now she is associate editor of the political magazine *New Statesman*, for which she writes fluent and incisive political profiles, and is *Vanity Fair*’s European editor at large. She has also written an article about polygamy for *New Statesman* and presented a BBC radio program on the subject in Britain. In her spare time, if that is the right way to describe it, she finished a screenplay about a young, hapless-in-love British woman whose exasperated mother turns to her Pakistani neighbors to help organize an arranged marriage for her.

That is her first foray away from nonfiction. “I am completely aware that it is a massive cliché to be working on my screenplay, but at least it was commissioned,” Khan said cheerfully. “It could be crap, but I am going to get it done.”

“We Steal Secrets,” which was released last month, examines the complicated case of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. It also examines in fascinating detail the equally complicated and possibly more interesting, because it is so shocking, case of Bradley Manning, **the troubled, sexually confused Army intelligence analyst** whose leaking of secret American diplomatic and policy documents to WikiLeaks led to his arrest three

years ago. (He is currently awaiting trial.) As for Assange, the movie dissects all his contradictions, examining him as hero and villain, as an advocate of openness and transparency who is also a deeply secretive, possibly paranoid control freak — an ultimately unknowable person.

Khan's connection to the movie came because she was an admirer from afar of WikiLeaks and, for a time, a high-profile supporter of Assange's in Britain. "There was a lot of stuff coming out about Pakistan, which confirmed suspicions I had about the sort of double-dealing of the government," she said of the WikiLeaks material. And more simply, "I don't like lies," she explained. "WikiLeaks exposed the most dangerous lies of all, which are those that are told to us by elected governments."

She was drawn into **Assange's odd, charismatic orbit** after the British authorities placed him in solitary confinement while he fought extradition to Sweden, where he is **wanted on charges of sexually assaulting** two former WikiLeaks volunteers. Along with other sympathizers, Khan helped post his bail, which ran to the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But then several things happened. Working with Gibney on his WikiLeaks documentary, Khan served as his liaison to Assange and **was sucked further and further into the morass of Assange's suspicious, conspiracy-theory-suffused mind [according to Gibney and Khan --A.B.]**. Assange at first seemed amenable to an interview on camera, but became increasingly, maddeningly obstructive, finally heaping so many conditions and demands that negotiations over the terms completely broke down. *[Nonsense. See John Pilger and Joseph Farrell on this subject. --A.B.]*

Then Assange suddenly jumped bail — Khan and the other supporters lost their money — and dramatically sought political asylum in the Ecuadorean embassy, around the corner from Harrods, where he has remained, confined to a small studio, since last June.

He has never responded to Khan's e-mails asking him to explain his legal situation, she says, and she said her agreement to help post bail was never meant to allow him to avoid facing the charges in Sweden, but merely to get him out of prison while he prepared a legal case and continued his WikiLeaks work. She has not spoken to him since June of last year.

Khan recently wrote an **elegant [???**] article for *New Statesmen* about her evolving feelings — admiration turned to disillusionment — toward Assange. While claiming to support the notion of a just society "based upon truth," she wrote, WikiLeaks has in fact "been guilty of the same obfuscation and misinformation as those it sought to expose, while its supporters are expected to follow, unquestioningly, in blinkered, cultish devotion."

Assange's supporters have denounced "We Steal Secrets," saying that its examination of the sex charges against Assange amounts to irrelevant sensationalism. *[That is not all they say, and what they say is substantiated. --A.B.]* On the contrary, Khan said, Gibney actually unearthed a great many details about Assange's past that he ended up not putting in the movie. "Alex is an ethical, scrupulous person, and I think he decided that it was not relevant to the story, and the Swedish case absolutely was," she said. *[In what way? --A.B.]* Meanwhile, Khan is starting work with Gibney on another documentary, about drone warfare.

So please do not say she is a socialite. “There are plenty of things that you can call me, even if they are not flattering, but socialite, I think, is incorrect,” she said. Nor should anyone assume that growing up with money has somehow made her feel entitled. On the contrary, Khan said, as the interview wound down, it has cemented her hunger for doing something meaningful. “I know people in similar situations who haven’t really worked or who have sort of squandered their money,” she said. “The result is, I suspect, just massively low self-esteem and an unfulfilled life.”

She led the way to the door, through the courtyard, and back to that nondescript gate, discussing why there was a huge hole in the ceiling of her entryway. (It has to do with a shared plumbing connection with a nearby house, and the unwise tendency in that house, apparently, to flush baby wipes down the toilet.) The next day, she sent an e-mail clarifying her position. “I didn’t mean to suggest that I am not very lucky,” Khan wrote. “I just meant that it’s easy to become indolent, entitled and to lose a sense of purpose if you don’t have to work.” She finished: “In my experience, being busy and working hard is the key to sanity/happiness.”

<http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/29/the-unlikely-activist/>

The “We Steal Secrets” documentary on WikiLeaks is incredibly biased

I was appalled to see the We Steal Secrets documentary portray whistleblowing as something that is deviant

Jesselyn Radack
The Guardian
30 May 2013

Oscar-winning documentarian Alex Gibney’s “We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks” is slick and dangerous in the same way “Zero Dark Thirty” is. People walk away finding it “balanced”, and thinking that certain conduct (whistleblowing and torture, respectively) is “bad” or “good”. **We live in such a perverse moment in society that a film is portrayed as “balanced” when it paints whistleblowing as deviant behavior.**

The film takes all the caricatures of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and admitted source Pfc Bradley Manning, exaggerates them, and adds some new ones. The attacks range from the petty (Manning is effeminate and Assange is a hacker-hero enamored with his newfound rock star status), to the simply bizarre (Assange is out to impregnate unwitting women and spread his seed all over the planet) and impossible (during the era of “Don’t ask, don’t tell,” while serving in the military, Manning was taking hormone therapy.)

Gibney spins a narrative about the “transformations” of both Manning and Assange: “[i]n online chats with WikiLeaks, Manning’s thoughts changed,” and this is inextricably intertwined with his gender-identity crisis. Meanwhile, Assange has an almost-religious devotion to transparency, but turns into a law-dodging criminal who wants to keep secret his many salacious deeds.

Ironically, it is Gibney's transformation in how he views his subjects— a transformation that occurs over the course of making this film— that follows the quintessential whistleblower nightmare, with Gibney playing the role of retaliator. In the typical whistleblower ordeal, a person trying to expose disturbing and often illegal acts by the government runs afoul of the power structure, which then reprises with fantastical smears and attempts to ruin that individual personally and professionally by focusing on character assassination rather than conscience.

In Manning's own words, he "saw incredible things, awful things . . . things that belonged in the public domain". He then made the most massive whistleblower disclosures in the history of the world, exposing war crimes and the dark underbelly of our misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan. He hoped his disclosures would spur "discussion, debates, and reforms" and "want[ed] people to know the truth, no matter who they are, because without information you cannot make informed decisions as a public".

The government swiftly retaliated, arresting Manning, whom President Obama said "broke the law", and launching a worldwide manhunt for Julian Assange, whom vice president Joe Biden labeled a "hi-tech terrorist".

By spending an inordinate amount of the film on Assange's alleged personal misdeeds and Manning's gender dysmorphia, **Gibney, who should know better, given that his other stellar socio-political documentaries ("Taxi to the Dark Side" and "Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room") have relied on and benefitted from whistleblowers, perpetuates the usual smears that the government levels against whistleblowers and their allies: that they are vengeful, unstable, or out for fame and profit.**

Taking a page out of the government playbook, the film focuses on the person rather than the substance of his complaints. It attacks their credibility rather than answering their criticism. The film expends tremendous resources tarnishing those who broke the code of silence, which both Manning and Assange did in their own ways, on a massive and unprecedented scale with a massive megaphone called WikiLeaks.

In publicity for the film, Gibney minces no words in describing his true feelings about whistleblowers: "I think [Bradley Manning] raises big issues about who whistleblowers are, **because they are alienated people who don't get along with people around them, which motivates them to do what they do.**"

Legally [and ethically -- A.B.] speaking, a whistleblower's motive is irrelevant. As long as a government employee discloses what he or she reasonably believes evidences fraud, waste, abuse, illegality, or a danger to public health or safety, it matters not a whit if the revelation is beneficent, self-aggrandizing, naïve, or for financial gain (there are actually a number of whistleblower reward laws that pay out money as an incentive for coming forward.)

In the legal calculus, motive is irrelevant because whistleblowers are human beings who often have flawed and complicated motives, especially when most all of them have been suffering the death-by-a-thousand-paper-cuts treatment (ostracization, demotion, etc) that almost universally precedes their disclosures. This could also explain why people like National Security Agency whistleblower Thomas Drake,

who was filmed for the movie, ended up on the cutting-room floor. He is far too vanilla, upright, well-regarded— and perhaps the biggest strike of all, told producer Alexis Bloom that he considered Manning a whistleblower— to fit Gibney's "troubled whistleblower" mold.

While Gibney presents the documentary as a search for the truth about Manning's motivations and Assange's duplicity, the truth it actually reveals is that even an enlightened Academy award-winning documentarian of Gibney's caliber can be tarnished by the power of the government's self-serving stereotype of whistleblowers and the people who support them.

Assange Could Win Australian Senate Seat, Poll Shows

WikiLeaks founder could see more support for Senate campaign than originally predicted

Jacob Chamberlain, staff writer

Common Dreams

May 29, 2013

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange stands a good chance of winning his bid for an Australian Senate seat this September, according to a new poll released Wednesday. The poll, which asked Australian voters online "How likely would you be to vote for [Assange] and the WikiLeaks Party?" showed that 26 per cent of respondents considered themselves likely to vote the WikiLeaks Party into office. The same went for 23 per cent of voters in Victoria, where Assange will run.

Given Australia's electoral structure, "compulsory preferential voting," 23 to 26 per cent is more than enough to secure a seat for Assange.

The UK's Register explains:

But Assange doesn't need 23 per cent of votes to win a seat, because voting for Australia's Senate uses compulsory preferential voting, with candidates elected if they secure a quota of one sixth of all votes cast. Once a candidate secures a quota, further votes for that candidate are passed on to voters' second preference. This system **means that a candidate can be elected without many voters selecting them as their first preference.**

The realities of Australian politics mean that the State of Victoria, Assange's home for several years, will elect two Senators from the dominant Labor party and its main rival the Liberal/National coalition. **A fifth seat will likely go to The Australian Greens, leaving the sixth up for grabs. That seat may, if recent history is any guide, go to a candidate who secures as little as two per cent of first preference votes.**

Although a victory for Assange in September may not be his ticket out of the Ecuadorian embassy in London, as the Register explains, it could give him a voice in the Australian government that could prove helpful in the future:

Even if Assange did win a seat, Australian Parliamentarians don't enjoy privileges that would allow him avoid arrest upon exiting the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. And as this article points out, he may in any case not be eligible to run. Even if he is eligible and wins, he then faces the problem of appearing in the Senate, as if he fails to do so his seat would be declared vacant and awarded to another member of his party.

If that were to happen, Australia would likely gain a noisy pro-Assange voice in Parliament. That could still be useful to Assange, as the Senate has not delivered an absolute majority for the government of the day during most of the last thirty years. Minor party or independent Senators therefore often trade support for the Government's agenda for support for their pet causes.

Julian Assange on Fighting the International Crackdown on WikiLeaks

Democracy Now!
May 29, 2013

In this 40-minute web exclusive interview, Julian Assange of WikiLeaks discusses his more than 300 days in the Ecuadorean embassy, the U.S. Justice Department spying on journalists, the future of WikiLeaks and Visa's financial blockade on WikiLeaks.

AMY GOODMAN: This is Democracy Now!, The War and Peace Report. I'm Amy Goodman, with Nermeen Shaikh. Again, Julian Assange, founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks. On Tuesday, Ecuador's foreign minister accused the British government of trampling on the human rights of Julian Assange by refusing to allow him to travel to Ecuador, which granted him political asylum almost a year ago. The foreign minister, Ricardo Patiño, told Reuters in an interview, "By not granting him safe passage they are violating the human rights of a citizen, and every day that passes the effects of that violation hurt the person more and more." He says he is preparing a document, a document that Britain is legally obliged to grant you, Julian Assange, permission to leave the embassy and travel to South America. Can you talk about the significance of this, what your plans are, and what the Ecuadorean government is doing to help you come to their country?

JULIAN ASSANGE: The Ecuadorean government has been very supportive, and Foreign Minister Patiño, as well, as you see in relation to his statement. Why are they so supportive? Well, because they spent two months studying my asylum application, which included a lot of evidence, some of which— most of which is public, which you can see if you go to uswikileaks.org or also look at justice4assange.com, with the numeral 4. The law in this matter is— the morality in this matter is obviously clear. I have not been charged with an offense. The Swedes refuse to provide a guarantee I will not be extradited to the United States. They say they will put me in prison immediately, without charge, while they bother to conduct what they call their preliminary investigation. They refuse to behave like a normal European state using normal European procedures. The whole matter was even dropped once before in Sweden before the involvement of the politician, Claes Borgström.

So, now let's go to the law. The international law is also very clear. Both domestically, as it is implemented here in the United Kingdom, it says that asylum

procedures dominate other areas of the law, similar with internationally, that the United Kingdom has a relationship with the United Nations and the UNHCR, which is involved in the resettlement program for refugees. It has signed up to those treaties. It is part of the international system for the resettlement of refugees. It is meant to abide by the decisions taken by another state in relation to that program, in this case Ecuador.

The law is completely clear. The U.K. government is in violation of international law. Why is it— why is it doing that? Well, it's mostly a matter of prestige. The U.K. government has admitted, just one week ago, that it has so far spent \$5 million in 11 months on the surveillance operation upon me around this embassy. And that is not related to surveilling the embassy for other purposes. That is related, as they admit, to surveilling the embassy in relation to me, \$5 million.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Julian Assange, I want to turn to a related matter. You recently made a request under the Data Protection Act for information from Government Communications Headquarters, GCHQ, in the U.K., which gave you access to instant messages that remained unclassified. And one of the messages from September 2012 read, quote, "They are trying to arrest him on suspicion of XYZ. ... It is definitely a fit-up. ... Their timings are too convenient right after Cablegate." Could you talk about how you made the decision to use the Data Protection Act to get this information and what exactly it is that you found, in addition to this message, and what it means?

JULIAN ASSANGE: The U.K. did not have a Freedom of Information Act at all before 2005. This is a stratified society, very secretive in its formal procedures. It has no constitution. However, it did introduce the Freedom of Information Act in 2005. However, there's a separate act, and which has been gutted, as bureaucracies have learned how to avoid. But there is a separate act, the Data Protection Act, that came in in response to concerns about privacy and what— what credit card companies and so on, what information they were holding on members of the establishment here. So, we used the Data Protection Act on GCHQ, which is the equivalent, the British equivalent, of the National Security Agency.

And much to their horror, they had some chatter in their unclassified networks that they felt that they were forced to reveal in response to that, and that includes discussions about my present situation. **It also included calendars from Cabinet looking at— given to GCHQ, looking at when they predicted that various things would happen in my asylum case or extradition case. So, it shows you the very political nature of what is happening here, that these people in GCHQ should be so interested in it.**

I'm not alleging that there was some kind of CIA conspiracy, but instantly the Swedish government [???] was involved in publicizing and distributing, in an unlawful manner, according to their own laws, these allegations against me, which they admit that no woman was intending to make. That's something that happened once the police got hold of them, and that— also that **the Pentagon, in its Twitter accounts, immediately started promoting this. Robert Gates, on hearing that I had been arrested, there's video footage of him saying, with a great big smile, "Well, that sounds like good news to me," and similar sort of statements coming out from other U.S. officials, plus very aggressively. So, this is a matter that was politicized from the word go domestically in Sweden by the politician Claes Borgström just one month before the Swedish election, externally by Gates and by the Pentagon, and statements by the Swedish foreign minister, prime minister and several other different ministers repeatedly.**

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, I want to turn to the new book by Google CEO Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen called *The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business* that we were talking about in the first part of this interview. In the book, the authors suggest that you redacted parts of WikiLeaks' releases only because of monetary concerns. This is an excerpt from the book. They write, quote, "Today, hackers and information criminals publish their ill-gotten gains fairly indiscriminately— the 150,000 Sony customer records released by the hacker group LulzSec in 2011 were simply made downloadable as a file through a peer-to-peer file-sharing service— but in the future, if a centralized platform emerged that offered them WikiLeaks-level security and publicity, it would present a real problem. Redaction," they write, "verification and other precautionary measures taken by WikiLeaks and its media partners would surely not be performed on these unregulated sites (indeed, Assange told us he redacted only to reduce the international pressure that was financially strangling him and said he would have preferred no redactions), a lack of judgment around sensitive materials might well get people killed," they write. They say, "Information criminals would almost certainly traffic in bulk leaks in order to cause maximum disruption." Your response to this excerpt of the new book by the CEO of Google, Eric Schmidt?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, first of all, it's just simply untrue. And we released the full transcript of the meeting. We released the audiotape to go with the transcript. And you can see it is simply false. And the statement is never made. But if we go even beyond that and look to see whether there's disparate statements in the transcript that could be brought together, intentionally or by mistake, to make such a claim, that is also false. **I encourage everyone to have a look at that transcript. You can find it by searching for "Assange Schmidt." Just search for that.**

Now, a more interesting question is why is that topic being addressed at all. This is really quite a reactionary way of considering these issues. We don't have censors sitting there on the postal system monitoring every letter that you send to your grandmother. We don't have such censors sitting there for email. We don't have such censors sitting there monitoring to see if you say something bad in a phone call or if you've got a box of documents you posted off somewhere. So, the call for— the moral call for that kind of censorship, how would it— how would it actually be done? Well, how it would be done is by mass surveillance. It would be by— you can't censor something until you've seen what it is. So that would be mass surveillance of people's communications in order to grab and stop the ones that some power group that Google is wanting to ally itself with, it seems, would be offended by.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Julian Assange, you spoke in the first part of our interview about some of the financial restrictions placed on donations to WikiLeaks. Can you explain what you think the future of WikiLeaks is, how the organization has suffered as a result of the constraints that have been placed on financial donations, and some of the ways in which you're still managing to receive funding?

JULIAN ASSANGE: The initial blockade, which occurred for purely political reasons, by Visa, MasterCard, PayPal, Western Union, Diners Club, JCB, Discover, the Bank of America and Swiss Post Finance, that initial blockade was done extrajudicially, extralegally. **There's no law being used. There's no law being cited. There's not even an administrative decision** that has been cited by, say, the U.S. Treasury. In fact, the

U.S. Treasury has found just the opposite, that there is no lawful reason for such a blockade, and has not applied one itself. This is an example of patronage, an example of how this new center, extreme center, of U.S. power is able to influence the organizations in its periphery— namely, financial service companies.

Ninety-five percent of WikiLeaks financing was blockaded. What does that mean? Well, in order to have sovereignty, you must have economic sovereignty. So, for those people in Europe who try and use a Visa card to donate to an organization in Europe, those people in Australia who use a Visa card to try and donate into Australia, and, arguably, you could say certain people in U.S. states who try to donate to WikiLeaks in the United States, their economic sovereignty has been removed from them as a result of this interference by Visa, MasterCard, etc.

Now, in response, **we have sued these companies. And in every single court action that has occurred, we have been victorious.** And the last one was two weeks ago. Visa has been ordered to reopen the gateway. It has relented, but on midnight June 30, it's making another attack to close it. And here we have an extraordinary situation, revealed even in internal documentation of Visa, where **Visa is processing donations to KKK affiliates, but not processing donations to WikiLeaks.**

What does it mean, processing donations? It sounds very abstract. Well, people express their political will to support a political group or a group's activities, its political activities in the case of WikiLeaks, with their wallet. They vote with their wallet. They express themselves in a First Amendment manner in speech and in association as a result of giving a particular group money. And this has been enjoined, not as a result of a community consensus, as such things should be done, mandated under law, simply as a result of backroom deal making in Washington and elsewhere.

But if we go to— if we go to how have we been able to survive over the past two-and-a-half years of this blockade, well, a 95 percent reduction in revenue, of course, will destroy most businesses, will destroy most families. But WikiLeaks has extensive worldwide support. So, even though we are only receiving 5 percent of that, even though 5 percent— 95 percent is blockaded, 5 percent of a very large figure is still not an insignificant— insignificant figure. It's just enough to proceed as we have been doing so. But, of course, it has denied the organization and its supporters the rightful growth and expansion of WikiLeaks. **It means that we can't proceed our publications as fast as we otherwise would or support our supporters who are in prison or facing trial to the degree that we would like to.**

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, what do you see the future of WikiLeaks— what could it evolve into? I mean, in terms of the content, what you're aiming for WikiLeaks to be?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Every law, every constitution, every regulative decision is based upon what people are discussing in their community. It's based upon our sum knowledge of history and the present. And if— we can see that by taking it to extremes. Let's imagine that no one is able to communicate with everyone else, that all the books are burnt, so there's no communication with the past, there's no communication with each other in the present. As a result, all the civil parts of society, all the better ways of doing things, are forgotten and collapse entirely. All laws, regulations and so on, constitutions, simply disappear. So, the question is— we know that at this extreme there is nothing. People are like rocks or like animals in the dirt. They can't communicate. They're all deaf and mute.

And we know that we're currently somewhere here and that the **Internet has led to a remarkable period of political education around the world. It is the greatest**

period of political education that has ever occurred in terms of the most number of people being involved in it. Can we move that across? Can we get that to here? Because if we look at the trajectory, it seems that— that when we have books that are able to be freely published, when the printing press was introduced, when other forms of communications, letters and so on, was introduced, they were not able to be centrally controlled, where people could share information with each other about how the world works. The state of man improved tremendously. So, can we move it even further? And that's the goal of WikiLeaks. We are the avant-garde of the free press, but **we are also, in doing so, the avant-garde of human knowledge.**

AMY GOODMAN: Julian, I was wondering if you could talk about how you spend your days. How many days have you been in the embassy right now?

JULIAN ASSANGE: It's about 337 days.

AMY GOODMAN: And how large is the space that you're in?

JULIAN ASSANGE: It's a small flat. I have no complaints about the space or the— or definitely the staff, who are very supportive to me here and who have shown great tolerance to the disruption of their life. **They are also under— all under threat of being expelled. Explicit threats are made by the British. At one stage, we had over 30 police surrounding the building in the middle of the night, police coming down on ropes, an explicit threat to enter the embassy unlawfully by the British.** So, these are people who have families here, who have children, who have lived in the U.K. for over a dozen years. So, it has been— it has been difficult for them.

The only— the difficulty for me is that the surveillance operation outside, this \$5 million— more than \$5 million per year spent on this surveillance operation, means, of course, **meeting with potential sources is utterly out of the question. It also means that I can't meet many of the WikiLeaks staff, who would be placed into a vulnerable position. It's also difficult for me to conduct my activities,** difficult for me to run for election in Australia, for example, in such a state.

But, you know, journalists love to hear about, desperate to hear about how I'm suffering in this condition. Well, I am not suffering in that sense. I am doing my life's work. **We are winning in this fight. There's a very clear trajectory over the last year. We are winning in court. We're winning politically across the world. So, I have my work, if you like, to keep me company, and it's doing— it's doing very well.**

I mean, we were facing a position where it was borderline as to whether the organization and some of its principal people would be annihilated by the U.S. back reaction to our publications. We understood that at the time. We understood that the organization might be destroyed, as a result. But the publication, especially of U.S. diplomatic cables, was so important historically, so significant. It is the single greatest political treasure that has ever been published, over 3,000 volumes of documentation on how the world works— not how the world worked a hundred years ago, but how the world actually works right now. And it was significant enough that it was worth risking our freedom, but also the ongoing longevity of the organization.

But we've managed to battle through it. The organization is still continuing. We have published over a million documents in the last 12 months. The number of documents we've been publishing is increasing. As time has gone by, the legal position is strengthening, the political position is strengthening. **We now have an entire continent of Latin America pretty strongly supporting WikiLeaks at a popular level, but even at a governmental level.**

AMY GOODMAN: What indicates to you that you're winning?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, we are literally winning in the courts in Iceland. Of course, Iceland is an independent— is one of the most independent countries in Europe, that has been behind a lot of our values in the past. The European Parliament passed a resolution against the activities of the credit card companies in relation to us. In Australia, we have had three opinion polls. They show that I have between 26 and 28 percent of the voting intention, Australia-wide. We have 40 percent of the voting intention of people under the age of 30, 36 percent of the voting intention in the most popular state of New South Wales, where Sydney is located. The Kissinger Files, 1.7 million documents that we have just published.

And I detect a certain fear in the United States administration and a certain fear in the Pentagon in relation to making statements about us. The bad old neo-McCarthyist fervor that once existed in 2011 about this organization, where politicians felt that they could propose bills to Congress, where Lieberman and Peter T. King felt they could propose bills to Congress to declare my staff enemy combatants of the United States, who could be kidnapped or killed at will, those days are well and truly gone, where politicians like Biden thought that he could come out and declare that I was a high-tech terrorist, where other politicians and high-profile journalists thought they could come out and directly call for my assassination, as Bill O'Reilly did and other people in Fox and The Washington Times. They came out and nakedly called for my assassination, including an adviser even in Canada to Stephen Harper. Those days are gone. Now, this organization is furious, and we are after redress. And we are getting redress.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Julian Assange, you mentioned how you're doing in the race for the Senate in Australia. Can you tell us a little about how you're running a campaign from the Ecuadorean embassy in London?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Let me just contextualize this a bit for American viewers. Australia has long— is the closest state culturally to the United States. It's much closer culturally to the United States than England. It is twice as young as the United States. It was the first country to give— second country to give women the vote. New Zealand was the first, was the first country. And that's because it didn't have the hangover of this existing British class structure. And after World War II, Australia reoriented its strategic relationships from the United Kingdom and towards the United States. And some of that has been good, and a lot of it has been bad.

Now, the present Labor government was an infiltration target in the 1970s, the people in the union movement and so on. And that includes people like the foreign minister, Bob Carr, who we exposed as being a U.S. embassy informant back in the 1970s. It includes other people like Mark Gibb, who we knocked off out of the Australian Cabinet. He was the power broker who permitted the current prime minister, Julia Gillard, to get into power, to roll the previous Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, in a **political coup d'état backed by mining companies**.

So, what happened when WikiLeaks published the U.S. diplomatic cables? There were some previous actions before, but the biggest response by the Australian government was as a result of our publication of the U.S. diplomatic cables. Well, what did the U.S. government do? It declared that there would be a big investigation, that the DOJ would be in charge of it, and it was going to go after us, and so on. The Australian government was even worse. The Australian government, the Australian prime minister publicly declared that what I was doing was illegal. The Australian

government publicly declared a whole-of-government investigation, publicly saying it would involve the Defense Department; ASIO, the domestic intelligence service; ASIS, the foreign intelligence service, equivalent to the CIA; the AFP, Australian Federal Police, equivalent to the FBI; and the attorney general's department. And this whole-of-government investigation would go after me and go after WikiLeaks. The Australian Federal Police found, within three weeks, that I had in fact committed no crime.

What did the attorney general and the prime minister also do? They requested that the Australian Federal Police see if I could be charged with treason under Australian law. They also said publicly they would cancel my passport as an Australian citizen, as I was traveling in Europe and trying to be careful about U.S. intelligence agencies surveilling me. And eventually, they said, "We decided not to cancel Mr. Assange's passport." And why? Because it would be an outrage to cancel a citizen's passport? No, because, **they said publicly, that it was helpful for tracking my movements. And that's not just rhetoric.** We pulled the internal documentation, and it says just that, that the police advice back up to the Australian government was they were finding it helpful for tracking my movements. The Australian intelligence services have been found—and there's lots of this in The Sydney Morning Herald as a result of FOI procedures—have been found to be sending information back and forth to the United States in relationship to me.

So, the Australian people are very unhappy to see an Australian organization, an Australian export success story like WikiLeaks, being treated like that. They're also unhappy to see an Australian citizen being treated like that. They don't want that to happen to their own families or to themselves. But also, they appreciate the values of WikiLeaks. The values of WikiLeaks arose from me and some other Australians who formed this organization. So it is partly a distillation of Australian cultural values, partly a distillation of American cultural values, of medicine and respect for the First Amendment, and understanding that such values are the disciplining force of government.

So, I think that's why you see an eagerness in the Australian population to elect our people from the WikiLeaks Party into Canberra to go in and clean it out. If we manage to stand up to the public pressure of the Pentagon, their public demands that we destroy our publications, then can we stand up to a bit of cronyism and corruption and pressure from property developers for the U.S. embassy in Canberra? Well, of course we can.

AMY GOODMAN: In a major development in the ongoing scandals around the Obama administration spying on journalists, NBC News has revealed that Attorney General Eric Holder personally signed off on a controversial search warrant that identified Fox News reporter James Rosen as a possible co-conspirator in violations of the Espionage Act. The search warrant enabled Justice Department investigators to secretly seize his private emails as part of an investigation into who provided him with classified information about North Korea in 2009. In the government's application for the warrant, prosecutors allege there was probable cause to believe that Rosen violated the Espionage Act of 1917. In another filing, prosecutors argued they should be allowed to keep the warrant secret from Rosen because they might need to monitor his email account indefinitely. I want to ask you about Rosen and also about the FBI getting the phone records of AP, you know, on 20 phone lines, which meant about a hundred reporters and editors at Associated Press.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, let's look at this phenomena from two aspects. Don't be deceived by what appears to be small maneuvers by the Department of Justice to go

after AP, to go after Rosen, to go after us, etc. We have over here the bulk surveillance industry run by the **National Security Agency that already has all these records**. It has them all already. The National Security Agency— and this has come out in one court case after another— was involved in a project called Stellar Wind to collect all the calling records of the United States, every record of everyone calling everyone over years. And the result of that lay out the entire community and political structure, based upon who people are friends with. **You can infer that by who calls who, and what the status is by the relative flow of calls around the country, to suck out the entire community structure of the United States. That has already been done.** Those calling records already enter into the national security complex.

What we're talking about here are mechanisms to use that information in a court case, and therefore it has to be clean. This is the dirty team; this is the clean team. And so, these are maneuvers to pull people into court cases that will become public to set a deterrent against national security journalism. And the most pernicious aspect of that is the abuse of the Espionage Act and other mechanisms to try and conflate the activities of a source with the activities of a journalist or a publisher, and to try and say that whenever a journalist deals with a source, they're in fact engaged in a conspiracy. And if there's an allegation— of course, allegations can be very easily made, placed on the table, just invented from thin air— that a source's behavior affects national security and is therefore espionage, and therefore, extend that allegation over to the journalist and to the source— and to the publisher.

In the case of Rosen, they have done that in order to get at Rosen's emails and other records, to then back reflect onto the source or onto other sources. You know, it is simply a disgrace. It is unethical conduct. It is politically worrying conduct. It is chilling conduct. And it is— why is it being done? Because they believe they can get away with it. **It is part of advancing the frontier of the national security state to roll on over the First Amendment and every other traditionally accepted U.S. value.**

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Julian Assange, as we begin to wrap, I'd like to go to a clip from Alex Gibney's recently released documentary, "We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks". This clip follows you as you're about to deliver a press conference on the publication of the Afghan War Logs, a massive trove of documents exposing the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. The clip begins with the voice of Australian journalist Mark Davis.

MARK DAVIS: He woke up late, of course. I'm knocking on the door. "Julian, come on, man." He gets up, does his normal thing, you know.

JULIAN ASSANGE: What's the time? What's the time?

MARK DAVIS: Twenty-five to.

JULIAN ASSANGE: I need to prepare a little list of things.

MARK DAVIS: Alright, I'll be two minutes. How are you feeling?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Tired, haven't been to sleep, but good. Good. Fourteen pages in The Guardian this morning. "Massive leak of secret files exposes true Afghan war." We tell our sources maximum political impact, and I think we got pretty close.

MARK DAVIS: There's 10 trucks out there, 10 media trucks.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Yeah, yeah. It'll be a good outcome.

MARK DAVIS: He walked out that door as the sort of aging student hobo. By the time, you know, he had made this 50-yard walk, he was a rock star. He was one of the most famous guys on the planet.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: That was a clip from "We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks", a recently released documentary by Alex Gibney. That was Australian journalist Mark Davis. Julian Assange, can you talk about that clip, about the film, and whether you were interviewed for the film, and if not, why?

JULIAN ASSANGE: WikiLeaks, as an organization, did not cooperate with the film at all. We cooperated instead with an upcoming film by Laura Poitras and another one that is being co-produced by Ken Loach's Sixteen Films. Alex Gibney apparently is very unhappy with that, and it seems to have affected his objectivity and sense of perspective in a result— as a result of it.

Talk about that clip— that was the moment of the Afghan War Logs. There's a— you know, a desire there to make, as there is in many— much news reportage or documentaries, to make the subject of the film the only thing, like there was nothing important that happened before. That's— it's not true. We can see silly statements. Just seeing just now, for example, we have Mark Davis, a reasonably decent Australian journalist, saying that I woke up late, but actually, if you look at the clip, it has me saying that I'd been awake all night working, and that's clearly true.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Julian Assange, you mentioned two other films coming up by Ken Loach and Laura Poitras. Could you say, are those documentaries? Are they feature films?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Those are feature documentaries.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: And there is another film releasing on WikiLeaks called "The Fifth Estate". I believe it's coming out in the fall or in November. Do you know anything about that?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Yes, although the most recent thing that I've seen about that says it's coming out in October. That is a pretty nasty feature documentary— sorry, a feature film by DreamWorks, Spielberg's outfit. It is based upon the two most hostile anti-WikiLeaks books that have ever been made. And it opens with a scene in Iran, in a nuclear complex in Iran, which has a— what the film describes as a U.S. informant in there informing on the Iranian nuclear program. They have the Iranians 15 minutes away from an atomic weapon. The Iranians, in that, are loading the atomic weapon into a Shahab-3 missile. And **according to this piece of fiction, WikiLeaks publications exposes this Iranian U.S. intelligence source, and that's why— that's why the U.S. administration is not able to say that Iran is really 15 minutes away from an atomic weapon.** That also brackets the film at the end. That source flees. The Iranians find out as a result of our publications, and he flees. So you can see what the setup is. I mean, it's pretty nasty. But apparently, demonizing Iran and, I guess, WikiLeaks is how you win an Academy Award these days. **It should be presented, of course, by none other than Michelle Obama.**

AMY GOODMAN: Julian Assange, Alex Gibney said, quote, "Finally, we had a six-hour meeting." He's talking about you. He says, "He told me the market rate for an interview was a million dollars. I told him I don't pay for interviews," said Alex Gibney. And he went on to say that you said, "That's too bad. In that case, you might do something else for me." And Gibney said, "He wanted me to spy on our other interview subjects, which I found a rather odd request from someone concerned about source protection." Is that true?

JULIAN ASSANGE: No. I don't see why, Amy, you need to repeat the embarrassing talking points by a documentary filmmaker who makes a film about WikiLeaks without anyone from WikiLeaks in it. Of course, Alex is trying to cover from that critical, critical flaw. But we have released the entire transcript, including a description of that conversation. **We have that conversation on tape, unlike Alex Gibney. And you can go to wikileaks.org/gibney-transcript.html to read all about it.** This is a case of a reasonably sleazy U.S. documentary filmmaker coming up against scientific journalism, and you know he's not liking the results. I mean, you can see by his comments. We published the whole transcript. We analyzed the whole thing. We record interviews. We show every sleight of hand in the editing that has been conducted. It's interesting to speculate, if we move beyond the personal and back to the political, why it is that that is done. Well, in a way, thematically, it used these tricks in order to increase the dramatic tension, the character tension, and so on. But it's clear that Gibney also has a bit of a personal vendetta that we went with— we decided not to go with him, and we went instead with Laura Poitras.

AMY GOODMAN: Finally, Julian Assange, where do you see yourself in a year?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, a year is quite interesting. In a few months, obviously, I'll probably still be here. But a year, quite possibly in Ecuador, quite possibly in Australia. The Australian election is September 14. It's just 106 days away. That will be very significant. **It's not legally significant, but politically it's very significant as an expression of the will of the Australian people,** more broadly. This is a political situation. This is a politicization of various legal situations, and it has to be dealt with politically.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, I want to thank you for spending this time, as you stand there for the last, well, two hours in the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where you have been for more than 10 months. Again, the British government says they will arrest Julian Assange if he dares to step foot outside and extradite him to Sweden. The question in Sweden, if he would be immediately put in prison, and would he be extradited to the United States? But we will leave it there. Julian Assange, thanks for joining us.

http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2013/5/29/extended_interview_julian_assange_on_international_crackdown_on_wikileaks

Julian Assange's human rights are being violated by UK, says Ecuador

Ecuador foreign minister attacks British government for not allowing WikiLeaks founder to take up political asylum

*Reuters
29 May 2013*

Ecuador's foreign minister on Tuesday accused the British government of trampling on the human rights of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange by refusing to allow him to travel to Ecuador, which granted him political asylum almost a year ago.

Assange, 41, took refuge in Ecuador's tiny embassy in London last June to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over sex assault and rape allegations. He denies the allegations.

Ecuador's socialist president, Rafael Correa, angered the UK by granting Assange asylum in August on concerns that the former computer hacker might be further extradited from Sweden to the United States. Ecuador's government late last year said the Australian citizen was suffering from lung problems.

"By not granting him safe passage they are violating the human rights of a citizen, and every day that passes the effects of that violation hurt the person more and more," foreign minister Ricardo Patino told Reuters. "It's a whole year that this gentleman has spent without feeling the sun, and that's really serious... because this decision has been taken by a state that says it protects human rights."

Ecuador argues that Assange's deportation to Sweden is part of a scheme by the US government to have the former computer hacker extradited to American soil so that he can face charges over WikiLeaks' release of thousands of US diplomatic cables.

US and European government sources say the United States has issued no criminal charges against him, nor launched any attempts to extradite Assange.

Assange is said to be living a cramped life inside the modest diplomatic mission. He eats mostly takeout food and uses a treadmill to burn off energy and a vitamin D lamp to make up for the lack of sunlight.

Patino said the Ecuadorean government is preparing a document in which it will argue that Britain is legally "obliged" to give Assange permission to leave the embassy and travel to South America.

He said that talks with the British government over Assange's fate continue and that he hopes to discuss the issue with British foreign minister William Hague in "a matter of weeks or months".

Assange said last year he expected to wait six months to a year for a deal that would allow him to leave the embassy.

Ecuador says UK violating WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's 'human rights'

*Australian AP
May 31, 2013*

ECUADOR'S president has accused Britain of violating human rights by not allowing WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to leave its London embassy after he was granted asylum by the South American nation.

The Australian hacker, who founded the anti-secrecy group, has been holed up in Ecuador's embassy for nearly a year, seeking to avoid extradition to Sweden where he is wanted for questioning in a sexual assault case.

Assange has denied any wrongdoing, and has said he fears that if he is extradited, he will be sent on to the United States, where he could face espionage charges for publishing a trove of classified documents.

"What greater affront to human rights is there than to have a person unable to leave an embassy, when the state concerned has granted him political asylum?" Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa said in a radio interview.

Mr Carrea said that if a country acted in a similar manner towards someone who had been granted asylum in Britain or the United States, it would be harshly criticised, calling it a "double standard."

Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino said on Wednesday he would travel to London to meet with Assange and deliver asylum documents to him....

<http://www.news.com.au/world-news/britain-violating-assanges-human-rights/story-fndir2ev-1226654159375>

An Absurdly Expensive Spectacle: Guarding Assange in London

*BINOY KAMPMARK
Counterpunch
May 31–June 2, 2013*

*They set the rules about what a win was. They lost in every battle they defined.
Their loss is total. We've won the big stuff.*

— Julian Assange, Salon, 10 May 2013

We live in an age of austerity, if we are to believe the scorched earth cult that has taken over most Western governments. Budgets are being slashed by economic irrationalists. Outlays are being trimmed. The nippers and snippers are doing their worst, and here, we have an astonishing statistic. The British government, through its police arm

Scotland Yard, has spent somewhere in order of \$5 million “guarding” Assange. The term is itself odd—guarding suggests that he might come to harm, that protection is required. The harm, of course, is purely down to the fact that the British government might just bag him and ensure his swift departure to a country that has not, as yet, laid formal charges.

In this queer fantasy of rented laws and comic security, it is of greatest amusement that Assange, even in Ecuadorean quarters, has managed to get information of the chatter that has been taking place in GCHQ. It was obtained via a request made under the Data Protection Act. That much he revealed in an interview with Spanish television programme Salvados. Those darlings in the bunker were certainly happy to wonder what might happen to the dissident Australian.

When those in the secrecy business start pondering about set-ups, you know you are onto something rich. One member in GCHQ messaged a colleague: “They are trying to arrest him on suspicion of (XYZ)... it is definitely a fit-up... their timings are too convenient right after Cablegate.”

Timing, convenience—purple material indeed. The other suggests that Assange is being a “highly optimistic fool” if he believes he won’t be extradited, a perfect position if one is to say that foolishness demands an even greater act of foolishness to expose the absurdity of it all. With almost quixotic enthusiasm, Assange has set himself the task of pushing not so much the envelope as the entire tray to the edge to see how far he can go.

The scene is dark and hilarious. **There are officers at corners, officers in neighbouring buildings. “Police sit round-the-clock in a communications van topped with an array of antennas that presumably captures all electronic forms of communication from Assange’s ground-floor suite”** (Salon, May 10). There are payments for overtime.

The point to be made here is that Assange has become a security analyst’s wet dream, though it might be more appropriate to call it a flood dream, copious volumes of fantasy and fear that have come together with a huge cheque. A vast security apparatus has been put in place to keep tabs on the Australian’s movements ‘in Ecuador’ as it were.

This security establishment has embellished, extended and demonstrated what sort of threat he poses to their staple of secrets. When one considers that efforts of surveillance and prosecution include the efforts of contractor ManTech of Fairfax, Virginia, an outfit that has spent some \$2 million this year for a computer system designed to handle the prosecution documents (Salon, May 10), we are not so much in Robert Ludlum territory as the padded asylum.

The latest estimate of Assange’s rising bill of costs is merely skimming the surface. Those costs are incurred by the British government alone. The global breakdown is bound to be stupendous. The U.S. security apparatus, comprising such entities as the Army’s Criminal Investigative Department, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Diplomatic Security Service have people on the case.

The Australians, in an attempt to tighten the noose around one of their nationals, have obliged to help their Washington masters in trying to find ways of revoking Assange's passport. This avenue is not surprising, given that the Australian government is notoriously indifferent to the fate of its own citizens, always keen to help other friends wanting their own nationals. Assange is in distinguished company in this regard, as the renowned Cold War journalist Wilfred Burchett suffered similarly at the hands of the Canberra drudge in the 1970s. In both cases, it would seem, publish and be damned.

Whether the British tax payer starts foaming at the mouth at the extensive and expanding bill will be something worth seeing. The bloody mindedness of the British government is considerable. The spectacle has ceased merely being absurd. It has become absurdly expensive.

• *Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com*

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/05/31/guarding-assange-in-london/print>

The Banality of 'Don't Be Evil'

*Julian Assange
June 2, 2013
The New York Times*

"The New Digital Age" is a startlingly clear and provocative blueprint for technocratic imperialism, from two of its leading witch doctors, Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, who construct a new idiom for United States global power in the 21st century. This idiom **reflects the ever closer union between the State Department and Silicon Valley**, as personified by Mr. Schmidt, the executive chairman of Google, and Mr. Cohen, a former adviser to Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton who is now director of Google Ideas.

The authors met in occupied Baghdad in 2009, when the book was conceived. Strolling among the ruins, the two became excited that consumer technology was transforming a society flattened by United States military occupation. They decided the tech industry could be a powerful agent of American foreign policy.

The book proselytizes the role of technology in reshaping the world's people and nations into likenesses of the world's dominant superpower, whether they want to be reshaped or not. The prose is terse, the argument confident and the wisdom — banal. But this isn't a book designed to be read. It is a major declaration designed to foster alliances.

"The New Digital Age" is, beyond anything else, an attempt by Google to position itself as America's geopolitical visionary — the one company that can answer the question "Where should America go?" **It is not surprising that a respectable cast of the world's most famous warmongers has been trotted out to give its stamp of approval to this enticement to Western soft power.** The acknowledgments give pride

of place to Henry Kissinger, who along with Tony Blair and the former C.I.A. director Michael Hayden provided advance praise for the book.

In the book **the authors happily take up the white geek's burden**. A liberal sprinkling of convenient, hypothetical dark-skinned worthies appear: Congolese fisherwomen, graphic designers in Botswana, anticorruption activists in San Salvador and illiterate Masai cattle herders in the Serengeti are all obediently summoned to demonstrate the progressive properties of Google phones jacked into the informational supply chain of the Western empire.

The authors offer an expertly banalized version of tomorrow's world: the gadgetry of decades hence is predicted to be much like what we have right now — only cooler. **"Progress" is driven by the inexorable spread of American consumer technology over the surface of the earth**. Already, every day, another million or so Google-run mobile devices are activated. Google will interpose itself, and hence the United States government, between the communications of every human being not in China (naughty China). Commodities just become more marvelous; young, urban professionals sleep, work and shop with greater ease and comfort; democracy is insidiously subverted by technologies of surveillance, and **control is enthusiastically rebranded as "participation"; and our present world order of systematized domination, intimidation and oppression continues, unmentioned, unafflicted or only faintly perturbed**.

The authors are sour about the Egyptian triumph of 2011. They dismiss the Egyptian youth witheringly, claiming that "the mix of activism and arrogance in young people is universal." Digitally inspired mobs mean revolutions will be "easier to start" but "harder to finish." Because of the absence of strong leaders, the result, or so Mr. Kissinger tells the authors, will be coalition governments that descend into autocracies. They say there will be "no more springs" (but China is on the ropes).

The authors fantasize about the future of "well resourced" revolutionary groups. A new "crop of consultants" will "use data to build and fine-tune a political figure." "His" speeches (the future isn't all that different) and writing will be fed "through complex feature-extraction and trend-analysis software suites" while "mapping his brain function," and other "sophisticated diagnostics" will be used to "assess the weak parts of his political repertoire."

The book mirrors State Department institutional taboos and obsessions. It avoids meaningful criticism of Israel and Saudi Arabia. It pretends, quite extraordinarily, that the Latin American sovereignty movement, which has liberated so many from United States-backed plutocracies and dictatorships over the last 30 years, never happened. Referring instead to the region's "aging leaders," the book can't see Latin America for Cuba. And, of course, the book frets theatrically over Washington's favorite boogeymen: North Korea and Iran.

Google, which started out as an expression of independent Californian graduate student culture — a decent, humane and playful culture — has, as it encountered the big, bad world, thrown its lot in with traditional Washington power elements, from the State Department to the National Security Agency.

Despite accounting for an infinitesimal fraction of violent deaths globally, terrorism is a favorite brand in United States policy circles. This is a fetish that must also be catered

to, and so “The Future of Terrorism” gets a whole chapter. The future of terrorism, we learn, is cyberterrorism. A session of indulgent scaremongering follows, including a breathless disaster-movie scenario, wherein cyberterrorists take control of American air-traffic control systems and send planes crashing into buildings, shutting down power grids and launching nuclear weapons. The authors then tar activists who engage in digital sit-ins with the same brush.

I have a very different perspective. The advance of information technology epitomized by Google heralds the death of privacy for most people and shifts the world toward authoritarianism. This is the principal thesis in my book, “Cypher-punks.” But while Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Cohen tell us that the death of privacy will aid governments in “repressive autocracies” in “targeting their citizens,” they also say governments in “open” democracies will see it as “a gift” enabling them to “better respond to citizen and customer concerns.” **In reality, the erosion of individual privacy in the West and the attendant centralization of power make abuses inevitable, moving the “good” societies closer to the “bad” ones.**

The section on “repressive autocracies” describes, disapprovingly, various repressive surveillance measures: legislation to insert back doors into software to enable spying on citizens, monitoring of social networks and the collection of intelligence on entire populations. **All of these are already in widespread use in the United States. In fact, some of those measures — like the push to require every social-network profile to be linked to a real name — were spearheaded by Google itself.**

The writing is on the wall, but the authors cannot see it. They borrow from William Dobson the idea that the media, in an autocracy, “allows for an opposition press as long as regime opponents understand where the unspoken limits are.” But these trends are beginning to emerge in the United States. No one doubts the chilling effects of the investigations into The Associated Press and Fox’s James Rosen. But there has been little analysis of Google’s role in complying with the Rosen subpoena. I have personal experience of these trends.

The Department of Justice admitted in March that it was in its third year of a continuing criminal investigation of WikiLeaks. Court testimony states that its targets include “the founders, owners, or managers of WikiLeaks.” One alleged source, Bradley Manning, faces a 12-week trial beginning tomorrow, with 24 prosecution witnesses expected to testify in secret.

This book is a balefully seminal work in which neither author has the language to see, much less to express, the titanic centralizing evil they are constructing. “What Lockheed Martin was to the 20th century,” they tell us, “technology and cybersecurity companies will be to the 21st.” Without even understanding how, they have updated and seamlessly implemented George Orwell’s prophecy. If you want a vision of the future, imagine Washington-backed Google Glasses strapped onto vacant human faces — forever. Zealots of the cult of consumer technology will find little to inspire them here, not that they ever seem to need it. But this is essential reading for anyone caught up in the struggle for the future, in view of one simple imperative: Know your enemy.

• *Julian Assange is an Australian editor, activist, journalist, and founder of Wikileaks.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/02/opinion/sunday/the-banality-of-googles-dont-be-evil.html?pagewanted=all>

'We Steal Secrets': State Agitprop

Chris Hedges
TruthDig.com
June 3, 2013

Alex Gibney's new film, "We Steal Secrets," is about WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange. It dutifully peddles the state's contention that WikiLeaks is not a legitimate publisher and that Bradley Manning, who allegedly passed half a million classified Pentagon and State Department documents to WikiLeaks, is not a legitimate whistleblower.

It interprets acts of conscience and heroism by Assange and Manning as misguided or criminal. It holds up the powerful— who are responsible for the plethora of war crimes Manning and Assange exposed— as, by comparison, trustworthy and reasonable. Manning is portrayed as a pitiful, naive and sexually confused young man. Assange, who created the WikiLeaks site so whistle-blowers could post information without fear of being traced, is presented as a paranoid, vindictive megalomaniac and a sexual deviant. "We Steal Secrets" is agitprop for the security and surveillance state.

Rebels are typically a bundle of contradictions and incongruities. They are often difficult people whom the dominant systems of power abused at a young age. They have the intelligence needed to dissect the workings of power, and to devise mechanisms to fight back. German Jewish intellectuals in the Nazi era such as Hannah Arendt, writers such as James Baldwin, who was gay as well as black, and the revolutionary Frantz Fanon, a black writer and psychiatrist raised in the French colony of Martinique, all were outsiders, even outcasts. Like these three, Manning and Assange rose out of personal troubles to ask the questions traditional rebels ask, and they responded as traditional rebels respond.

"The initial presentation of the story was that Bradley Manning was a pure political figure, like a Daniel Ellsberg," Gibney told The Daily Beast in an interview in January. "I don't think that's a sufficient explanation of why he did what he did. I think he was alienated; he was in agony personally over a number of issues. He was lonely and very needy. And I think he had an identity crisis. He had this idea that he was in the wrong body and wanted to become a woman, and these issues are not just prurient. I think it raises big issues about who whistleblowers are, because they are alienated people who don't get along with people around them, which motivates them to do what they do."

Gibney is unable to see that humans are a mixture of hubris and altruism, cowardice and courage, anger and love. **There are no "pure" political figures— including Daniel Ellsberg. But there are people who, for reasons of conscience, discover the inner fortitude to defy tyranny at tremendous personal risk. Manning did this. Assange did this. They are not perfect human beings, but to dwell at length, as Gibney does, on their supposed psychological deficiencies and personal failings, while glossing over the vast evil they set themselves against, is an insidious form of character assassination. It serves the interests of the oppressors. Even if all the character flaws ascribed by Gibney to Manning and Assange are true— and I do not believe they are true— it does not diminish what they did.**

The film at many points is a trashy exercise in tabloid journalism. Gibney panders to popular culture's taste for cheap pop psychology and obsession with sex, salacious gossip and trivia. **He shows clips of Assange dancing in a disco. He goes through an elaborate ritual of putting a wig and makeup on one of Assange's estranged paramours, Anna Ardin, to disguise her although she is a public figure in Sweden.**

"When the women went to the police to try to force Assange to take an HIV test, their testimony raised questions about possible criminal charges," Gibney says in speaking about a Swedish case in which allegations of sexual misbehavior have been made against the WikiLeaks publisher. "The police, on their own, decided to investigate further. The refusal to use a condom took center stage: If Assange had HIV and knew it, it could be a case for assault. The testimony of the women raised another issue: Did he refuse to use a condom because he wanted to make the women pregnant? Some pointed to the fact he had already fathered four children with different women around the world."

The personal sin is excoriated. The vast structural sin Assange and Manning fought is ignored. The primacy of personal piety over justice is the inversion of morality. It is the sickness of our age. **David Petraeus is hounded out of the CIA not because he oversaw death squads that killed thousands of innocents in Iraq or because the CIA tortures detainees, but because he had an extramarital affair.** The power elite can draw up kill lists, torture people, wage endless war and carry out massive fiscal fraud on Wall Street as long as they don't get caught sleeping with their administrative assistants. Assange can lay bare the crimes they commit, but his act of truth-telling is canceled out by alleged sexual misconduct.

Is the most important thing about Martin Luther King Jr. the fact that he was a serial adulterer? Did King's infidelities invalidate his life and struggle? Do the supposed defects of Assange and Manning negate what they did? Gibney would have us believe they do. Manning, in a just world, would be a witness for the prosecution of those who committed war crimes. Assange would be traveling around the United States collecting First Amendment awards.

The persecution of Manning and Assange is not an isolated act. It is part of a terrifying assault against our most important civil liberties and a free press. Manning and Assange are the canaries in the mineshaft. They did not seek to sell the documents that WikiLeaks published or to profit personally from their release. They are part of the final, desperate battle under way to stymie the security and surveillance state's imposition of corporate totalitarianism. They and others who attempt to expose the crimes of the state— such as Jeremy Hammond, who admitted in a plea agreement last week that he had hacked into the private intelligence firm Stratfor and who faces up to 10 years in prison— will be ruthlessly persecuted. And the traditional media, which printed the secret cables provided by WikiLeaks and then callously abandoned Manning and Assange, will be next.

The Associated Press recently saw the state seize two months of its emails and phone logs, and the government has admitted seizing Fox News reporter James Rosen's phone records. Half a dozen government whistle-blowers have been charged by the Obama administration under the Espionage Act. It is becoming harder and harder to peer into the inner workings of power. And once there are no Mannings or Assanges,

once no one is willing to take risks to expose the crimes of empire, there will be no freedom of the press.

The fundamental conceit of “We Steal Secrets” is that Assange’s concern about the possibility of being arrested by U.S. authorities is a product of paranoia and self-delusion. The vast array of intergovernment forces— at least a dozen— dedicated to arresting Assange, extraditing him and destroying WikiLeaks is, Gibney would have us believe, fictional. I detailed these forces in “The Death of Truth.” The refusal to acknowledge the massive campaign against Assange is the most disturbing aspect of the film. There are numerous indications, including in leaked Stratfor emails, that a sealed indictment against Assange is in place. But Gibney refuses to buy it.

“Had the secret-leaker become the secret-keeper, more and more fond of mysteries?” Gibney asks in the film. “The biggest mystery of all was the role of the United States. Over two years after the first leak, no charges had been filed by the U.S. Assange claimed that the U.S. was biding its time, waiting for him to go to Sweden, but there was no proof.”

The sage-like figure in the film is former CIA Director Michael Hayden, who in 2001 lied when he told reporters that the National Security Council was not monitoring U.S citizens without court warrants from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. He represents, for Gibney, the voice of reason.

“You’ve got this scene, somebody evidently troubled by the scene— frankly, I’m not— but I can understand someone who’s troubled by that, and someone who wants the American people to know that, because the American people need to know what it is their government is doing for them,” Hayden says of the “Collateral Murder” video released by WikiLeaks that shows a U.S. helicopter shooting to death civilians, including two Reuters journalists, in an Iraqi street. “I actually share that view— when I was director of CIA there was some stuff we were doing I wanted all 300 million Americans to know. But I never figured out a way about informing a whole bunch of other people that didn’t have a right to that information who may actually use that image, or that fact or that data or that message, to harm my country.”

Adrian Lamo, who worked as an FBI informant, faking a friendship with Manning to sell him out, is given a perch in the film to wring his hands like Judas over how agonizing it was for him to turn in Manning. **He did it, he assures us, to keep the country safe, although no one has ever been able to point to any loss of life caused by the leak of the secret documents.**

“I care more about Bradley than many of his supporters do.... And I had to betray that trust for the sake of all of the people that he put in danger,” Lamo says tearfully. It is one of the most cloying moments in the movie.

Assange, by the end of the film, is the butt of open ridicule. Bill Keller, when he was executive editor of The New York Times, published material from WikiLeaks documents and then trashed Assange, calling him in a 2011 article “elusive, manipulative and volatile” as well as “arrogant, thin-skinned, conspiratorial and oddly credulous.” In the Gibney film, Keller adds to his condemnation of Assange by saying: “He looked like a bag lady coming in. Sort of like a dingy, khaki sports coat, old tennis shoes, with socks that were kind of collapsing around his ankles and he clearly hadn’t bathed in several days.” **Keller was one of the most ardent cheerleaders for the war in Iraq.**

Two of Gibney's previous films, "Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room" and "Taxi to the Dark Side," were masterful explorations into the black heart of empire. **This time, Gibney was commissioned by Universal Studios— owned by Comcast— and paid to make a motion picture on WikiLeaks. He gave his corporate investors what they wanted.**

WikiLeaks has published a line-by-line critique of the film's transcript at: <http://justice4assange.com/IMG/html/gibney-transcript.html>

Assange Statement on the First Day of Manning Trial

*Julian Assange
Firedog Lake
June 4, 2013*

As I type these lines, on June 3, 2013, Private First Class Bradley Edward Manning is being tried in a sequestered room at Fort Meade, Maryland, for the alleged crime of telling the truth. The court martial of the most prominent political prisoner in modern US history has now, finally, begun.

It has been three years. Bradley Manning, then 22 years old, was arrested in Baghdad on May 26, 2010. He was shipped to Kuwait, placed into a cage, and kept in the sweltering heat of Camp Arifjan.

"For me, I stopped keeping track," he told the court last November. "I didn't know whether night was day or day was night. And my world became very, very small. It became these cages... **I remember thinking I'm going to die.**"

After protests from his lawyers, Bradley Manning was then transferred to a brig at a US Marine Corps Base in Quantico, VA, where— infamously— he was subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment at the hands of his captors— a formal finding by the UN. Isolated in a tiny cell for twenty-three out of twenty-four hours a day, he was deprived of his glasses, sleep, blankets and clothes, and prevented from exercising. All of this— it has been determined by a military judge— "punished" him before he had even stood trial.

"Brad's treatment at Quantico will forever be etched, I believe, in our nation's history, as a disgraceful moment in time" said his lawyer, David Coombs. "**Not only was it stupid and counterproductive, it was criminal.**"

The United States was, in theory, a nation of laws. But it is no longer a nation of laws for Bradley Manning.

When the abuse of Bradley Manning became a scandal reaching all the way to the President of the United States and Hillary Clinton's spokesman resigned to register his dissent over Mr. Manning's treatment, an attempt was made to make the problem less visible. Bradley Manning was transferred to the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

He has waited in prison for three years for a trial— 986 days longer than the legal maximum— because for three years the prosecution has dragged its feet and obstructed the court, denied the defense access to evidence and abused official secrecy. This is simply illegal— all defendants are constitutionally entitled to a speedy trial— but the transgression has been acknowledged and then overlooked.

Against all of this, it would be tempting to look on the eventual commencement of his trial as a mercy. But that is hard to do.

We no longer need to comprehend the “Kafkaesque” through the lens of fiction or allegory. It has left the pages and lives among us, stalking our best and brightest. It is fair to call what is happening to Bradley Manning a “show trial”. Those invested in what is called the “US military justice system” feel obliged to defend what is going on, but the rest of us are free to describe this travesty for what it is. No serious commentator has any confidence in a benign outcome. The pretrial hearings have comprehensively eliminated any meaningful uncertainty, **inflicting pre-emptive bans on every defense argument that had any chance of success.**

Bradley Manning may not give evidence as to his stated intent (exposing war crimes and their context), nor may he present any witness or document that shows that no harm resulted from his actions. Imagine you were put on trial for murder. In Bradley Manning’s court, you would be banned from showing that it was a matter of self-defence, because any argument or evidence as to intent is banned. You would not be able to show that the ‘victim’ is, in fact, still alive, because that would be evidence as to the lack of harm.

But of course. Did you forget whose show it is?

The government has prepared for a good show. The trial is to proceed for twelve straight weeks: a fully choreographed extravaganza, with a 141-strong cast of prosecution witnesses. **The defense was denied permission to call all but a handful of witnesses.**

Three weeks ago, in closed session, the court actually held a rehearsal. Even experts on military law have called this unprecedented.

Bradley Manning’s conviction is already written into the script. The commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces, Barack Obama, spoiled the plot for all of us when he pronounced Bradley Manning guilty two years ago. “He broke the law,” President Obama stated, when asked on camera at a fundraiser about his position on Mr. Manning. **In a civilized society, such a prejudicial statement alone would have resulted in a mistrial.**

To convict Bradley Manning, it will be necessary for the US government to conceal crucial parts of his trial. Key portions of the trial are to be conducted in secrecy: **24 prosecution witnesses will give secret testimony in closed session, permitting the judge to claim that secret evidence justifies her decision.** But closed justice is no justice at all.

What cannot be shrouded in secrecy will be hidden through obfuscation. The remote situation of the courtroom, the arbitrary and discretionary restrictions on access for journalists, and the deliberate complexity and scale of the case are all designed to

drive fact-hungry reporters into the arms of official military PR men, who mill around the Fort Meade press room like over-eager sales assistants. The management of Bradley Manning's case will not stop at the limits of the courtroom. It has already been revealed that the Pentagon is closely monitoring press coverage and social media discussions on the case.

This is not justice; never could this be justice. The verdict was ordained long ago. Its function is not to determine questions such as guilt or innocence, or truth or falsehood. It is a public relations exercise, designed to provide the government with an alibi for posterity. It is a show of wasteful vengeance; a theatrical warning to people of conscience.

The alleged act in respect of which Bradley Manning is charged is an act of great conscience—the single most important disclosure of subjugated history, ever. There is not a political system anywhere on the earth that has not seen light as a result. In court, in February, Bradley Manning said that he wanted to expose injustice, and to provoke worldwide debate and reform. Bradley Manning is accused of being a whistleblower, a good man, who cared for others and who followed higher orders. Bradley Manning is effectively accused of conspiracy to commit journalism.

But this is not the language the prosecution uses. The most serious charge against Bradley Manning is that he “aided the enemy”— a capital offence that should require the greatest gravity, but here the US government laughs at the world, to breathe life into a phantom. The government argues that Bradley Manning communicated with a media organization, WikiLeaks, who communicated to the public. It also argues that al-Qaeda (who else) is a member of the public. **Hence, it argues that Bradley Manning communicated “indirectly” with al-Qaeda, a formally declared US “enemy”, and therefore that Bradley Manning communicated with “the enemy”.**

But what about “aiding” in that most serious charge, “aiding the enemy”? Don't forget that this is a show trial. The court has banned any evidence of intent. The court has banned any evidence of the outcome, the lack of harm, the lack of any victim. It has ruled that the government doesn't need to show that any “aiding” occurred and the prosecution doesn't claim it did. **The judge has stated that it is enough for the prosecution to show that al-Qaeda, like the rest of the world, reads WikiLeaks.**

“Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people,” wrote John Adams, “who have a right and a desire to know.”

When communicating with the press is “aiding the enemy” it is the “general knowledge among the people” itself which has become criminal. Just as Bradley Manning is condemned, so too is that spirit of liberty in which America was founded.

In the end it is not Bradley Manning who is on trial. His trial ended long ago. The defendant now, and for the next 12 weeks, is the United States. A runaway military, whose misdeeds have been laid bare, and a secretive government at war with the public. **They sit in the docks. We are called to serve as jurists. We must not turn away.**

<http://dissenter.firedoglake.com>

Double trouble

Have two men been on trial this week? US military prosecutors are clear that they regard Julian Assange as Private Bradley Manning's co-conspirator, that he also is guilty of carrying out acts of espionage against America.

*Philip Dorling
Canberra Times
June 6, 2013*

It's the highest-profile prosecution of an official leaker in the United States for at least a generation. In the dock is a young United States Army private. But he's not the only person US prosecutors have their sights on in a case that has far-reaching implications for relations between government and the media in the United States and beyond. The other target is Australian citizen, WikiLeaks publisher and now political candidate Julian Assange.

Private First Class Bradley Manning has already admitted passing to WikiLeaks hundreds of thousands of classified documents that included US embassy cables, war logs from Iraq and Afghanistan, intelligence and security assessments of Guantanamo Bay detainees and a video of an Apache helicopter attack on civilians in Baghdad. The offences to which Manning pleaded guilty at a pre-trial hearing in March carry a maximum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment.

However, the 25-year-old soldier, described by his defence counsel as "young and naive but good-intentioned" is still facing the rest of his life in prison.

Not satisfied with Manning's guilty pleas, the United States government is pressing on with a range of more serious charges headed by that of "aiding the enemy". It is specifically alleged that Manning "wrongfully and wantonly caus[ed] to be published on the internet intelligence belonging to the US government, having knowledge that intelligence published on the internet is accessible to the enemy".

The prosecution intends to present evidence that during the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, US troops collected digital media items that included "the entire... Afghanistan database released on WikiLeaks as well as Department of State information."

Evidence will be presented that bin Laden asked for information published by WikiLeaks and received reports from another member of al-Qaeda.

The military prosecutors have indicated they will not seek the death penalty if Manning is convicted of these charges, but the young soldier could be in a military prison for the rest of his life.

Manning's trial, which began at Fort Meade in Maryland on Monday, has attracted wide media attention, although the volume of reporting has quickly fallen away after the first day of what is expected to be three months of complex legal proceedings.

Future media coverage is likely to be spotty, especially given that much of the trial will be held in secret as witnesses give security classified testimony [and the mainstream media are largely indifferent --A.B.].

Aside from the media, one foreign embassy has been diligently attending the protracted pre-trial hearings and was present in court at the beginning of Manning's trial. Indeed, a locally engaged **senior research and liaison officer at the Australian embassy in Washington, Alli Curtis, has a box seat at the proceedings.**

For more than 18 months, Curtis has been travelling regularly to Fort Meade and drafting detailed reports which the Australian embassy has cabled back to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra.

Curtis has recorded the legal manoeuvrings of prosecution and defence in Manning's pre-trial hearings in fine detail. The cables have been routinely distributed to the offices of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, across the foreign affairs portfolio and to the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Federal Police.

Declassified through freedom of information applications by Fairfax Media, Curtis' highly professional reports have provided an interesting, if increasingly sanitised, Australian official perspective on the Manning prosecution.

At a Senate estimates committee hearing in Canberra on Wednesday night, a senior Foreign Affairs and Trade executive confirmed that at least one report on this week's proceedings at Fort Meade had already been received. What Curtis has reported this week may be disclosed publicly in due course.

However, it is already clear that the Australian embassy will have had much to write about because WikiLeaks publisher and Australian citizen Julian **Assange is already featuring prominently in the proceedings.** Indeed, on the first day of the trial the prosecution peppered its opening statement with numerous references to Assange, suggesting that he built up close ties to Manning over a six-month period from late 2009 to mid 2010.

Prosecutor Captain Joe Morrow alleged that WikiLeaks, and more specifically Assange, guided Manning as to which classified documents to leak, advised how to avoid detection, and even involved Manning, then a Baghdad-based intelligence analyst, in WikiLeaks' editing process.

Morrow cited extracts of a web chat between Manning and an individual that the prosecution claims was the WikiLeaks publisher. The chats showed, the prosecution alleged, that there was a "familiarity between Manning and Julian Assange".

The prosecution claims that as early as November 29, 2009, just two weeks after he was deployed to Iraq, Manning sought and obtained contact details for Assange. Between then and his arrest in May 2010, Manning reportedly searched for the term "WikiLeaks" more than 100 times on the secure intelligence databases that he was authorised to use at Forward Operating Base Hammer outside Baghdad.

The prosecution further alleges that examination of Manning's computers revealed an email exchange between him and WikiLeaks in which the soldier contributed to the editing process of the video showing the US Apache helicopter attack that was released by WikiLeaks in April 2010 under the title "Collateral Murder".

In essence, the prosecution alleges that Manning effectively acted as an agent of WikiLeaks with the transparency website guiding the leaking of documents through its 2009 "most wanted list". This, the prosecutors claim, provided Manning with a "menu" from which to search.

The prosecution's allegations of direct interaction between Manning and Assange extend to the leaked reports on detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Morrow claimed on Monday that Manning asked the WikiLeaks founder about how "valuable" the assessments were. **In other communications, Assange is alleged to have advised the soldier on "finding ways to browse SIPRNet [a secure database] anonymously".**

For those who have been following the Manning case closely, including the Australian embassy in Washington, the prosecution's claims don't entirely come as a surprise. After all, it's some three years since Wired magazine first published extracts of the chat logs between Manning and US government informant Adrian Lamo, in which the young soldier **disclosed he was "uploading [classified US military information] to a crazy white-haired aussie who can't seem to stay in one country very long... crazy white haired dude = Julian Assange".**

Australian embassy cables released to Fairfax Media further revealed that as early as December 7, 2010, Australian diplomats confirmed the US Justice Department was conducting an "active and vigorous inquiry into whether Julian Assange can be charged under US law, most likely the 1917 Espionage Act".

After working US government contacts, the embassy further advised Canberra in December 2010 that it was "likely true" that a secret grand jury had been convened in Alexandria, Virginia, to consider evidence arising from the WikiLeaks investigation.

Regular updates through 2011 included reporting on the issuing of subpoenas to compel WikiLeaks associates to appear before the grand jury and Justice Department efforts to access Twitter and other internet accounts as "casting the net beyond Assange to see if any intermediaries had been involved in communications between Assange and Manning".

An early embassy report on Manning's pre-trial hearing in December 2011 highlighted the prosecution's assertions that Manning had leaked to WikiLeaks "and, specifically, to Julian Assange". At that time it was alleged that Manning had asked WikiLeaks, and again specifically Assange, for help in cracking passwords so that he could log onto classified databases anonymously.

Other information revealed in Manning's pre-trial proceedings indicates that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has targeted at least seven civilians including the "founders, owners, or managers of WikiLeaks" for alleged offences including espionage.

Manning himself discussed his online exchanges with WikiLeaks in his statement made in March this year when he pleaded guilty to a range of lesser charges.

Manning said he gave his WikiLeaks contact the pseudonym "Nathaniel Frank" after the author of a book he had read:

"Due to the strict adherence of anonymity by [WikiLeaks], we never exchanged identifying information. However, I believe the individual was likely Mr Julian Assange, Mr. Daniel Schmidt [then a WikiLeaks staffer], or a proxy representative of Mr Assange and Schmidt . . . After a period of time, I developed what I felt was a friendly relationship with Nathaniel. Our mutual interest in information technology and politics made our conversations enjoyable. We engaged in conversation often. Sometimes as long as an hour or more."

This week, the US military prosecution left no doubt that it regards Assange as a co-conspirator with Manning. In this, Assange is presented not as a journalist engaged in legitimate dealings with a confidential source, but as someone encouraging, directing and facilitating espionage.

This has serious implications for Manning as it is part of a prosecution strategy to characterise his motives and demonstrate that he was well aware he could be "aiding the enemy" by passing information for publication by WikiLeaks.

According to the prosecution, Manning was not a naive individual who wanted to "lift the fog of war" and "make the world a better place", as his defence counsel put it; but an egotist who hooked up with a notorious organisation devoted to the indiscriminate dissemination of sensitive information.

"This is a case about a soldier who systematically harvested hundreds of thousands of documents from classified databases and then dumped that information onto the internet, into the hands of the enemy," prosecutor Morrow declared.

According to the prosecution, the case is "about what happens when arrogance meets access to sensitive information".

These claims are serious matters for Assange, who has been, and probably still is, the subject of a grand jury investigation targeting him for criminal prosecution.

However, the implications are much broader. Many investigative journalists have discussed with confidential sources, including national security sources, how to access information, how to take security precautions and how to avoid getting caught. As Assange himself put it this week, speaking from his refuge at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, the US prosecution's argument involves a disturbing precedent:

"The precedent works like this: If you communicate with a journalist, then you communicate with a publisher, then you communicate with the public, then you communicate with al-Qaeda— so you communicate with enemies of the United States, and as a result your communications with a journalist must be punished by death or life imprisonment.

"If tolerated, that will lead to regimes where every US government source, when speaking to a journalist, must be concerned that they will suffer either the death penalty or life imprisonment as a result. Now having established that, the US government will have set the precedent that not only is the [source] indirectly communicating with al-Qaeda by communicating with the public, but the publisher and the journalist is as well. And therefore the publisher and the journalist can be embroiled in espionage charges."

Investigative journalism and espionage— the two are regarded as one and the same thing. This can only have a chilling effect on journalism that is related to national security matters.

Of course, all these proceedings still have a long way to run. The Manning trial is expected to last some three months. After that there may be appeals that will take years to be dealt with.

Assange's complicated legal circumstances also appear far from resolution, with the Swedish and British governments showing no inclination to compromise on their insistence that he must be extradited to Sweden to face questioning about sexual assault allegations.

No assurances against possible extradition to the United States appear likely, either. The US government is unlikely to declare its hand any time soon, though the Manning trial is likely to reveal further elements of a potential prosecution case against Assange.

Meanwhile, the Australian embassy in Washington will be taking copious notes. But don't expect any action or statements by the Australian government on Assange's behalf. Prime Minister Julia Gillard once labelled WikiLeaks' actions "illegal", and there's certainly no regard for Assange, who has signalled his intention to run as a Senate candidate for the newly formed WikiLeaks Party.

At Senate estimates hearings on Wednesday evening, Foreign Minister Bob Carr bluntly observed that he thought Assange's consular needs had been "overserviced" and that the government would make no representations to the US government about his circumstances.

Asked by Greens senator Scott Ludlam whether the government would raise the question of Assange's free speech protection as a journalist under the First Amendment to the US constitution, Carr, himself a former journalist, observed: **"It wouldn't be a matter of concern to Australia to make a case for him. No, why would we do that? It doesn't affect Australian interests....** It's not a focus of our diplomacy. Why would it be?"

www.canberratimes.com.au/opinion/political-news/double-trouble-20130606-2ntae.html#ixzz2VYx1Zjzm

Assange no concern of ours, says Carr

Bob Carr says Hezbollah's involvement in Syria conflict is hugely significant, and also warns that the Coalition is on thin ice with Indonesia by promising to "turn back the boats" without a formal agreement.

*Philip Dorling
The Age
June 6, 2013*

The Australian government has washed its hands of Julian Assange as prosecutors at the trial of US soldier Bradley Manning have openly targeted the WikiLeaks publisher

as a conspirator engaged in espionage.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr has told a Senate budget estimates committee that the government would make no more representations to the US on Assange's circumstances because his case "doesn't affect Australian interests".

Senator Carr's declaration that he would not "over-service" Assange's consular needs came after US military prosecutors left no doubt that they regard the WikiLeaks chief not as a journalist dealing with sources but as a conspirator in the theft of classified information.

US prosecutors made repeated references to Assange this week, alleging at the opening of Private Manning's trial that the WikiLeaks publisher had directly encouraged and aided the soldier's massive leaks of classified documents.

The US has alleged that Assange conspired with Manning in the theft of classified information, including advising the soldier on "finding ways to browse SIPRNET [a secure database] anonymously".

Fairfax Media has also learnt that Assange has been prevented by one of the largest banks in the US from making a donation to his own political party. The Bank of America blocked the transfer to the new WikiLeaks Party of a \$25,000 prize awarded to Assange by the Japanese musician, artist and philanthropist Yoko Ono.

News of the funding block against the WikiLeaks Party comes as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledged to the Senate estimates hearing that WikiLeaks, and by implication Assange, continued to be under investigation by the US Justice Department.

However, when asked by Greens senator Scott Ludlam whether the Australian government would raise the question of Assange's free-speech protection as a journalist under the First Amendment to the US constitution, Senator Carr said that 'It wouldn't be a matter of concern to Australia to make a case for him. No, why would we do that?'

Asked whether the government would inquire whether a US grand jury investigation of Assange was ongoing, Senator Carr said no further inquiries would be made because "it doesn't affect Australian interests".

"I'm not going to have resources allocated to it," he said. "There's been enough investment of [department] resources in looking after Mr Assange's interests. This is an over-servicing of a consular case."

He added: "When information emerges from the American system it can be looked at with interest. It's not a focus of our diplomacy. Why would it be?"

Ms Ono honoured Assange with her annual Courage Award for the Arts in New York in February for his "courageous step" in "returning what belongs to the public domain".

Assange asked that the \$25,000 award be sent to the WikiLeaks Party, a separate legal

entity to WikiLeaks. However, in April Ms Ono's office said the Bank of America had refused to wire the money to the party's account. **Her office then paid the award to the US-based Freedom of the Press Foundation, which in turn passed it on to WikiLeaks.**

The Bank of America is one of a number of major financial institutions including Visa, American Express, Mastercard and Western Union that since December 2010 have refused to transfer funds to WikiLeaks. Transfers have been allowed to WikiLeaks-related entities, including Assange's legal defence fund.

WikiLeaks Party president John Shipton said the party had not experienced problems with other financial institutions.

www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/assange-no-concern-of-ours-says-carr-20130606-2nt5t.html#ixzz2VYxQxDD9

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Bradley Manning Trial Coverage

Today (June 4th) was the second day of Bradley Manning's trial. It is expected to last 12 weeks. The trial will resume tomorrow and then go into recess until Monday, as the trial is going quicker than expected and witnesses are not scheduled. Transcripts of all hearings are being released through the Freedom of the Press Foundation:

<https://pressfreedomfoundation.org/bradley-manning-transcripts>

The Yellow Press And Assange's Political Ambition

Lateline Interview: Julian Assange
ABC Australia
2013-06-10

In Australia a full 40 per cent of people under the age of 30 say that they intend to vote for WikiLeaks.

EMMA ALBERICI, PRESENTER: This month marks a year since Julian Assange entered the Ecuadorian embassy in London seeking political asylum. The WikiLeaks founder is responsible for publishing the 700,000 classified documents released by American soldier Bradley Manning, who's pleaded guilty to the leaking of that material and is now on trial for aiding the enemy. Julian Assange is convinced there is a sealed indictment waiting for him in the US. We recorded this interview with him just a short time ago. Julian Assange, welcome to Lateline.

JULIAN ASSANGE, WIKILEAKS FOUNDER: Thank you.

EMMA ALBERICI: We'll get to your political ambitions shortly. Let's begin though with Bradley Manning and the charge that he aided the enemy. When you published the documents he gave you, didn't it occur to you that you might be compromising American and allied military operations in the release of that information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, there's been a lot of speculation and rumours about that by the yellow press. But the fact is not **even the Pentagon alleges that a single person came to harm as a result of any of our publications anywhere in the world, and in fact, no other government agency does either. It is not a matter in this case. That's one of the disturbing aspects about the Bradley Manning case, is that they have forbidden the defence to table any evidence whatsoever that no-one came to harm and the prosecution is not going to table any evidence— because there isn't any—that anyone did come to harm.**

EMMA ALBERICI: We've learnt that a Navy SEAL found WikiLeaks documents at the Pakistan compound where Osama bin Laden was killed. Presumably you knew it was possible, even probable, that those documents would be read by al-Qaeda, sensitive documents you were releasing.

JULIAN ASSANGE: **Well I am sure al-Qaeda reads the New York Times. He mentioned that he read Bob Woodward books. He probably has People, maybe even Who Magazine, possibly even Dr Seuss laying around his compound. So what?** There's no allegation that al-Qaeda was in any way aided by the publications that we published. Despite the fact, despite the fact that Bradley Manning has been charged with aiding the enemy, a capital offence, the judge in this case has said that the prosecution does not need to show that al-Qaeda was aided in any way whatsoever and the prosecution doesn't allege that al-Qaeda was. All they intend to show is that al-Qaeda had our publications just like everyone else in the world.

EMMA ALBERICI: How can you be 100 per cent certain that information you've released hasn't contributed to at the very least an atmosphere of mistrust between the US and others?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, look, **the United States' behaviour is what has led to an atmosphere of distrust.** People should not trust the United States military industrial complex. Of course they shouldn't. We've seen abuse after abuse. In fact this organisation revealed that the United States military, the Pentagon has been involved in the killing, directly or indirectly, according to its own records, of 129,000 people. Now that wasn't simply in aggregate in Iraq or in aggregate in Afghanistan. That was the individual death records and their locations and what military units were involved in those two countries. That's what we documented.

EMMA ALBERICI: So it doesn't matter to you if you did contribute to a sense of acrimony between the US and other countries?

JULIAN ASSANGE: **It does matter; in fact it's very important that the level of trust is proportionate to the level of behaviour.** So it's been an extremely important thing that— for example, that Australians do not trust speculative military adventures in Central Asia. Of course it is.

EMMA ALBERICI: One of the key charges levelled against you is that you released that massive volume of material with scant regard for the consequences. Certainly Julia Gillard has said that there was no moral purpose to what you were doing.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, you know, **the Senate has twice demanded that Julia Gillard apologise for her statements.** Twice they have passed that resolution. Julia Gillard's libellous statements are made outside of Parliament. She's only saved by the statute of limitations. Have resulted in a banking blockade against an Australian publisher. They've also resulted in the Bank of America refusing to send a payment to WikiLeaks, the Australian political organisation. Julia Gillard has a lot to be responsible for in terms of her libellous comments. If we go to our publications— well **not even NATO in Kabul, as it said to CNN, could find a single person in need of protection.** So this is all yellow press hype. The Government doesn't allege it. NATO has even looked into the speculative component and says that there's nothing.

EMMA ALBERICI: You've been in the Ecuadorian embassy for a year now. How much longer do you expect to be there?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well it's an interesting question. The situation is very interesting. But, you know, I'm quite optimistic. The support for WikiLeaks as an organisation increases. We can see that in the media in different countries around the world. We can see it politically. We can see it in polling results in Australia where a full 40 per cent of people under the age of 30 say that they intend to vote for WikiLeaks, between 25 and 28 per cent nationwide in Australia. And that is across three polls now by the Government's own polling agency, UMR.

Additionally, the political situation that is developing in United States, in the UK has gradually been improving over time. And I think the lies and fictions of Bob Carr, for example, are now well and truly over. Even his office is now speaking about the grand jury in the United States. We've seen in the Bradley Manning trial this week, the intent and focus of the United States Government to go after this organisation. And they're aware that this organisation and people like it and our values are forming a new body politic and people like Edward Snowden are part of that phenomena.

EMMA ALBERICI: We will discuss Edward Snowden, but before that I wanted to ask you how much contact you're having with the Australian High Commission there in London.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Yeah, so that's actually— it's remarkable to look at the statements made by the Foreign Minister, but other Australians who have been in difficult situations will tell you it's all exactly the same. So, **I have not met anyone from any consulate, any Australian Government official since 2010, since I was in prison.** In the time that I've been in this embassy here— we laugh about it, that once a month, there will be a tick-the-box call to the consul here saying, "Well, how's Mr Assange?" And, well, my response is, "Well, what's your offer?"

The last time that they offered some medical assistance to the Ecuadorian Government— the only concrete offer that they ever put on the table— the Ecuadorian consul went to meet with the Australian consul, completely utterly wasted his time. **The result of that was, "Well, here you are, here's a list of doctors in London." A list of doctors that the Australian Government is going to pay for? "No." Nothing, nothing at all. Just a list of doctors that I should never, ever go to, apparently.** Because, in fact, all that the so-called consular support is doing here is it's simply collecting political intelligence for Bob Carr.

There's an Australian member— there's a DFAT member sitting in on the Bradley Manning case. There has been for about six months, secretly sitting there, recording notes. Are those notes passed on to our legal team? Absolutely not. They produce briefing notes for Bob Carr so he can set up his press lines.

So actually, so-called consular support for me and for many other Australians in similar situations, what it's actually about is collecting political intelligence for the minister to set up their press lines, so **it's really a type of corruption where money that should be spent on actual consular support is simply spent on producing press releases for the Foreign Minister** to make it look like he gives a damn about Australians. As we know, he doesn't give a damn about Australians at all. **Since the 1970s he's been in bed with the US. Even as a union leader he was having multiple meetings with the US embassy.**

EMMA ALBERICI: I know you say that the last real contact you had was 2010. What advice have they given you about your predicament?

JULIAN ASSANGE: They have given no advice, nothing at all. No advice, no information, nothing whatsoever. Not me, not to my lawyers, nothing. You see these absurd claims by Bob Carr saying that there's been, I don't know, 87 consular contacts. They include just calling, just this tick-a-box call procedure. No information whatsoever. We asked, "Can the Australian consul give me a passport?," for example. "No." **The absurd response is, "Well just come down to the Australian consulate."** It's a joke. I mean, they insult the Ecuadorians with this sort of behaviour. They insult me. They insult all of Australia with this sort of behaviour.

EMMA ALBERICI: How are you any more vulnerable to US extradition from Sweden than you are in the UK?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well I have political asylum here in the Ecuadorian embassy. I am completely invulnerable to extradition to the United States.

EMMA ALBERICI: That wasn't always the case though.

JULIAN ASSANGE: Yeah, but, you know, these are complex legal issues. If you go to Justice4Assange.com with the numeral "4", you can read all about the precise legal issues. But **basically, this is a lot more than just about the law. The law isn't good in either country, but there's also process, there's also the fact that I speak English,** I don't speak Swedish. I was only intending to be in Sweden for one week. I have no knowledge of their system. The whole system moves incredibly quickly. Sweden is isolated from the world's press, you can't rely on that, it's a very small, tight-knit community and so on. So there's— **while in some ways parts of the law are better in Sweden, the process itself is not at all good.** Since the year 2000, every single person the United States has requested for extradition from Sweden has been extradited— no exceptions. **Here in the UK, about 10 per cent of people that the US has requested extradition have not been extradited.** The nearest equivalent, and it's a pretty direct case, Gary McKinnon, they've been fighting to extradite him for 10 years and finally the UK eventually, very reluctantly, vetoed his extradition to the US. **That's never happened in Sweden.** *[Possibly because the cases have not been similar, nor as many. --A.B.]*

EMMA ALBERICI: Let's talk about the 29-year-old former CIA staffer Edward Snowden. It's now been revealed that he was responsible for those leaks to The Guardian and The Washington Post revealing the way the US National Security Agency gains information from internet companies— Google, Facebook, as well as US telecoms. Have you had any communication with him?

JULIAN ASSANGE: We have had indirect communication with his people.

EMMA ALBERICI: What do you mean?

JULIAN ASSANGE: I don't think it's appropriate at this time that I go into further details, but let's look at the case and let's look at what he's revealed. What he has revealed is what I have been speaking about for years, that their National Security Agency and its allies have been involved in a mass interception program of Google, Facebook, the various telecommunications data, the telecommunications flow to the United States— which is about 99 per cent, for example, of Latin American traffic flows to the United States— bulk interceptions of many, many people, many, many Australians. And we must ask the question, and the Australian Government must answer the question: how many Australians have been intercepted? In the relationship between the Defence Signals Directorate and ASIO and US Intelligence, has the Australian Government been pooling that information about Australians? Has it been pooling that information about Americans?

There's been an admission here in the UK that GCHQ— which is the big spy— electronic spying agency here, the equivalent of DSD or the National Security Agency— has been involved in that program, in the Prism program since at least 2010, accessing data obtained from Google, Facebook, Yahoo, etc. Is the Australian Government still involved in this warrantless interception program? Are there collection points in Australia? Have Australian companies been part of this, having their information sucked out to the United States? Is this being done without a warrant? It is simply not acceptable.

And if I am elected to the Senate, the Australian WikiLeaks Party position is that there should be no interception, none at all of Australians without proper judicial oversight. No warrants without a judge assessing independently the warrant and there must be reporting every six months to the Australian Parliament on how many interceptions are occurring. You know, **we run the danger here of the West more broadly drifting into a state where there are two systems. There's one law for the average person and there's another law if you're inside the national intelligence complex.** You can intercept whoever you want, you're complete unaccountable for your actions, there's no judicial review. That is not acceptable. I don't believe Australians find that acceptable. I don't believe that Americans find that acceptable. Snowden clearly didn't find that acceptable and he was even someone in the system.

EMMA ALBERICI: And is that the basis for your pitch for election to the Australian Senate?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well we have a great many reasons and there's various policies of different kinds will be released during the election cycle. But in essence, the values of transparency and accountability and resistance under pressure that I have developed

through hard experience with WikiLeaks, that is what we intend to take to Canberra. You know, we went toe-to-toe with the Pentagon, we've gone toe-to-toe with many other corrupt states. Canberra is a corrupt little mini-state. We all know that. There's a corruption of purpose. **We elect people, we send them to Canberra to represent Australians, to represent Australians to the bureaucracy, to hold the bureaucracy to account, to represent Australian interests overseas. And yet we have people like Bob Carr and Julia Gillard representing mining industries, representing Macquarie Bank, representing their long-lost American pals.** That is not acceptable.

EMMA ALBERICI: Well how do you expect to represent the people of Victoria when you're locked up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and you're wanted in Sweden on sexual assault allegations?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, **you mention these in an inflammatory way. People should go to Justice4Assange.com and they can read all about your so-called allegations** where even the women concerned say they had absolutely no intention to file any such formal allegations. This is a matter that has been taken by the Swedish state. That is admitted in the Supreme Court here on paper, it's admitted in the High Court here. This is matter taken by the Swedish state. So people should have a look at Justice4Assange.com. They can also look at the excellent Four Corners investigation into that entire episode.

Now if we go to the legal situation and representation, that's actually quite interesting. It's really very fascinating. You know, the State of Victoria was created by exactly such a situation. Once upon a time there was just New South Wales, Greater New South Wales and it included the people of Melbourne, the people of Port Phillip Bay. And they found that they were not represented in the NSW Parliament whatsoever. And so they nominated Earl Grey, **the same Earl Grey that is responsible for the tea, he was the secretary of the colonies to represent them in the NSW Parliament. He was here in the UK. He was elected, even though he was in the UK and he could not take his place in the NSW Legislature. And the result, fascinating result was that he created the State of Victoria when he was kicked out of the NSW Legislature. So in fact the very founding of the State of Victoria is analogous to the situation that I'm in.**

But if we then go and look at the Australian Constitution, well, I would be taking my seat in July next year, so hopefully the situation has been resolved by then, but if it doesn't, we have a fascinating situation, which is **the Australian Senate would have to vote to kick me out if I didn't turn up in the Senate for a period of two months. That'd be a very interesting political situation.** It would reveal a lot about the two sides of politics in this country and what they do in the Senate and what they think is in Australian interests. **But if they do, then another person from the WikiLeaks Party, one of the other publicly declared candidates, can easily take my place while I'm not able to take it.**

EMMA ALBERICI: Finally, Julian Assange, Jemima Khan, who was once a keen supporter of yours, has recently lamented that you, in her words, expect supporters to follow unquestioningly in blinkered, cultish devotion, claiming that you had become more like an Australian L. Ron Hubbard. What do you make of that?

JULIAN ASSANGE: Well, come on. I mean, really? **Jemima Khan? Seriously?** This

concerns a Hollywood documentary made by Universal for \$2.5 million. They wanted WikiLeaks to partake in that, but we thought they were going to produce a pretty sleazy result, so we said no. In fact, **the documentary team that we are working with is the same one that is now holed up in Hong Kong with Snowden.** That's Laura Poitras. Anyway, so because we went with Laura Poitras and we didn't go with Alex Gibney in the US, the result was Gibney then went to Jemima Khan and recruited her to try and bring us in to that documentary process over two years ago, giving her access and an executive credit in the film. But we couldn't tolerate the film. So we attacked the film, but she was part of the film, so as a result, she attacked back. I mean, **it's really just— it's nothing.**

EMMA ALBERICI: We have to leave it there. Julian Assange, thanks so much for taking the time to speak to us.

JULIAN ASSANGE: You're welcome.

Video: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dyNdtXBMhHM

<http://leaksource.wordpress.com/2013/06/10/julian-assange-lateline-interview-06102013/>

Ecuador's foreign minister says UK should allow Julian Assange to exercise his 'fundamental right' to sunbathe

Assange has been holed up in the west London embassy for almost a year

*James Legge
The Guardian
11 June 2013*

Ecuador's foreign minister has said Britain should allow housebound fugitive and Wikileaks founder Julian Assange to leave his country's embassy to sunbathe which, he said, is a "fundamental right."

Assange, 41, has been in the embassy in Kensington, west London, since June last year, avoiding extradition to Sweden on sex assault charges. The Metropolitan Police keep watch on the building around-the-clock and have orders to arrest the Australian if he steps outside.

Foreign minister Ricardo Patino will meet William Hague in London on Sunday, and today he said: "We believe he has a fundamental right to sunbathe." He said Assange can currently only enjoy the June rays through a window, adding: "His right to intimacy, mobility, a normal life and health is being restricted.

"I will be asking the British government to allow Mr Assange to sunbathe and enjoy the warm weather and sunshine because unfortunately, at this moment in time, he hasn't been able to do so for a year."

Assange was given diplomatic asylum two months after seeking refuge in the Ecuadorean Embassy. At Sunday's meeting, Mr Patino is expected to tell Britain it has a duty to grant his charge safe passage out of the UK. The Wikileaks founder says he fears he will be handed over to the US and face the death penalty for publishing leaked secret documents if he is sent to Sweden.

Australia abandons Assange

*Linda Pearson
Green Left Weekly
June 15, 2013*

Australian foreign Minister Bob Carr finally acknowledged the US grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange on June 5. This investigation will decide whether Assange should be prosecuted for his role in releasing confidential documents through WikiLeaks.

Despite the risk to Assange, Carr told a Senate budget estimates committee that the Australian government will not be seeking information from the US government about the grand jury, because "it doesn't affect Australian interests".

Carr's statement came during the first week of whistleblower Bradley Manning's trial, where the US government has alleged that Assange helped Manning leak hundreds of thousands of classified US government documents to WikiLeaks. Their aim is to portray Assange as a conspirator, rather than as journalist, so that he can be prosecuted under the archaic Espionage Act.

Greens senator Scott Ludlam asked Carr whether the Australian government has expressed the view to the US government that Assange should be "entitled to protections under the First Amendment of the US Constitution, for publishing activities that are entirely legitimate".

Carr replied: "Not to my knowledge, no. **It wouldn't be a matter of concern to Australia to make a case for him... Why would we do that?"**

The prospect of a US prosecution of Assange is a matter of concern to Australians because it restricts the powers of a free media to investigate serious crimes carried out by governments. **In publishing the leaked information, WikiLeaks' actions were no different to the actions of other media organisations that published it.**

When Ludlam questioned Carr further about the grand jury, Carr said: "There's nothing more to say about it. We're not going to over-service these consular cases. **I'm not going to have resources allocated to it. There's been enough investment of DFAT resources in looking after Mr Assange's interests."**

Contrary to Carr's assertions, the Australian government has offered Assange no substantive assistance since 2010.

In an interview with Lateline on June 10, Assange described the Australian government's "consular assistance" as a "tick-a-box call procedure", that is, phone calls

are occasionally made by an Australian official to inquire about Assange's wellbeing, but no practical help is offered.

Assange said: "I have not met anyone from any consulate, any Australian government official since 2010, since I was in prison.... They have given no advice, nothing at all. No advice, no information, nothing whatsoever. Not [to] me, not to my lawyers, nothing."

The type of assistance the Australian government could offer, if they supported Assange, would be to make public statements in defence of his rights and make diplomatic representations to the US government on his behalf.

With the recent chilling revelations about the US government's mass surveillance of personal phone and internet records, and its initiation of a criminal investigation into the source of the information, we should be more concerned than ever about the attacks on journalists like Assange.

Yet Carr prefers to defer to an increasingly authoritarian US government, than to stand up for the rights of an Australian citizen and journalist.

<http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/54279>

Assange: America is at the Precipice of Turnkey Totalitarianism

The Sunday Story The revelations are a breakthrough in the war we have been fighting to expose what I called last year "the coming surveillance dystopia."

Hasan Suroor
The Hindu
June 16, 2013

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange tells Hasan Suroor in an interview that people cannot really remain anonymous today, even if they use the right tools on the Internet.

What was your first reaction to the Snowden revelations? Were you surprised?

The revelations are a breakthrough in the war we have been fighting to expose what I called last year "the coming surveillance dystopia." Because of the nature of its work WikiLeaks has known about many of the activities of the National Security Agency but the Snowden revelations show clear and current proof of the worst aspects of this dangerous new surveillance regime.

Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon papers in 1971 revealing how the American public was misled over the Vietnam war, has described the Snowden leak as the most important in American history — even more important than the Pentagon papers. Do you agree? If so, in what way do you measure its importance?

I agree it is the most important in relation to the United States. America stands at the precipice of "turnkey totalitarianism" where the most dangerous elements of a neo-

garrison state have been constructed. However, the release of the WikiLeaks cables was of greater global importance because it involved every major issue in nearly every country.

In what ways can people safeguard their online privacy in the face of such wholesale invasion of their personal information by the State?

It is now extremely difficult to be a completely private person; to not be swept up into some component of the U.S. global surveillance regime. For example, even if you are careful to use anonymisation tools, such as Tor or the anonymous operating system Tails, there is still the problem that all your friends, family and colleagues have been transformed into unwitting informants as they discuss their interactions with you on Facebook, email, SMS, Skype and so on.

You have said that WikiLeaks revelations inspired the Arab Spring. But do you fear that the actions of the kind revealed by Snowden might have a chilling effect on popular uprisings in future?

This chill was already known in the Mubarak regime in Egypt. Pamphlets distributed by activists in the Egyptian revolution began and ended with 'Protect yourself; do not use Facebook or twitter' because of previous round-ups. What pervasive surveillance means is that if you start a revolution you must be sure to win it.

Are his actions likely to encourage more whistleblowers to come forward?

Bradley Manning's trial began on Monday last week, three years after he was arrested. The United States Department of Justice has admitted that its even larger investigation into WikiLeaks and myself continues. **Despite this, or perhaps even because of it, Edward Snowden has stood forward** to reveal the truth about where our world is heading and the courageous journalists, Laura Poitras and Glenn Greenwald, have joined his courage and conviction.

The same disgraceful attacks that we saw against Bradley Manning we now see against Edward Snowden. Political attacks and attacks on character. Similarly, the same type of de-legitimising smears that we saw against me are now hitting the journalists Glen Greenwald and Laura Poitras.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/assange-america-is-at-the-precipice-of-turnkey-totalitarianism/article4818013.ece>

Julian Assange: a year in the embassy

Hindustani Times
June 16, 2013

It is an odd sight: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is wearing a jacket and tie, but no shoes. Then again, if you have not stepped outside Ecuador's London embassy for a year, shoes are largely pointless.

In an interview with AFP to mark this strange anniversary, the man behind the whistleblowing website that unleashed the wrath of Washington insisted diplomats have the potential to end the deadlock that has left him trapped.

Like something out of a spy novel, Assange, a 41-year-old former computer hacker from Australia, walked into the embassy on June 19, 2012 and claimed asylum in a sensational bid to avoid extradition to Sweden for questioning over alleged sex crimes.

Ecuador granted his request, accepting his fears that if sent to Sweden he might be passed on to the United States and prosecuted for publishing thousands of classified war logs from Iraq and Afghanistan and a cache of diplomatic cables.

But Britain has refused to grant him safe passage to Ecuador. For a year, police have maintained a 24-hour guard at the doors of the embassy— a modest apartment around the corner from the Harrods department store— and are poised to arrest him if he tries to leave.

The last year, Assange says, has been like living on a space station. He has used a sun lamp to make up for the lack of natural light, and exercises on a treadmill.

He has also been getting on with the business of being a thorn in Washington's side. "You ask how I deal with the difficulties of being confined. Well actually, my mind is not confined," he said, leaning back in a chair in the embassy's tastefully decorated front room. "The physical circumstances are difficult. However, I'm working every day."

He spoke as shockwaves reverberated around the world over the biggest US leak since WikiLeaks published the war logs and diplomatic cables in 2010: the exposure of spy agencies' massive electronic surveillance programmes.

Edward Snowden, an ex-CIA employee who says from exile in Hong Kong that his conscience drove him to reveal the scale of the government's spying on the public, faces a criminal probe— and Assange fears he will be treated as harshly as WikiLeaks' leaker Bradley Manning.

"Mr Snowden is as good an example of a hero as any. He has performed an extremely courageous act," said Assange, hailing him for exposing America's "creeping mass surveillance state".

"What we don't want to see is him ending up the same way as Bradley Manning— detained without trial, abused in prison and now facing life imprisonment."

Manning, a 25-year-old US soldier, is being court-martialled for passing the war logs and cables to WikiLeaks, with prosecutors arguing that leaking classified information is equivalent to helping al Qaeda. Aiding the enemy can carry the death sentence, though prosecutors are not seeking it in Manning's case.

"They're trying to erect a precedent that speaking to the media is the communicating with the enemy— a death penalty offence," said Assange. "What's at stake in this trial is the future of press in the United States and in the rest of the world."

The name of the silver-haired WikiLeaks founder has come up frequently during the court-martial, which began on June 3. He claims there is a sealed US indictment against

him, and that his conviction is a "99-percent chance" certainty if he ever ends up on US territory.

Assange's critics accuse him of hiding from justice over the sex allegations— which he denies— saying his fears of being passed from Sweden to the US are unfounded.

Entering the embassy was the final twist in a long legal battle over the allegations. But Assange claims Britain and Ecuador can reach a deal that will see him leave "within a year. I think the position in the UK is softening. **Of course, it will never publicly humiliate the United States by offering me safe passage in a manner that doesn't seem to be forced," he said. "But there's lots of ways of saving the pride of Sweden, Australia, the UK and the United States," he added, without specifying them.**

He insists Britain is breaking international law by refusing to let him travel to Ecuador as a refugee— but admitted it was difficult to imagine a scenario in which he could leave without being handcuffed.

Will there eventually come a day when he just gives up and walks outside?

"When I've had enough? I don't know. It's hard to say. At the moment we're doing such good work," he said.

Although its recent scoops have been much lower-profile than the cables and war logs, it continues to publish leaks from around the world, including millions of Syrian politicians' emails and US files on Guantanamo Bay.

Where will he be this time next year? "Hopefully Australia, Ecuador, travelling the world," he said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/1077110.aspx>

Diplomatic shift could end Assange's year of asylum

Irene Caselli
BBC News
2013-06-16

A year has passed since Julian Assange sought refuge in Ecuador's embassy in London. While the Wikileaks founder has not gone beyond the balcony at the embassy's Knightsbridge headquarters, much movement has been going on behind the scenes.

Ecuador's Foreign Affairs Minister Ricardo Patino announced last week that Ana Alban, Ecuador's ambassador to the UK, would leave her post. In a BBC interview, Mr Patino said Ms Alban had asked to be replaced before the Ecuadorean government decided to grant Mr Assange asylum. He said her replacement was not a result of the Assange case.

But foreign ministry sources in Quito told BBC News that various high-ranking officials had repeatedly expressed profound dissatisfaction over her work. They say Ms Alban was seen as "ill-suited for her position" and was considered unable to bring an end to the long-running diplomatic impasse.

As Mr Patino is due to hold talks with his UK counterpart William Hague in London on Monday, Ms Alban's replacement may also mean a shift in Ecuador's strategy in the Assange saga.

Mr Assange entered Ecuador's embassy in London last June asking for asylum. He did so to avoid extradition to Sweden, where prosecutors want to question him over allegations of rape and sexual assault.

The Australian anti-secrecy campaigner, who denies wrongdoing, fears that if he is sent to Sweden, he may be extradited to the US, where he could face the death penalty for disclosing confidential government information.

His decision to seek refuge in Ecuador's embassy caught many international observers by surprise, raising questions about why the Andean country would be interested in protecting him.

Sources told the BBC that negotiations had been in the making for months and that Ecuadorean authorities in London already knew that Mr Assange would soon become their guest.

Yet, it took the Ecuadorean government two months to make its position official. On 16 August, Mr Patino announced Mr Assange would be granted asylum. While the Assange case gave Ecuador a high profile, it also put the country in a delicate diplomatic position.

So far Ecuador has tried to negotiate safe conduct with the UK government so that Mr Assange can leave the embassy without being arrested. But the UK insists it is obliged under the law to extradite Mr Assange to Sweden.

"This is a complex case in which the reputations of many countries are at stake," said foreign policy analyst Michel Levi, of Quito's Simon Bolivar Andina University. "Such a case required a more experienced diplomatic representation that could co-ordinate the situation better."

Ms Alban was named ambassador to London in 2010, when the UK was seen as marginal for Ecuador's foreign relations. Some US cables dating back to 2007, when President Rafael Correa took over and appointed Ms Alban as environment minister, suggest she was not an experienced political operator.

"Alban, who was appointed by previous President Alfred Palacio in 2005, was retained by President Correa. Although seemingly well-intentioned, she has been a weak and ineffectual minister under both Palacio and Correa," said a cable originating from the US embassy in Quito on 17 September 2007.

Ecuador's relations with Mr Assange have had ups and downs since his Wikileaks website first released US State Department diplomatic cables in November 2010. At the time, former deputy Foreign Minister Kintto Lucas said Ecuador would grant him residency if needed. A few weeks later, Mr Patino and President Correa backtracked, saying Mr Lucas had spoken "on his own behalf." **Mr Correa spoke disparagingly of Wikileaks, saying it had "committed an error by breaking the laws of the United States and leaking this type of information."**

But things changed in 2011, when the Ecuadorean government reached an agreement with Mr Assange to declassify all the cables from the US Embassy in Quito.

Wikileaks had previously released the cables through El Comercio and El Universo, two opposition newspapers which Mr Correa thought were using them to further their own anti-government agenda.

Sources told BBC News that Fidel Narvaez, Ecuador's consul to London, was the mastermind behind the Wikileaks-Ecuador episode. Mr Narvaez, a political activist who was made consul in 2010, is thought to have approached Mr Assange about the US cables.

He also mediated an interview between the Wikileaks founder and President Correa in April 2012. The 75-minute interview, broadcast on Russia Today, an English-language TV channel funded by the Moscow government, was a bonding moment for Mr Assange and the Ecuadorean president, who praised Wikileaks and its work.

Mr Assange's arrival at the embassy was no surprise for those at the foreign affairs ministry who already knew of Mr Narvaez's negotiations with Mr Assange. At the same time Mr Narvaez, who is seen with suspicion by career diplomats for his radical politics, hoped to find fertile terrain in Mr Patino's hard line in foreign affairs.

Last week Mr Patino announced the new ambassador would be Juan Falconí Puig, a lawyer criticised for his role in protecting private banks during the collapse of Ecuador's financial system in the late 1990s.

It is difficult to determine whether a shift in Ecuador's approach to this diplomatic saga will determine a quick exit strategy for Mr Assange. But the answer may lie within the walls of the embassy to which the Wikileaks founder is currently confined.

Britain's threat to nab Assange almost broke ties: Ecuador

AFP

June 17, 2013

Britain's threat to enter Ecuador's embassy in London to nab WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange strained bilateral ties to the point of breaking but relations are now good, a top diplomat said on Sunday.

Bilateral "ties really reached a critical point when (last August) there was an inappropriate threat to invade Ecuadoran territory, violating the diplomatic legation, seeking Mr Assange's capture," Ecuadoran Deputy Foreign Minister Marco Albuja said in a phone interview.

"That was the key moment at which relations were in danger of being broken off," Albuja said as Assange marked a year's limbo in the embassy.

The 41-year-old former computer hacker from Australia, walked into the embassy on June 19, 2012, and claimed asylum in a sensational bid to avoid extradition to Sweden for questioning over alleged sex crimes.

Ecuador granted his request, accepting his fears that if sent to Sweden he might be passed on to the United States and prosecuted for publishing thousands of classified war logs from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as a cache of diplomatic cables, on the secret-spilling WikiLeaks website.

Britain has refused to grant him safe passage to Ecuador. Quito, meanwhile, has pressed on in its bid to secure that safe passage for the whistleblower. And "now there is no real effect on (bilateral) relations, and we have in London, as well as in Quito, a fluid dialogue. Ties are good," Albuja said.

Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño is in London to meet Monday with his British counterpart William Hague in a bid to unblock the diplomatic logjam. **"At no time has Ecuador sought to defy the English or Swedish justice system,"** Albuja said.

"From the beginning we have said that Mr Assange should face trial. But of course what is being requested is that he not be extradited to a third country where the death penalty is an option and as such his life could be endangered," he added, alluding to the United States.

"We are awaiting Britain's response. Ecuador is not negotiating, Ecuador is having a dialogue," he stressed.



Assange supporters outside the Ecuadorian Embassy

Julian Assange prepared for five more years in embassy, says Ecuador

Foreign minister Ricardo Patiño says situation is 'totally unjust', as talks arranged between British and Ecuadorean legal experts

*Sam Jones
The Guardian
17 June 2013*

The WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, says he is fit enough to spend another five years inside the tiny Ecuadorean embassy in London, Ecuador's foreign minister said on Monday, as it was announced that British and Ecuadorean legal experts would try to resolve the impasse.

Despite the news of the legal talks— which followed a meeting on Monday morning between the British foreign secretary, William Hague, and his Ecuadorean counterpart, Ricardo Patiño— neither London nor Quito is showing any sign of backing down.

The Foreign Office said "no substantive progress" had been made during the discussions, while Patiño told a press conference that Assange's situation was "totally unjust".

Patiño said his government and Assange himself were prepared for a long waiting game, with the WikiLeaks founder telling him he was fit enough to spend another five years inside the embassy, in which he will have been holed up for exactly a year on Wednesday.

Assange walked into the embassy in Knightsbridge last June in an attempt to avoid extradition to Sweden to face sexual assault and rape allegations, which he denies. Ecuador granted him political asylum two months later but the British authorities have made it clear that he will be arrested if he leaves the building.

Patiño expressed hope that the legal working party might find a solution to the impasse, but insisted his government would never abandon Assange.

"Our government will not hand Mr Assange over to the UK government nor to anyone else and we shall continue to stress that Mr Assange has the right to benefit from asylum," he said. "We feel he should be handed over into safe conduct so that he can leave the UK for elsewhere."

He said Assange had been deprived of his liberty for a year, adding: "Really, is justice prevailing here? It's not, is it?"

Patiño said: "For us this is a matter of principle rather than patience, and of course if you have strong principles you must have sufficient patience... When you act on principle, you have all the time in the world and that's what we've also committed to Mr Hague and Mr Assange." He added: "We do hope that Mr Assange is not going to get older and die in our embassy."

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Ministers agreed that officials should establish a working group to find a diplomatic solution to the issue of Julian Assange, but no substantive progress was made. The foreign secretary was clear once again that any resolution would need to be within the laws of the United Kingdom."

Patiño, who conceded that Scotland Yard's round-the-clock guarding of the embassy was sometimes "a bit uncomfortable" for staff, said the police and the British government could rest assured that Ecuador would make no attempt to whisk Assange from the premises.

"We're not going to smuggle Mr Assange out in the boot of a car or through an underground tunnel or something," he said. "The Ecuadorean government isn't going

to go out through the back door, we're going to come out proud through the front door.... We're going to ensure that he comes out facing his freedom—the freedom of our country. This is what we are hoping for."

He said Assange was in good spirits and they had been up until 4am on Monday talking about the situation. "He said he was strong enough to stay in our embassy for at least five years if he is not granted safe passage," Patiño said. "[But] I would consider it a total injustice if he has to spend more time in our embassy."

Asked whether Quito would countenance a similar request for asylum from the NSA whistleblower, Edward Snowden, Patiño said the government would certainly consider it.

"If he applies to our government, then of course we shall analyse the situation and of course other countries may be involved too," he said. "But if he applies for asylum to the Ecuadorean government, then, shouldering its full responsibility, the Ecuadorean government will analyse the request."

Julian Assange's asylum stalemate no nearer resolution one year on

The Ecuadorean embassy's celebrity refugee is used to living in what Assange likens to a space station as he battles extradition

*Esther Addley
The Guardian
17 June 2013*

Vivienne Westwood has paid a visit, as have the American civil rights activist Cornel West and the "cyberlibertarian" campaigner and former Grateful Dead lyricist John Perry Barlow.

Lady Gaga popped in while in town to launch her fragrance, after the singer MIA tweeted that she would supply tea and cake. On Thursday, René "Residente" Pérez, the lead singer of a Puerto Rican rap duo called Calle 13, called round to collaborate on a song about free expression.

And on Sunday, 362 days after Julian Assange first asked Ecuador to grant him political asylum, the WikiLeaks founder hosted his most senior visitor yet, the country's foreign minister, Ricardo Patiño. The politician's meeting with his British opposite number, William Hague, was the first ministerial-level talks of a five-nation diplomatic tangle that to date has frustrated all attempts at resolution: what on earth is to be done about Julian Assange?

Wednesday will mark a year since Assange first walked into the Ecuadorean embassy in Knightsbridge, west London, and asked for asylum, since when he has not set foot outside its tiny suite of offices. The Australian took the dramatic step after losing the final stage of a long battle to avoid extradition to Sweden to answer accusations by two women of rape and sexual assault.

Assange argues that going to Sweden would leave him vulnerable to onward extradition to the US to face potential espionage charges relating to the WikiLeaks cable releases. To his critics, however, it was an opportunistic attempt to avoid Sweden's legitimate judicial process.

Ecuador granted asylum two months later, but Britain vowed he would be arrested if he so much as stepped outside to take the air. And so the man whose Cablegate leaks shook the world has been eating, sleeping, working and receiving visitors in a room less than five metres wide, housing a single bed, a bookshelf, a small round table and chairs.

Ecuador's tiny embassy occupies part of a single storey of a red-bricked mansion block immediately to the rear of Harrods. On one side of the building is the shop's loading bay and a noisy taxi rank, on the other a small alleyway in which a number of police vehicles park day and night. A uniformed officer is on permanent duty on the building's steps, while others stand watch nearby to ensure Assange does not make a bid for freedom.

Inside, the Australian shares a bathroom, in which a shower was installed after he became a surprise house guest, and has access to a tiny basic kitchen. He has a running machine— a gift from the film director Ken Loach— and receives regular visits from a personal trainer, and from a small core of WikiLeaks staffers who keep him supplied with fresh food and clean clothes. **His room is so dim, Assange has said, that he relies on a lamp that mimics blue sky, set to a timer, to stop him working all night.**

Preparing for a rare appearance on the embassy's balcony, he once burned his face so badly on the lamp that his skin blistered. It is a little like living in a space station, he has said.

And yet, for all his constraints, Assange has a number of laptops and mobile phones and a fast internet connection, and that, say supporters, makes his situation greatly preferable to what he considers his alternatives.

"Certainly I think it is hard for him, as it would be hard for anybody in his position," says his friend and regular visitor Vaughan Smith, whose Norfolk home was the Australian's previous long-term address while he was on bail fighting extradition. "He hasn't seen a ray of sunshine for a year, so it's not comfortable. Nevertheless, he is a very determined person, and **he's bearing with it in a way that I think not everybody would be able to do.**

"I think Julian is somebody who sees a world outside on the internet that perhaps some of us don't see, and he is able to work. Were he in a prison cell he would be unlikely to have that access."

The journalist John Pilger, another regular visitor, agrees that Assange's constrained life is "certainly better than that on offer in Sweden and the United States". "In the meantime, he is busy day and night. The number of people who come simply to offer their support is remarkable. **What strikes me whenever I see him is his good humour; he has a wry, mischievous wit and is always good company. The paranoia of which he is accused by his enemies often applies to them, not him.**"

Pilger has brought his fellow Australian DVDs of Catch-22, Borat and Dr Strangelove; Assange has also worked his way through box sets of The West Wing and The Twilight

Zone. **But most of the time, Assange says, he works: 17 hours a day, seven days a week. That includes giving frequent videolink interviews, issuing statements about issues of web expression and liaising with supporters in Australia, where he is running for election to the Senate.**

What is Assange holding out for at the embassy? What the Australian and his supporters want is clear. "The lawful, moral and humane solution is for the British government to abide by its obligations under international law and allow Julian Assange to leave this country under protection of the government of Ecuador," says Pilger. **"With the Obama administration at war with truth-tellers and the world, does anyone seriously doubt the kind of future that awaits Assange if he is not protected?"**

While no extradition order has been issued by the US, a secret grand jury is believed to have been looking into potential grounds for prosecution of Assange, and his supporters are convinced the US would like to try him.

That is also Ecuador's argument. **"There is no question that Britain not only can allow safe passage [from the embassy to Ecuador]... but that it must,"** Patiño said in an interview with the BBC this week, insisting that any possible future prosecution in the US would be politically motivated.

Some have floated a possible compromise deal, in which Assange would go to Sweden with a guarantee from London and Stockholm not to extradite him on to the US (which would require the agreement of both). But even if the two governments were to agree—in itself, highly unlikely—it would not be enough to persuade the Australian to leave the embassy, say friends. **"He's just as frightened of the British extraditing him to America as the Swedes,"** said one close associate.

Assange has told reporters that he expects Sweden to drop the case against him, but Elisabeth Massi Fritz, the new lawyer for one of his two accusers, has shown no such appetite, saying: "Sweden must put pressure on Ecuador for Assange to be submitted to Sweden ... Assange will not set the rules of the game for how we conduct a preliminary investigation in Sweden."

Britain insists it is committed to finding a diplomatic solution to the stalemate, and with the cost of policing the Australian's year in limbo estimated at £4 m so far, or a little under £12,000 a day, its eagerness to do so is understandable.

But the Foreign Office insists that it cannot allow Assange to leave the UK without acting on the Swedish warrant, and it is unclear how the legal working group set up by Hague and Patiño will be able to resolve what to date has been an irreconcilable difference: Quito believes international law demands that Britain let Assange leave, while London insists it must comply with UK law in extraditing him to Sweden.

And so, for the foreseeable future, Assange will stay in his Knightsbridge lodgings. **"For us this is a matter of principle,"** said Patiño, **"and if you have principle you have all the time in the world."**

Julian Assange: UK and Ecuador hope working party can help end impasse

Move comes as William Hague and his Ecuadorean counterpart agree to keep communication channels open

*Press Association/The Guardian
17 June 2013*

A group of legal experts is to be set up by the UK and Ecuadorian governments to try to break the deadlock over the future of the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange. But despite the move being agreed after a meeting between the British foreign secretary, William Hague, and his Ecuadorean counterpart, Ricardo Patiño, little progress was made in trying to resolve the diplomatic standoff.

Assange has been inside Ecuador's London embassy for almost a year, fearing he will be extradited to the United States if he travels to Sweden to answer allegations of sexual assault against two women.

Patiño told a news conference that the Ecuadorian government was prepared to continue to allow Assange to remain inside the embassy, following the decision last year to grant him political asylum. He made it clear that Assange would not be smuggled out of the embassy in the boot of a car, saying he should be allowed to leave and go to Ecuador.

There was now a legal dispute between the UK and Ecuador, which Patiño said he hoped could be resolved by the working party.

A Foreign Office spokesman said the two ministers had agreed to keep channels of communication open, but made no breakthrough, adding: "Ministers agreed that officials should establish a working group to find a diplomatic solution to the issue of Julian Assange, but no substantive progress was made.

"The foreign secretary was clear once again that any resolution would need to be within the laws of the United Kingdom." Patiño said Assange was prepared to stay inside the embassy for five years, believing it was preferable to facing the US legal system.

DN: 2013-06-17

Assange får besök av utrikesministern

Ecuadors utrikesminister Ricardo Patiño väntades i helgen till Storbritannien för att träffa Julian Assange, som sedan ett år håller sig gömd på landets ambassad i London. Wikileaksgrundaren Assange misstänks sedan 2010 för sexbrott i Sverige. På ambassaden i London sitter han sedan den 19 juni i fjol.

I en brittisk rättsprocess har det slagits fast att Assange ska utlämnas till Sverige. Men han är efter alla Wikileaks avslöjanden om USA:s krigföring i Irak och Afghanistan

rädd att bli utlämnad till USA från Sverige. Assange hävdar att han riskerar att dömas till döden i USA.

Assange har beviljats politisk asyl av Ecuador, men kan inte lämna ambassaden utan att gripas av brittiska myndigheter.

På måndagen träffar Patiño sin brittiske kollega William Hague för att diskutera Assanges framtid, rapporterar brittiska medier.

Ambassaden bevakas av polis, dygnet runt. Redan i vintras uppgavs att kostnaden för bevakningen nått motsvarande cirka 30 miljoner kronor.

Professor Joakim Nergelius sade nyligen till TT att svenska myndigheter kunde ha visat mer flexibilitet i fallet:

– Det har blivit ett låst läge och jag tycker nog att svenska myndigheter har bidragit till att det har blivit så, säger Nergelius, professor i rättsvetenskap och juridik vid Örebro universitet.

De svenska brottsmisstankarna mot Assange går tillbaka till 2010 och handlar om en våldtäktsanklagelse, två fall av sexuellt ofredande och ett fall av olaga tvång.

Anhängare till Assange hade hoppats på ett uttalande från honom under söndagen, men fick istället nöja sig med att Assange vinkade ut genom ett fönster.

• *Amanda Johansson Murie*

'Wikileaks' Film Flop Scores on BitTorrent Sites

*Leslie Meredith
TechNewsDaily
June 17, 2013*

No box office smash, "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks," captured the No. 4 spot in last week's most pirated movies roster, compiled by TorrentFreak, a news site covering all things torrent-related. As of June 16, 2013, the \$2 million movie about Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, directed by documentarian Alex Gibney for Universal Studios, **has made a paltry \$158,600** in U.S. ticket sales, according to BoxOfficeMojo.com.

But it's a hit on TorrentFreak, beating big-budget pictures such as "Jack the Giant Slayer," "Fast and Furious 6" and the animated feature "Epic." ("The Hangover Part 3" held the top spot for the second straight week.) And the irony of its failure as a commercial venture, compared with its success as a "stolen" film is somehow fitting since it is indeed about so-called stolen or leaked documents, depending on your point of view.

The Wikileaks movie's lack of popularity may be due in part to the lambasting it received from Wikileaks.org itself on the eve of the movie's release in late May. The site released an annotated transcript including detailed notes pointing out what Wikileaks called misinformation throughout the movie's script.

"The title ('We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks') is false. It directly implies that WikiLeaks steals secrets. In fact, the statement is made by former CIA/NSA (National Security Agency) director Michael Hayden in relation to the activities of U.S. government spies, not in relation to WikiLeaks," the first note reads. "This an irresponsible libel."

Further, Wikileaks casts Internet freedom activist Assange as a possible co-conspirator with Bradley Manning, who is currently being court-martialed for espionage and aiding the enemy after reportedly leaking government documents to Wikileaks.org. The organization said the portrayal was "factually incorrect," and they had no participation in the making of the film. (Assange declined to be interviewed by Gibney.)

... Meanwhile, Assange has been working on a film with Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Laura Poitras, which will be out later this year. Poitras was instrumental in breaking the recent NSA spying story and has herself been the target of government investigations. Her upcoming film is the third in a trilogy, focusing on post-9/11 America, and will include Wikileaks.org-approved material. It is as yet untitled.

Assange will not leave Ecuador embassy even if Sweden drops extradition bid

WikiLeaks founder fears moves are under way by the US to prosecute him on espionage charges over cable releases

*Esther Addley
The Guardian
18 June 2013*

Julian Assange will not leave Ecuador's embassy even if Sweden drops its extradition bid over accusations of sexual assault, because he fears moves are already underway by the US to prosecute him on espionage charges, he has said.

On the eve of the anniversary of his seeking asylum in the embassy in Knightsbridge, Assange said he believed a sealed indictment had already been lodged by a grand jury in Virginia, which could see him being arrested and extradited by Britain to the US to face prosecution over the WikiLeaks cable releases.

"The strong view of my US lawyer is that there is already a sealed indictment, which means I would be arrested, unless the British government gave information or guarantees that would grant me safe passage," the WikiLeaks founder told a small group of news agencies.

"We know there is an ongoing investigation in the US and we know I am a target of the federal grand jury. There is a 99.97% chance that I will be indicted. So if the Swedish government drops their request [to go to Sweden] tomorrow, I still cannot leave the embassy. My lawyers have advised me I should not leave the embassy because of the risk of arrest and extradition to the US."

The foreign secretary, William Hague, and his Ecuadorean opposite number, Ricardo Patiño, met on Monday to discuss the ongoing diplomatic stalemate, but were unable to reach agreement. Ecuador argues that having been granted political asylum, Assange should be allowed to board a plane to Quito unimpeded but the British authorities have insisted they will not let him leave without acting on the Swedish warrant. The two countries agreed to set up a legal working group in an attempt to **arrive at a solution to the impasse.**

Asked if he regretted seeking asylum because of the resulting stalemate, Assange said: "Strategically, it has been exactly what I hoped for."

Living and working from a small room in the embassy was less stressful than the 600 days he spent on bail wearing an electronic tag, Assange said, although he admitted that it took "diligence" to stay healthy with limited access to natural light. "You can get rickets by not having any sunlight— it is not healthy to be in this position."

But he shrugged off reports that he had been ill during his time in the embassy, describing health stories about a chest condition as "lung-gate". Assange said that when he sought asylum he had believed he would be in the embassy for between six months and two years, a timescale he still considered realistic.

"My case could be swiftly resolved if Sweden were to guarantee that I would not be extradited to the US or if the British government would guarantee to veto any such extradition to the US," he said.

"While I remain hopeful that a diplomatic solution can be reached, or that the Swedish and US authorities will cease their pursuit of me, it remains the case that it is highly unlikely that Sweden or the UK will ever publicly say no to the US in this matter."

DN: 2013-06-18

När precis allting står på spel

Krönika: Emanuel Karlsten:

I veckan är det ett år sedan Julian Assange sprang in på Ecuadors ambassad och hittade ytterligare en fristad. Det är lätt att se det som ett jubileum i galenskap för ett Wikileaks och Assange som kantrat i paranoia. **Men det kan lika gärna stå som exempel för modet att riskera allt.** Och hur illa det kan sluta.

Just nu gömmer sig Edward Snowden på hemlig plats i Hongkong. Den senaste veckan har han blivit världskänd för att ha läckt uppgifter om hur USA övervakar världen. Varje gång han loggar in på datorn drar han upp luvtröjan över både sig och skärmen för att ingen spionkamera ska fånga hans tangentrörelser. Genom att läcka information har han offrat hela sitt liv. Han kommer för alltid att få leva på flykt.

På andra sidan jordklotet sitter Bradley Manning i ett amerikanskt fängelse. Han finns där för att han läckte hundratusentals hemlighetsstämplade dokument om amerikanska krigsförbrytelser. Nyligen inleddes hans rättegång. Manning har redan förlorat sin frihet.

Båda personerna vågade eftersom Assange gick före. Och alla tre uppger ädla motiv: kunskap och makt till folket.

Det Assange startade med Wikileaks är unikt. Aldrig har så mycket hemligstämt material tillgängliggjorts för så många. Ibland klantigt paketerat, men samtliga läckor är gjorda med syftet att medborgare ska känna till maktens övergrepp.

Men priset är högt. Tydligast blev det för Julian Assange och Wikileaks. Från att ha varit hjälteförklarad är Assange nu bortsorterad som haverist. [*Av vem? --A.B.*] Det handlar inte om hans publiceringar utan om hur han har hanterat efterspelet. Avslöjar man amerikanska statshemligheter blir man övervakad och alla runtomkring blir potentiella fiender. Det gjorde den **redan ängsliga [???** Assange kraftigt paranoid. Han klädde sig i kvinnokläder för att inte upptäckas, ifrågasatte sina kolleger och började styra Wikileaks med järnhand. Och när anmälningar om sexualbrott kom tolkade han det genast som att CIA riggat en "honungsfälla". Få vet sanningen om det där, men Assange byggde själv ihop en teori som gjorde honom livrädd: Ett åtal kunde tvinga honom att bli utlämnad till USA.

Assange flippade totalt och använde allt sitt förtroendekapital för att skydda sig. [*Enligt vem?*] Wikileaks insamling till Manning doldes på hemsidan och ersattes med Assanges försvarsfond. I stället för att kliva av Wikileaks, skilja på person och organisation, drog Assange med sig hela organisationen i sitt personliga trauma.

Jag är inte säker på att jag kan anklaga honom för det. Slås man i panik för sitt liv greppar man efter varje livlina man har. Och Assange hade väldigt mycket att både greppa och dra med sig ned i fallet.

Assange och hans efterföljare är alla ett slags engångshjältar som trots att de sitter på en vinnande hand inte kan spela vidare. Medan Snowden har insett det från sitt gömställe i Hongkong, står Assange fortfarande och **gormar från en balkong** i London. Det är på ytan beklagligt, men mänskligt sett förståeligt.

Det är två olika sidor av uppgång och fall.

AB: 2013-06-18

"Olämpligt att generalsekreteraren sitter kvar"

Claes Borgström till rasande attack mot Advokatsamfundet

Fallet Thomas Quick är ett av Sveriges mest uppmärksammade. Men trots att huvudpersonen Sture Bergwall, som han i dag heter, har begärt resning och friats i alla mordfallen är historien långt ifrån avslutad.

I september avslöjades en omfattande mejlkorrespondens mellan huvudpersonerna i Quick-fallet: justitierådet Göran Lambertz, HD-åklagaren Christer van der Kwast och Quick-utredaren Seppo Penttinen, av Expressen.

Tre av mejlen kom från Claes Borgström, Thomas Quicks tidigare advokat. Juristen uppmuntrade Lambertz i sitt arbete med debattartiklar som antydde att Quick kan vara skyldig till flera mord.

"Jag tycker att du hanterade diskussionen i Aktuellt mycket bra. Var Leif nykter?" skrev Borgström till Lambertz den 20 augusti, efter en debatt mot polisprofessorn Leif GW Persson i SVT:s "Aktuellt". Uttalandet fick GW Persson att ryta till och kalla Claes Borgström för en "framstående alkolog".

Efter skandalen inledde Advokatsamfundets disciplinnämnd en granskning om varför Borgström deltagit i konversationen. Borgström friades men tre personer i nämnden, bland annat samfundets generalsekreterare Anne Ramberg, ansåg att Borgström borde ha tilldelats en varning.

Den senaste utvecklingen i den infekterade kontroversen kommer från Claes Borgström. I en artikel i tidningen Advokaten som publiceras på onsdag, som Aftonbladet tagit del av, ifrågasätter han Advokatsamfundet. Att de under disciplinutredningen mot honom frågat efter "ytterligare mailkorrespondens i samma ämne" är enligt advokaten ett brott mot Europakonventionen.

– Det är som att ställa frågan 'Har du gjort några fler inbrott som vi inte känner till?' till en inbrottstjuv och sedan säga 'Om du inte svarar på frågan får du en månad extra', säger han.

Han är också kritisk till att Advokatsamfundet bett honom kommentera "innehållet i drygt 200 mail där jag varken var avsändare eller mottagare".

– Det är ju rena trakasserierna. Det finns ingen anledning att jag ska kommentera mejl som jag inte haft något med att göra, säger Claes Borgström.

Han antyder till och med att generalsekreteraren Anne Ramberg borde avgå.

– Att de har satt rättsäkerheten ur spel väcker frågan om de är lämpliga att ha den posten de har, säger Claes Borgström.

Anne Ramberg vill inte offentligt diskutera vare sig utredningen mot Claes Borgström eller hans åsikter om advokatsamfundets lämplighet.

– Jag har inga som helst kommentarer till Claes Borgströms åsikter om disciplinnämnden eller att han skulle kräva min avgång, säger Anne Ramberg.

Det är inte bara relationen till Advokatsamfundet som skurit sig för Claes Borgström efter Quickhärvan. Med Leif GW Persson har advokaten inte talat efter alkoholgliringarna.

– Jag har aldrig varit riktigt så arg på honom som han verkar vara på mig. Men jag har inga fientliga tankar kring Leif även om jag tycker att han tar i för mycket emellanåt, säger Claes Borgström.

• *John Granlund o. Susanna Nygren*

Rereading Michael Hastings' Interview with Julian Assange

Kevin Gosztola

Firedog Lake

June 18, 2013

The sad news is being taken in by all self-respecting journalists. Someone who had a great passion for what he did and embodied the adversarial spirit that muckraking reporters should have in journalism died in a car accident at a young age. Rolling Stone contributor Michael Hastings died in a car crash in Los Angeles at the age of 33.

His death also happens to come almost exactly one year after WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange sought asylum from Ecuador and entered the country's embassy in the United Kingdom. He has spent an entire year inside the embassy pressing the UK for safe passage to Ecuador to no avail because Sweden continues to want to extradite him and the country has not dropped sexual assault allegations that he faces.

Hastings is one of the few reporters in the world to have conducted and published a major interview with Assange. He interviewed him back in December 2011 when Pfc. Bradley Manning first appeared in a military court at Fort Meade. Assange was still in a home in the British countryside under house arrest.

As someone who has aggressively covered the Manning court martial, along with Julian Assange and WikiLeaks, I found myself going back over the interview that Hastings did. I read it when it was released, but, a year and a half later, there are bits and pieces I am noticing that make it an enduring piece of work.

Hastings, unlike many other journalists, took seriously the fact that the United States government had decided to target Assange. He did not suggest that Assange was conjuring up conspiracy theories about how he was being persecuted because he was an egomaniac. He listened to what Assange had to say about how the Justice Department was likely pursuing him in a widespread investigation.

He asked Assange, "And they're going after Manning, who is facing a life sentence, to get him to say that you're a spy?" and about how the WikiLeaks site had a "most-wanted" list of stories" the organization was "eager to get."

Both are prescient questions, given what I have been witnessing in Manning's trial. Prosecutors maintain Manning was working on behalf of WikiLeaks, searching the secret network with government information he had access to for information that "was also found on the 'most wanted' list."

Assange answered, "To be another chess piece on the board in the attack on us. The U.S. government is trying to redefine what have been long-accepted journalistic methods. If the Pentagon is to have its way, it will be the end of national-security journalism in the United States." He also said the "most wanted" list "was not put together by us."

"We asked for nominations from human rights activists and journalists from around the world of the information they most wanted, and we put that on a list," Assange

added. “The prosecution in the Manning hearing has been attempting to use that list as evidence of our solicitation of information that is likely to be classified, and therefore our complicity in espionage, if we received such information.”

Hastings was willing to sympathize with Assange about the fact that the “Anglo-American press” had given him very little support. He asked about the New York Times’ Bill Keller and how WikiLeaks was different from a mainstream news organization. Assange was able to talk about the Times smearing him and Hastings listened.

Given what we know from Manning now, I also find this exchange to be more interesting:

[HASTINGS] “Collateral Murder” — the video you released in April 2010 showing a U.S. helicopter gunship firing on a group of Iraqi civilians, including two Reuters journalists and two children— was the first scoop that got you major media attention. You learned that The Washington Post actually had the video and had been sitting on it.

[ASSANGE] A Post reporter named David Finkel had the video. We had sources who explained that he had even shown them the video in his home. Yet he concealed it.

It leads me to immediately think of what Manning said of Finkel in his statement in military court on February 28 about his decision to disclose the “Collateral Murder” video:

“As I continued my research, I found an article discussing the book, *The Good Soldiers*, written by Washington Post writer David Finkel. In Mr. Finkel book, he writes about the aerial weapons team attack. As, I read an online excerpt in Google Books, I followed Mr. Finkel’s account of the event belonging to the video. I quickly realized that Mr. Finkel was quoting, I feel in verbatim, the audio communications of the aerial weapons team crew...”

This exchange, when he asks about books being written about WikiLeaks and Assange, is fascinating as well:

[HASTINGS] One of the more interesting books is from Heather Brooke, a writer for *The Guardian*. She sounds almost like a scorned lover— she says she “swooned madly” when you first looked at her, then later concluded that you’re an asshole. That seems to be a recurring narrative of these stories about you.

[ASSANGE] [Long pause] I don’t think Heather Brooke is particularly interesting. The general phenomenon is interesting. **Someone has an involvement to some extent in our work, which they then overstate tremendously to gain authority.** They get something from the involvement— a reputation by proximity, information we’ve collected or some other item of value. Then we’re not able to continue the relationship with them at the same degree of involvement, so they feel rejected. When you become a celebrity— at various times, within the English language, I have been the most famous person being discussed in the news— people’s behavior shifts. **What they lose through the lack of an ongoing relationship seems to be so incredibly valuable to them, so their desire to keep it, or their feeling of loss when they are not able to preserve the interaction, is so extreme that it drives them to do things you would not normally expect people to**

do. I always thought that A-level celebrities and their complaints about the difficulties of being a celebrity were rather self-indulgent.

It makes me think about Alex Gibney's latest documentary "We Steal Secrets" and the prominent role that disaffected WikiLeaks staffer James Ball played in helping Gibney craft the film.

Ball is now a journalist working for The Guardian, who comes off as someone who has gone through the experience Assange described. He has had a "feeling of loss." When publishing stories for The Guardian that do not tie-in to his past with WikiLeaks, his work does not enjoy as much interest. So, to continue to benefit from the "reputation by proximity," he is willing to consistently rehash his past with WikiLeaks to keep up his notoriety.

Hastings pressed Assange on the sexual assault allegations he was facing, why he feared being extradited to Sweden and whether he should have ever slept with the two women, who say he violated them. He asked about legal expenses that were piling up and any advice he had for journalists.

He was generally interested in what Assange and WikiLeaks were trying to do. He did not ask questions to smear or call into question Assange's character. They were asked to help the public understand who Assange was and why he had founded WikiLeaks, as well as to respectfully test some of Assange's claims about his past actions.

A standard for interviewing someone like Assange that few journalists follow was set by Hastings. His passion and commitment to journalism will be missed.

Assange works to be healthy in embassy

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange says it takes "diligence" to remain healthy cooped up in the Ecuadorean embassy but an ACDC mug is on hand to help.

*Australia Associated Press
19 June 2013*

Whistleblower Julian Assange has a confession to make— he doesn't read emails anymore. The 41-year-old insists he works 17 hours a day inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London on his WikiLeaks website, various court cases and his new Australian political party. But he's doing it all without the aid of email.

"I don't know, I don't read any email," he says when asked if he's been receiving messages of support on the first anniversary of his decision to seek asylum in the diplomatic mission. "You'll have to ask someone else."

Assange spoke to a small group of newswire reporters, including AAP, for 80 minutes inside the embassy in the posh Knightsbridge district. Dressed in an open-necked blue business shirt, blue jeans and runners, the former computer hacker **is considered and thoughtful in his answers. He often leaves long pauses before speaking** and occasionally sips from an ACDC coffee mug.

Assange says he won't leave the embassy, even if Sweden drops its investigation into allegations he sexually assaulted two women, because he fears being extradited to the US over WikiLeaks' release of classified documents.

He's prepared to stay put for five years rather than risk being jailed in the US. But just because he's confined doesn't mean he is idle.

"Where do people get this crazy idea that I have time on my hands?" he asks. "It takes more time to do things if you are stuck in an embassy not less time. **I still have all the demands I had, it's just more time-consuming to do them now.**"

Assange is busy with a dozen legal cases, including the US trial of Bradley Manning, fighting the banking blockade against donations and setting up the WikiLeaks party in Australia.

The Australian reportedly has a number of laptops and mobile phones along with a fast internet connection. In order to stay relatively fit, Assange runs up to 8 km a day on a treadmill given to him by socialist film director Ken Loach. He regularly sees a personal trainer and also does boxing and callisthenics.

"Other people are in more difficult circumstances," he says, singling out Manning. "(But) the physical circumstance here is of course difficult. It's an unnatural environment and therefore it takes diligence to stay healthy."

Being starved of sunlight is "dangerous because you can get rickets" which is why he's purchased a UV lamp.

Ecuador's ambassador in November revealed Assange was suffering from a chronic lung ailment, but the Australian Senate candidate jokes about that now. "Ah Lung-gate!" he quips.

Assange argues it's less stressful being in the embassy than under house arrest as he was for almost 600 days while challenging, ultimately unsuccessfully, Sweden's extradition request through the British courts. Back then he stayed at a supporter's country mansion but had to obey a curfew, wear an electronic ankle tag and report to police daily.

At the embassy, Assange shares a bathroom which had a shower installed after he sought refuge there on June 19, 2012. He also has access to a small kitchen. The 41-year-old says it hasn't been easy for embassy staff who have been incredibly generous and accommodating. "They've been troopers and adapted to the situation."

London police have also been working hard to make sure Assange can't leave without being arrested and sent to Sweden. They estimate it's cost STG 3.8 million (\$A6.3 million) to watch the diplomatic mission 24 hours a day between June 2012 and the end of May 2013.

But according to Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino there's no need for such surveillance. "We are not going to have Mr Assange escaping from our embassy," he said after meeting Assange this week. "We are not going to smuggle Mr Assange out in the boot of a car or through an underground tunnel."

"The Ecuadorean government is not going to go out through the back door we are going come out proud through the front door."

The South American country granted Assange political asylum on August 16 last year, two months after he first entered the embassy.

Assange — Labor 'bent over' to pacify US

Sky News Australia

June 19, 2013

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has launched a blistering attack on the Gillard government saying it 'bent over more than any other country in the world' to appease the United States.

In an interview to mark the first anniversary of his decision to seek political asylum in Ecuador, an angry and bitter Assange said Labor had abandoned him. The Australian said it was likely the coalition would win the upcoming election and he hoped that would lead to a clean-out of the ALP starting with Julia Gillard and her 'cronies'. **They, including Foreign Minister Bob Carr, had relied on connections with the US for advancement, Assange said.**

'This is as perverted a government as you can possibly imagine,' he told reporters, including AAP, inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London. 'The duty of that government was to protect an Australian organisation and citizen and it did just the opposite. It bent over more than any country in the world to publicly satisfy the United States.'

Assange, 41, is particularly critical of Ms Gillard because she initially labelled him a criminal and pushed for a government inquiry into WikiLeaks. He also hasn't forgotten that her former attorney-general, Robert McClelland, considered cancelling his passport and charging him with treason.

The former computer hacker said the fact the Gillard government had abandoned him made it even 'worse' than the US. That's saying a lot because Assange remains cooped up in Ecuador's diplomatic mission because he fears being extradited to the US over WikiLeaks' release of classified documents.

Although Assange railed against the government he insists the Australian people and media are mostly supportive. He is buoyed by recent opinion polls suggesting around 20 per cent of Australians would consider voting for his new WikiLeaks party.

It aims to run Senate candidates in Victoria, where he'll lead the ticket, NSW and Western Australia in the 2013 election. Assange says the party 'probably' won't target any lower house seats 'but it depends on party resources'.

WikiLeaks' other Senate candidates are 'just about to be announced', he said, adding that they included some well-known names.

Queensland-born Assange is upset **the banking blockade against donations to the WikiLeaks website has now been extended to the political party.** He recently asked

for the \$25,000 prize he received for winning the 2013 Yoko Ono courage award be directed to the party 'but the Bank of America blocked the transfer'.

Some legal experts have suggested even if Assange is elected to the upper house he could face a constitutional challenge over whether he should have been allowed on the electoral role after living overseas for so many years.

But Assange isn't concerned. 'We've looked closely at the law,' he said. 'Various claims have been made over the past year by so-called election experts and they've all fallen one by one. I've personally researched the detail of the constitution and its interpretation.'

His current predicament aside, whether it will be 'safe' for Assange to return to Australia eventually depends, he says, on the outcome of the election. 'If there is enough expressed political will by the people then that will act as a restraining force on the behaviour of government.'

Julian Assange supporters stand by their man

WikiLeaks chief in limbo a year since taking refuge at the Ecuadorian embassy.

*Simon Hooper
Al Jazeera
19 June 2013*

Whenever the stand-off between Julian Assange and British authorities seeking to extradite him to Sweden to answer sex assault allegations finally ends, it seems unlikely to involve a car chase.

The narrow streets around the Ecuadorian embassy, from which the fugitive WikiLeaks founder has not emerged since claiming asylum there one year ago, are a permanent traffic jam of oversized limousines favoured by the local diplomatic community, and chauffeur-driven saloons queued up outside the neighbouring Harrods department store.

Across the road from the embassy in the west London district of Knightsbridge, a small cluster of dedicated Assange supporters have maintained a daily vigil for each of the 365 days that the Australian has been inside.

Most days they number just a handful, standing on the pavement with small banners reading "Free Assange", "Safe Passage" and "Don't Shoot the Messenger", handing out leaflets to curious passers-by for a couple of hours or so each afternoon.

"This is just symbolic, but I think it is important to remind people that Julian is still here inside the embassy," Clara Torres, a nurse originally from Chile, told Al Jazeera.

For Torres, Assange's claim to asylum has a deeply personal resonance. She fled to the UK in 1978 after her ex-husband had been held as a political prisoner for two years under Augusto Pinochet's military rule.

"Asylum is very strong for me. This is the last thing a human being runs to. It is the only way to escape persecution. It was the last resort for him to run into exile," she said.

Assange sought asylum a year ago after exhausting legal options within the UK to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over allegations of sexual assault made by two women.

He denies the allegations and says he believes he would face subsequent extradition to the United States where Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of leaking confidential diplomatic and military cables to WikiLeaks, is currently facing a court martial that could see him jailed for life.

Torres said the UK should allow Assange to go to Ecuador, just as China last year allowed Chen Guangchen to travel to the US after the dissident had taken refuge in the US embassy in Beijing. **"China let one of its residents go to America and it's supposed to be the worst country in the world for human rights. And even Pinochet let thousands of Chileans go through the embassies to other countries."**

Standing alongside Torres, Jim Curran, an Irish civil liberties activist, said he had been campaigning against extradition proceedings for nearly 40 years since the height of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) campaign against British rule in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, when the UK used its extradition treaty with Ireland to have suspected fighters rendered into its custody.

He said he saw parallels between Assange's case and that of Colin Wallace, a former British soldier who exposed details about covert operations and a secret black propaganda unit in Northern Ireland, and alleged links between British intelligence agents and loyalist paramilitary groups. Wallace was wrongly jailed in 1980 for allegedly beating a man to death, but the conviction was eventually overturned.

"We had whistleblowers in Ireland in relation to atrocities that the British government carried out against Irish Republicans. Some of them were British people like Colin Wallace and they were vilified by the establishment. I suppose people who expose malpractice by any government in any country, they get vilified."

Curran said he was concerned Assange would be shifted on to the US from Sweden as soon as the country's legal system had dealt with the sexual assault allegations against him, pointing to the country's past involvement in the US prisoner rendition programme.

Sweden was censured by the United Nations' Committee Against Torture in 2006 over the rendition of two Egyptian men, Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed Alzery, to Egypt in 2001. But it subsequently halted cooperation with rendition flights and paid substantial damages to the pair.

But he said: "While Sweden is an admirable country and has given great help to people campaigning against war and refuseniks and asylum seekers and refugees, that seems to have been deteriorating under the current government."

Curran said his support for Assange was primarily motivated by concerns over the UK's current extradition arrangements. He said he opposed both the European arrest warrant system, which requires all European Union member states to detain and transfer suspects wanted elsewhere in the EU, and all extraditions to the US.

"Until it signs up at the International Criminal Court, I do not believe that anybody should be extradited to the United States of America," he said. But he added: "Assange has focused international attention on what I call state terrorism and that is very important. I believe in freedom of speech and a free press. I believe all governments should be transparent in what they do because they are responsible to voters and taxpayers, and they shouldn't be engaging in clandestine operations."

Assange has been accused by some critics of inspiring the sort of devotion among his acolytes usually associated with cult leaders.

"The problem is that WikiLeaks ... has been guilty of the same obfuscation and misinformation as those it sought to expose, while its supporters are expected to follow, unquestioningly, in blinkered, cultish devotion," Jemima Khan, one of many former supporters to have fallen out with Assange, wrote in the *New Statesman* magazine earlier this year.

But Torres rejected Khan's criticism: "I don't agree with her. They're trying to deface his character, and saying horrible things. I don't think he is the Messiah or anything like that. He is just a very brave and intelligent man."

Speaking to Al Jazeera's Listening Post this week, Assange said he would be "reasonably surprised" if his situation at the embassy had not been resolved within two more years. But Ricardo Patino, Ecuador's foreign minister, said after talks on Sunday that Assange had told him he was prepared to remain inside for another five years if necessary.

Lance Rolls, a researcher originally from New Zealand and a regular attendee at the vigil, said the situation was a "poor reflection on UK society. I was here the day after I heard he'd gone into the embassy, and I wanted to be there to be a witness. And these guys have been here for him now all through the winter and the snow."

Like others at the vigil, Rolls stated that Assange should answer the allegations he faces, although he said he should be given the opportunity to do so in a third country where he would not be at risk of extradition to the US.

But he added the efforts of whistleblowers such as Manning and Edward Snowden, currently hiding in Hong Kong after revealing details of US surveillance programmes, had exposed bigger concerns. "As a society we are getting smothered and we are getting controlled, especially with all the technology. Where we are heading, we have got to be very careful."

One Year Since Seeking Asylum from Ecuador, Julian Assange Demands Obama Drop Investigation into WikiLeaks

Kevin Gosztola
Firedog Lake
June 19, 2013

WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange has been living in the Ecuador embassy in the United Kingdom for a year now, hoping to break a standoff between Ecuador and the UK so that he could have safe passage to Ecuador.

Ecuador granted him political asylum because of the United States Justice Department's ongoing investigation into WikiLeaks, which has involved a secret grand jury empanelled in Alexandria, Virginia. The grand jury has sought information on Assange, staffers, volunteers and others with ties to WikiLeaks.

Part of why he remains in the embassy is because Swedish authorities continue to want to extradite him to Sweden so he can be questioned about sexual allegations made by two women. However, if the authorities really wanted to do what was best for the women and have all of this over and done with, they could have questioned Assange in the Ecuador embassy long, long ago.

During a press conference call to mark the anniversary, Assange said the UK had been "blockading" him from going to Ecuador and this was a "violation of international law."

Assange also demanded that President Barack Obama do the "right thing" and "immediately drop the immoral investigation against WikiLeaks, its staff and its sources, before the press meets its death."

Former legal counsel to the New York Times James Goodale, who argued the Pentagon Papers case, reinforced what Assange was saying about the US government pursuit of him: "It is quite clear that the legal strategy, he, the president, wishes to invoke is to accuse Julian Assange of conspiracy," Goodale stated. "It is very clear that Julian Assange is a journalist and, more importantly, a publisher and, to say that he conspired with Manning to publish the WikiLeaks, that theory could be applied to any publisher including the co-publishers" like the Times, The Guardian or Der Spiegel that published the documents Manning provided to WikiLeaks.

Goodale highlighted how the FBI had labeled Fox News Reporter James Rosen as a "co-conspirator with a respect to a leak broadcast on Fox News." He noted that, in writing his latest book, *Fighting for the Press*, he detailed how President Richard Nixon had setup a grand jury to try and indict Neil Sheehan for publishing the Pentagon Papers.

Now, according to Goodale, Obama is trying to succeed where Nixon failed by making the "news gathering entities in this country and reporters criminally liable for what they do when they gather the news. This would mean that the government will define the terms in which reporters and publishers can gather and publish the news, and we will lose that ability to do that ourselves or publishers will lose the ability to do that under the First Amendment."

Assange acknowledged how the UK government had spent millions of dollars on surveillance to monitor him. This has greatly inhibited what he is capable to do with the WikiLeaks organization and how much communication he can have with sources. On the other hand, it has not stopped him from doing any work because there is not much else he would rather be doing to occupy his time in the embassy.

He addressed the trial of Pfc. Bradley Manning, who has taken responsibility for disclosing information to WikiLeaks, and noted that WikiLeaks and his self have been a focus of military prosecutors.

Multiple reporters asked Assange about what WikiLeaks was doing to help NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. He said that someone was in touch with Snowden and they were "highly involved in the process of brokering asylum in Iceland."

The Associated Press has reported, "Johannes Skulason, an Icelandic government official," told AP, "that WikiLeaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson had held informal talks with assistants at the Interior Ministry and the prime minister's office."

In August 2012, The Saturday Age, based in Australia, published a report that featured some critical details on the United States government's plans for Assange. It describes Australian Foreign Affairs Department documents that were obtained under freedom of information laws and show the Australian diplomatic service "takes seriously the likelihood that Assange will eventually be extradited to the US on charges arising from WikiLeaks obtaining leaked US military and diplomatic documents."

Australia's ambassador to the US Kim Beazley sought "high-level US advice on 'the direction and likely outcome of the investigation' and 'reiterated' an Australian government request for "early advice of any decision to indict or seek extradition" of Assange.

Diplomatic cables identified "a wide range of criminal charges the US could bring against Assange, including espionage, conspiracy, unlawful access to classified information and computer fraud." **They indicated, "Australian diplomats expect that any charges against Assange would be carefully drawn in an effort to avoid conflict with the First Amendment free speech provisions of the US constitution."**

A 42,135-page FBI investigative file into WikiLeaks was revealed to exist during pretrial hearings in the court martial of Pfc. Bradley Manning, who disclosed US government information to WikiLeaks. Only 8,741 of the pages were, according to prosecutors, relevant to Manning. The other tens of thousands of pages, therefore, presumably involve Assange and others associated with WikiLeaks.

Why have such a sizeable file if the agency is not going to eventually issue an indictment against Assange?

When Assange entered the Ecuador embassy a year ago, there was much hysteria about leaks to the press on Obama's secret "kill list," cyber warfare against Iran and a CIA underwear bomb plot sting operation in Yemen. That hysteria has returned with Congress condemning disclosures on secret NSA surveillance programs (of which most in Congress were not informed).

Members of Congress have called Snowden, who has taken responsibility for the disclosures, a “traitor” and said he engaged in an “act of treason.” Rep. Mike Rogers ominously said, “It is at times like these where our enemies within become almost as damaging as our enemies on the outside.” Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger said, “This widespread leak by a 29-year-old American systems administrator put our country and our allies in danger by giving the terrorists a good look at the playbook that we use to protect our country. The terrorists now know many of our sources and methods.”

Obama has prosecuted a record number of alleged leakers or whistleblowers under the Espionage Act. His administration has actively sought to clamp down on the free flow of information on national security policies or programs so agencies can operate in total secrecy with impunity and zero scrutiny.

The political reaction to Snowden’s whistleblowing and the indifference to how the military is prosecuting among the elite in this country lays a foundation for taking a bold step and indicting Assange.

Assange should not merely be afraid that he could be indicted for being a publisher of a media organization. He should be afraid that an indictment would have wide support amongst those in power in the United States.

Julian Assange Emerges As Central Figure In Bradley Manning Trial

*Matt Sledge
Huffington Post
June 20, 2013*

FORT MEADE, Md. -- Bradley Manning is at the defense table. Casting a long shadow over his trial, however, is the figure of someone else the government would apparently like to put on trial: Julian Assange.

On Tuesday, government prosecutors sparred with defense lawyers for Manning, the Army private first class who has admitted to leaking a massive cache of documents to the transparency organization that Assange founded. At issue was whether the judge should accept as evidence two WikiLeaks tweets and a crowdsourced document called “The Most Wanted Leaks of 2009.”

The lawyers' dispute was at times highly technical, but it could ultimately help decide the merits of a theory central to the government's case against Manning: that he should have known his leaks could wind up in the hands of Osama bin Laden. Manning was so reckless, the government argues, that he should be convicted of the most serious charge laid against him, aiding the enemy.

In the course of making that argument, the government's prosecutors keep mentioning Assange's name. Over and over. **So far in the trial, he has been referenced 22 times.**

"Manning is not charged with conspiracy," said Michael Ratner, a human rights lawyer representing Assange in the United States. So why, he asked, "is WikiLeaks being mentioned so frequently and so often? They seem to be at least planting in the

public's mind that there's some agreement, conspiracy or aiding and abetting between WikiLeaks and Bradley Manning," he said.

The tweets and the "most wanted" document, which are being used to suggest that WikiLeaks invited Manning's leaks, could be used to build that conspiracy claim. The first of the tweets in the dispute over admissible evidence was sent on January 8, 2010:

The prosecution presented forensic computer experts last week who tried to show that Manning gave WikiLeaks the airstrike video file. The WikiLeaks tweet, said prosecutor Captain Alexander von Elten on Tuesday, shows that the group was in "possession of stolen goods."

"If WikiLeaks has a plan to compromise classified information, and Pfc. Manning is aware of that plan," von Elten said, that makes it "more likely that he knows what the effect of the compromise will be."

Despite days of testimony from forensic witnesses about Manning's computer habits, however, the government has presented no evidence that Manning ever actually read either of the tweets (the other tweet asked for a list of US servicemembers' email addresses) or the "most wanted" list, only that he could have read them.

Manning's defense argued the online files should not be introduced into evidence because they are nothing more than hearsay. "If you're going to talk about the effect on the listener, there has to be a listener," said Captain Joshua Tooman, one of Manning's lawyers.

"The plan or state of mind of WikiLeaks has nothing to do with Pfc. Manning," Tooman said. "They can plan and do whatever they want. That doesn't affect Pfc. Manning."

Col. Denise Lind, the military judge hearing the case, did not immediately rule on whether she will allow the tweets and the website into evidence. Even if she grants the defense its wish to exclude them, however, the government will have other files to fall back on.

There are the chat logs between Manning and a contact the government purports--- but has not proved--- is Julian Assange. There is the Army Counterintelligence Center on WikiLeaks that Manning himself leaked, which the government says shows he should have known that the site could be used by terrorists.

Taken together, said Eugene R. Fidell, lecturer in military law at Yale University School of Law, the government is trying to build "a collection of data points which [the prosecutors] think will permit the reader to the connect dots. Whether the judge will buy what they're selling remains to be seen," he said.

Fidell noted that any evidence entered against Manning will be of no value in any proceedings against Assange, holed up in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London for a year as of this week, if he is ever tried in the United States.

For two years, prosecutors in the United States have held open a grand jury to investigate WikiLeaks and Assange for Manning's leaks. Manning's supporters say the **government's apparent contention in both cases--- that someone can be prosecuted**

because they put information on the internet for anyone to read--- threatens the freedom of the press.

On Tuesday, Assange told reporters that he will not leave the embassy even if Sweden drops its extradition request on sexual assault accusations, because he still fears the U.S. will seek to extradite him.

"How can you doubt they're going after Julian Assange?" asked Ratner, Assange's U.S. lawyer. Ratner attended the opening statements of the trial on June 3, when the prosecution claimed that Assange helped Manning avoid detection on a classified government network. **"There were so many mentions of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks it looked like they were the bull's eye of the case."**

Statement by Julian Assange after One Year in Ecuadorian Embassy

*Embassy of Ecuador
London, U.K.
2013-06-22*

It has now been a year since I entered this embassy and sought refuge from persecution.

As a result of that decision, I have been able to work in relative safety from a US espionage investigation.

But today, Edward Snowden's ordeal is just beginning.

Two dangerous runaway processes have taken root in the last decade, with fatal consequences for democracy.

Government secrecy has been expanding on a terrific scale.

Simultaneously, human privacy has been secretly eradicated.

A few weeks ago, Edward Snowden blew the whistle on an ongoing program— involving the Obama administration, the intelligence community and the internet services giants— to spy on everyone in the world.

As if by clockwork, he has been charged with espionage by the Obama administration.

The US government is spying on each and every one of us, but it is Edward Snowden who is charged with espionage for tipping us off.

It is getting to the point where the mark of international distinction and service to humanity is no longer the Nobel Peace Prize, but an espionage indictment from the US Department of Justice.

Edward Snowden is the eighth leaker to be charged with espionage under this president.

Bradley Manning's show trial enters its fourth week on Monday.

After a litany of wrongs done to him, the US government is trying to convict him of "aiding the enemy."

The word "traitor" has been thrown around a lot in recent days.

But who is really the traitor here?

Who was it who promised a generation "hope" and "change," only to betray those promises with dismal misery and stagnation?

Who took an oath to defend the US constitution, only to feed the invisible beast of secret law devouring it alive from the inside out?

Who is it that promised to preside over The Most Transparent Administration in history, only to crush whistleblower after whistleblower with the bootheel of espionage charges?

Who combined in his executive the powers of judge, jury and executioner, and claimed the jurisdiction of the entire earth on which to exercise those powers?

Who arrogates the power to spy on the entire earth— every single one of us— and when he is caught red handed, explains to us that "we're going to have to make a choice."

Who is that person?

Let's be very careful about who we call "traitor".

Edward Snowden is one of us.

Bradley Manning is one of us.

They are young, technically minded people from the generation that Barack Obama betrayed.

They are the generation that grew up on the internet, and were shaped by it.

The US government is always going to need intelligence analysts and systems administrators, and they are going to have to hire them from this generation and the ones that follow it.

One day, their generation will run the NSA, the CIA and the FBI.

This isn't a phenomenon that is going away.

This is inevitable.

And by trying to crush these young whistleblowers with espionage charges, the US government is taking on a generation, and that is a battle it is going to lose.

This isn't how to fix things.

The only way to fix things is this:

Change the policies.

Stop spying on the world.

Eradicate secret law.

Cease indefinite detention without trial.

Stop assassinating people.

Stop invading other countries and sending young Americans off to kill and be killed.

Stop the occupations, and discontinue the secret wars.

Stop eating the young: Edward Snowden, Barrett Brown, Jeremy Hammond, Aaron Swartz, Gottfrid Svartholm, Jacob Appelbaum, and Bradley Manning.

The charging of Edward Snowden is intended to intimidate any country that might be considering standing up for his rights.

That tactic must not be allowed to work.

The effort to find asylum for Edward Snowden must be intensified.

What brave country will stand up for him, and recognize his service to humanity?

Tell your governments to step forward.

Step forward and stand with Snowden.

<http://wikileaks.org/Statement-by-Julian-Assange-after,249.html>

Support NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, says Julian Assange

WikiLeaks founder releases statement after former contract worker is charged with espionage by US prosecutors

*Tom Dart and agencies
The Guardian
22 June 2013*

The WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, has called on the world to "step forward and stand with" Edward Snowden, after the NSA whistleblower was charged with espionage by US federal prosecutors.

According to a statement on the WikiLeaks website, Assange said: "A few weeks ago, Edward Snowden blew the whistle on an ongoing program— involving the Obama administration, the intelligence community and the internet services giants— to spy on everyone in the world. As if by clockwork, he has been charged with espionage by the Obama administration."

It was revealed on Friday that the US has charged Snowden with unauthorised communication of national defence information and wilful communication of classified communications intelligence to an unauthorised person— charges that are part of the US Espionage Act. The 30-year-old, who is reportedly hiding in Hong Kong, has also been charged with theft of government property. The Washington Post reported that US authorities have asked Hong Kong to detain him on a provisional arrest warrant with a view to extradition.

It is just over a year since Assange sought refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in London in order to avoid being extradited to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over allegations of rape and sexual assault. He claims the allegations are politically motivated.

In the statement, Assange accuses President Barack Obama of going back on a promise to run a transparent administration and suggests he is the true "traitor" for supposedly betraying a generation of "young, technically minded people" such as Snowden and Bradley Manning, the US Army soldier charged with aiding the enemy who is presently on trial after he gave classified material to WikiLeaks.

"The US government is spying on each and every one of us, but it is Edward Snowden who is charged with espionage for tipping us off. **It is getting to the point where the mark of international distinction and service to humanity is no longer the Nobel Peace Prize, but an espionage indictment from the US Department of Justice," said Assange.**

"The charging of Edward Snowden is intended to intimidate any country that might be considering standing up for his rights. That tactic must not be allowed to work. The effort to find asylum for Edward Snowden must be intensified. What brave country will stand up for him, and recognize his service to humanity? Tell your governments to step forward. Step forward and stand with Snowden."

Several American politicians have backed the decision to charge Snowden. Senator Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat and a member of the Senate armed services committee, said in a statement on Friday: "I've always thought this was a treasonous act. Apparently so does the US Department of Justice. I hope Hong Kong's government will take him into custody and extradite him to the US."

Congressman Peter King, a Republican from New York, also praised the move. "I fully support the efforts of the United States government to indict and prosecute Edward Snowden to the fullest extent of the law," he said, according to Fox News. "He has betrayed his country and the government must demand his extradition at the earliest date."

King last week called for the prosecution of Glenn Greenwald, the Guardian journalist who has been heavily involved in breaking the NSA surveillance stories.

John Miller, a CBS News correspondent who is a former government intelligence worker, said on CBS that the extradition treaty between the US and Hong Kong has been "used a lot ... that's the good news, which is this won't be a rusty process. The complicating factor is it's a complicated process."

The Government Accountability Project, a US whistleblower support group, issued a statement backing Snowden. It read: "He disclosed information about a secret program that he reasonably believed to be illegal, and his actions alone brought about the long-overdue national debate about the proper balance between privacy and civil liberties, on the one hand, and national security on the other."

"Charging Snowden with espionage is yet another effort to retaliate against those who criticize the overreach of US intelligence agencies under this administration. The charges send a clear message to potential whistleblowers: this is the treatment they can expect should they speak out about constitutional violations."



Profile: Sarah Harrison

WikiLeaks
June 23, 2013

Miss Sarah Harrison Sarah Harrison is a UK citizen, journalist, and legal researcher who is currently working with the WikiLeaks Legal Defense team led by former Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon.

Miss Harrison has worked on important investigative projects that have uncovered serious human rights violations and aspects of the global surveillance industry in her capacity as a journalist and section editor for WikiLeaks, and as an investigative researcher for The Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Miss Harrison is seen in [this video](#) launching WikiLeaks' Syria Files at the Frontline Club in London, on 5 July 2012.

Miss Harrison has courageously assisted Mr. Snowden with his lawful departure from Hong Kong and is accompanying Mr. Snowden in his passage to safety.

<http://wikileaks.org/Profile-Sarah-Harrison.html>

Statement WikiLeaks Helps Snowden Leave Hong Kong

*Kevin Gosztola
Firedog Lake
June 23, 2013*

The whistleblower who revealed details on National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance and hacking, former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, has left Hong Kong with the help of WikiLeaks.

A statement put out indicates he "left Hong Kong legally. He is bound for a democratic nation via a safe route for the purposes of asylum, and is being escorted by diplomats and legal advisors from WikiLeaks."

It also shows that Snowden "requested that WikiLeaks use its legal expertise and experience to secure his safety. Once Mr Snowden arrives at his final destination his request will be formally processed."

Snowden was able to leave Hong Kong because, according to a press release by the Hong Kong government, "The documents provided by the US Government did not fully comply with the legal requirements under Hong Kong law."

The Hong Kong government requested the US government "provide additional information" so Hong Kong's Department of Justice could consider whether the US Government's request "could "meet the relevant legal conditions," but they were not confident that they had been given "sufficient information to process the request for a provisional warrant" to arrest him.

It is believed that Snowden, who has been charged by the US Justice Department with two violations of the Espionage Act and one count of theft of government property, will be going onward to Havana, Cuba, and then to Caracas, Venezuela.

Additionally, a United Kingdom citizen, journalist and legal researcher, who WikiLeaks reports has been working with the WikiLeaks Legal Defense team, helped Snowden depart from Hong Kong. She is "accompanying" Snowden "in his passage to safety."

"The WikiLeaks legal team and I are interested in preserving Mr Snowden's rights and protecting him as a person," former Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon, legal director of Wikileaks and lawyer for Julian Assange stated. "What is being done to Mr. Snowden

and to Mr. Julian Assange— for making or facilitating disclosures in the public interest— is an assault against the people.”

Interfax news agency in Russia is reporting that Snowden may stay in the Venezuelan embassy in Russia before moving on to Havana on Monday.

NSA Director Gen. Keith Alexander appeared on “This Week” with George Stephanopoulos on ABC. He did not speak specifically to the fact that Snowden had left Hong Kong but said Snowden is “clearly an individual who’s betrayed the trust and confidence we had in him. This is an individual who is not acting, in my opinion, with noble intent.”

The US Justice Department reacted to the news stating, “We have been informed by the Hong Kong authorities Mr Snowden has departed for a third country. We will continue to discuss this matter with Hong Kong and pursue relevant law enforcement cooperation with other countries where Mr. Snowden may be attempting to travel.”

It is unknown what Snowden’s final destination will be at this point, but WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange had this to say to the Sydney Morning Herald: “Owing to WikiLeaks’ own circumstances, we have developed significant expertise in international asylum and extradition law, associated diplomacy and the practicalities in these matters.

“I have great personal sympathy for Ed Snowden’s position. WikiLeaks absolutely supports his decision to blow the whistle on the mass surveillance of the world’s population by the US government.”

Check back for updates on where in the world Snowden travels to next and what US government officials and others in the United States are saying about Snowden and his decision to travel to a “democratic nation.”

UPDATE — 12:20 PM EST There were apparently multiple diplomatic cars from Ecuador seen after Snowden landed in Moscow. Snowden is believed to have gotten into one of them.

UPDATE — 12:40 PM EST Ecuador Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino reports Ecuador has received an asylum request from Snowden.

WikiLeaks Statement On Edward Snowden’s Exit From Hong Kong

June 23, 2013

Mr Edward Snowden, the American whistleblower who exposed evidence of a global surveillance regime conducted by US and UK intelligence agencies, has left Hong Kong legally. He is bound for the Republic of Ecuador via a safe route for the purposes of asylum, and is being escorted by diplomats and legal advisors from WikiLeaks.

Mr Snowden requested that WikiLeaks use its legal expertise and experience to secure his safety. Once Mr Snowden arrives in Ecuador his request will be formally processed.

Former Spanish Judge Mr Baltasar Garzon, legal director of Wikileaks and lawyer for Julian Assange has made the following statement: "The WikiLeaks legal team and I are interested in preserving Mr Snowden's rights and protecting him as a person. What is being done to Mr Snowden and to Mr Julian Assange— for making or facilitating disclosures in the public interest— is an assault against the people".

WikiLeaks cements its role as thorn in the side of US and UK governments

WikiLeaks' intervention in Edward Snowden case is consistent with organisation's stance on protecting whistleblowers

*Dominic Rushe
The Guardian
23 June 2013*

When WikiLeaks first claimed in a tweet that it was assisting NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden's "political asylum in a democratic country" there was one detail that apparently confirmed its involvement— that Snowden was travelling with a person whose surname was Harrison.

Sarah Harrison— a staff member for more than two years— has become one of Julian Assange's closest advisers since first working with the group as an intern on the publication of the Afghan war logs.

Direct intervention in Snowden's case marks a departure in practice for WikiLeaks— which has previously stressed its arms-length relationship with sources— but is consistent with the organisation's world view on protecting whistleblowers. It also cements its reputation as a thorn in the side of the US and UK governments.

Speaking to the Sydney Morning Herald from the Ecuadorean embassy in London, **Assange said: "Owing to WikiLeaks' own circumstances, we have developed significant expertise in international asylum and extradition law, associated diplomacy and the practicalities in these matters.**

"I have great personal sympathy for Ed Snowden's position. WikiLeaks absolutely supports his decision to blow the whistle on the mass surveillance of the world's population by the US government."

Harrison may seem a strange choice to accompany Snowden since, unlike several people close to WikiLeaks— most notably human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson— she has no legal qualifications or background. But Assange's group has also offered the support of its legal director Baltasar Garzón, the former judge who ordered the arrest

Hrafnsson: “WikiLeaks, Assange, Snowden and all of us are winning”

Interviewer: John Robles

Voice of Russia

2013-06-23

The world and Julian Assange recently marked the one year anniversary of his being trapped in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The unprecedented egregious and illegal interference by the United Kingdom in the case has shed any and all possible illusions that the U.K. is anything other than merely a surrogate of America. By not allowing someone who has received political asylum safe passage to travel to the country where the person has been granted asylum, the U.K. has also shown that the rule of law and abiding by international laws and conventions is something that is apparently optional if America is calling the shots.

This is John Robles, I’m speaking with Mr. Kristinn Hrafnsson he is the official spokesperson and the number two at the WikiLeaks organization.

Robles: Hello Sir! It is a pleasure to be speaking with you.

Hrafnsson: It is my pleasure as well.

Robles: I understand that you are in Ecuador right now. I’d like to get your views and your comments on the fact that Julian Assange has now spent more than a year in that embassy in London, and if you see any hope that that situation may change soon?

Hrafnsson: Yes, I’m always optimistic that the situation will change. Of course it is quite outrageous that he has had to spend a year and a day now in the Ecuadorian Embassy without there being a solution to the situation.

There has of course been some dialogue going on. The Foreign Minister of Ecuador did meet with his counterpart in London. So, one will hope that there is a solution very soon, but this could of course drag on for some time. But this has of course, to come to an end fairly soon. It is just ridiculous to continue this standoff.

Robles: There’ve been some media reports, I don’t know how credible they are, stating that Julian is resigned to being extradited. Would you grant those any credibility? I hope not.

Hrafnsson: No, I haven’t even seen these reports. But **there are so many false reports flying about with regards to his situation and with regards to WikiLeaks and my colleagues in the media, many of them seem to enjoy all kinds of fabrications when it comes to the organization and to Julian.**

Robles: That’s why I wanted to speak to you. Listen, are there any concrete positive moves going on right now as far as with the Ecuadorians and with William Hague? Can you tell us anything about that?

Hrafnsson: I believe that there was some progress made. But it remains to be seen how all that can materialize into a solution to the situation.

Robles: You know all of the stories right now going on about the NSA whistleblower Snowden. Do you see any correlations, any connections there?

Hrafnsson: The Snowden case has a strong connection to WikiLeaks and the revelations that we were publishing three years ago now and ongoing. We have seen a continuous trend of leaks and whistleblowers stepping forth. And now of course Snowden is informing of the overreaching surveillance and spying of the NSA, which is a matter not just for the Americans but for the entire world. And more and more information is coming out on that. This is something that has been maintained of course by the WikiLeaks and by Julian for years. And it is confirming what other whistleblowers that have stepped forth earlier from the NSA and from the CIA.

I can mention that John Kiriakou, Bill Binney, and Thomas Drake who all were telling a similar story about the activities of the NSA and had to suffer badly because of that, they were even threatened with being charged and prosecuted on the basis of Espionage Act in the U.S. which carries the maximum of the death penalty.

This is, in my mind, a signal that things are going forward and we are going to see more information and we are going to see more people stepping forth and blowing the whistle. And we are going to be seeing people who will leak information about the corrupt practices of governments.

Robles: Kristinn, do you think all our efforts and everybody's efforts, Snowden, Julian, yours, I mean thousands of good people with high moral standards, do you think we have a chance of fighting this monster? It just seems like over and over again we have the same thing happening and their crimes are getting worse and worse.

Hrafnsson: I think we have more than just a chance of succeeding. I absolutely think we are winning. That is a feeling that I have and is confirmed by the reaction that I've seen to the revelations of Snowden, and other recent examples of government surveillance and even snooping into journalists' matters, accessing their telephone logs, as happened with the 20 journalist at the Associated Press. With an attempt to make even a Fox journalist Rosen a co-conspirator in a leak.

This is basically an attack now going on on the media, and it is now being recognized by journalists more and more who have been a little bit asleep to this terrible reality, that this is an attack on journalists and this is an attack on the free press. This is now being reported as such and the general public of course will get the information about the seriousness and grave situation. And in my mind, no question about it, that people will not allow this to continue and they will stop this. So, I believe we are seeing a tidal change and this is a winning situation.

I think that Julian Assange and WikiLeaks were part of a trend in the right direction and the explosive leaks that have come out from our organization have been of course a wakeup call to people. There is a tremendous support we feel in all of the work of WikiLeaks and what we are doing.

There have even been surveys done I believe in 24 or 25 countries as far back as in the early year 2011, at the same time that we were basically being branded as terrorists by the U.S. Administration and there were calls for assassination of Julian Assange and others who work in WikiLeaks, and **there was an overwhelming support in all these countries and the majorities supported what we were doing.**

Countries where there was a minority of the population supporting what WikiLeaks was doing and that was the United States, but even so 40% of the respondents, were saying that they appreciated what WikiLeaks was doing. So, I believe that that is an indication of the simple fact that the general public do want more transparency.

Robles: Can I get your reaction and maybe can you tell us Julian's reaction, if you know, to the absolute massive capability of this PRISM program? What was Julian's reaction? And what is your reaction to the enormity of the NSA's capabilities?

Hrafnsson: Well, it does not come as a surprise to Julian Assange nor does it come as a surprise to anybody in WikiLeaks because **this is what we have been saying for quite some time**. And in the book that has come out by Julian, *Cypherpunks* this is basically what we have been maintaining. This is the capability this is what has been done, as it has been, for some time and it has also been confirmed by other whistleblowers who have stepped forth from the NSA as far back as 2003.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2013_06_23/WikiLeaks-Assange-Snowden-and-all-of-us-are-winning-Hrafnsson-9756/

Hrafnsson: "PRISM revelations will boost security; the mainstream media has failed."

*Interviewer: John Robles
Voice of Russia
2013-06-25*

In the continuation of our latest interview with Kristinn Hrafnsson marking the one year anniversary of the Julian Assange being trapped in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Mr. Hrafnsson gives us his views on the PRISM revelations and the effect that they will have on the internet and the current state of the world's mass media.

Robles: What is your advice to someone who doesn't want the NSA in their life, I mean, does encryption work anymore? Is there anything people can do to protect their privacy anymore on the internet, or is it pretty much all, "finished"?

Hrafnsson: There are technical means to safeguard yourself from snooping, there are browsers you can download, or something from the TOR Project that is available, relatively safe, encryption methods, it is known for example PGP that stands for Pretty Good Protection.

Robles: PGP up to version 6.5 was pretty much, I heard, unbreakable and then after that it was bought out by network associates and it's been monkeyed around with.

Hrafnsson: I am a simple journalist and would not be the best one to recommend specific programs; but there are programs that allow you to maintain security on the internet. They're being upgraded and developed constantly and people should be aware and find out about the latest developments in their field and I am sure that with all of the latest revelations there is going to be a boost in developing secure mechanisms for communications and security on the internet. It will be a constant battle because the situation is not done. **Things that are now secure will probably be insecure in few months, or in a year or two.**

Robles: How is Julian? Any comments from him on this one-year "horrible" anniversary? How is he?

Hrafnsson: He has been maintaining a positive attitude. He is doing fine. And as he has been busy and he has been working leading our work under these rather difficult conditions but it hasn't stopped him.

I think that he has an incredible ability to adapt to difficult situations he continues work. He is getting a bit used to that now, it is not just the year in the Ecuadorian Embassy, before that we had imprisonment, and house arrest, so this is a situation that is becoming easier, he has a strong character and he is capable of adapting to the situation.

Robles: Did he have a special message on the anniversary for his supporters?

Hrafnsson: In general, we are totally based of course, on the people and we are very appreciative of the great support that we have had and I hope that continues and increases and extends to others who really are dealing with hard situations as a result of doing work based on the same sort of principles that we have adhered to and of course I am referring to Bradley Manning and now Edward Snowden. We have a growing understanding among people about the importance of this subject and people are being fed up with being the victims of this invasion of privacy and corruption. That is what we report and let's hope that that continues.

Robles: How are you doing there in Ecuador? Is there anything you want to tell us about that? What are you doing down there? Anything going to come out of that conference you are at? Would you like to talk about that?

Hrafnsson: I am here on a conference, interesting enough, called "Responsible Journalism" and it is quite interesting to listen to voices about the criticism of the mainstream media, how they have failed and there needs to be a reform and a rethinking of the role of journalism in our society. For me as a journalist for all my working life I find this [refreshing] and a discussion that should be expanded to the whole world because I do recognize that the mainstream media has failed fundamentally especially in the recent years.

Robles: Kristinn I really appreciate it. I am sure you have other things to do. I really appreciate your talking with me.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2013_06_25/PRISM-revelations-will-boost-security-the-mainstream-media-has-failed-Hrafnsson-8440/

DN: 2013-06-25

Snowden på villovägar

Ledare

Edward Snowden lämnade under söndagen Hongkong för Moskva. Till Hongkong hade Snowden, som uppdagade säkerhetsmyndigheten NSA:s massbevakning av mejl och telefonsamtal, tagit sin tillflykt för att undvika det amerikanska rättsväsendet.

Enligt New York Times gav han sig av efter ingripande från den kinesiska regimen. Peking brukar låta Hongkong sköta sitt och uppskattade hur Snowden avslöjat amerikanernas hyckleri— USA kritiserar ofta Kina för dess kontroll av internet. Men hans närvaro i Hongkong placerade också kineserna i en knivig sits.

Snowdens popularitet bland Kinas internetanvändare skulle ha gjort en utlämning problematisk. Samtidigt var han inte viktig nog för att störa relationerna med USA. Då var en flytt till Moskva sannolikt en angenäm lösning. Särskilt som Putin knappast har något emot att jäklas med Washington.

För Snowden innebär flykten till Ryssland en olycklig vändning. Ända sedan Guardian berättade att det var han som läckt information om det amerikanska övervakningsprojektet har det dragits paralleller till Wikileaksgrundaren Julian Assange. I båda fallen har det handlat om skarpa unga män med höga principer som avslöjat hemligheter som är besvärande för den amerikanska staten.

När det nu rapporteras att Snowden tagit sig till Moskva, förbereder sig för vidare resa till Kuba och Venezuela, och dessutom har sökt asyl i Ecuador ger det onekligen en känsla av déjà vu. **Alla dessa länder— med minst sagt grava demokratiska brister— har omfannat, och omfamnats av, Assange.**

Det är synd eftersom jämförelsen mellan de två hela tiden har varit missvisande. Assange verkar drivas av en stark misstro mot all form av statsmakt och en avsky mot statens rätt att över huvud taget ha några hemligheter. **Wikileaks avslöjanden har också, som en konsekvens, till stor del karaktäriserats av mer eller mindre ogenomtänkta massdumpningar av hemlighetsstämplat material. Ibland med risk för enskilda och oskyldiga individers väl och ve.**

Snowden, å andra sidan, påminner mer om en traditionell whistleblower. Han observerade en specifik oegentlighet— NSA:s övervakningsprogram— och valde att berätta om det för välrespekterade medier, Washington Post och Guardian, som hade möjligheten att värdera informationen innan de publicerade den.

Värdet av Snowdens avslöjande är oomtvistligt. Det är en svår avvägning som måste göras mellan privatlivets helgd och vår gemensamma säkerhet. Men den till synes gränslösa och intransparenta övervakningen som NSA har genomfört är inte rimlig. Att den uppdagats stärker den amerikanska demokratin.

Med detta som bakgrund är Snowdens association med länder som Ryssland och Ecuador, samt att han sätter fot efter fot i Assanges spår, olycklig. Det skadar både honom och hans sak.

Samtidigt är det tydligt att han har begränsade alternativ. Han är anklagad för att ha offentliggjort sekretessbelagd information, vilket är ett brott inte bara i USA. Det innebär att han sannolikt riskerar att utlämnas ifall han söker sig till andra demokratier. Det är också lätt att förstå varför han med alla medel vill hålla sig borta från USA. Den terrorlagstiftning som antogs efter 11 september, avslöjandena om tortyr och fånglägret vid Guantánamo Bay har allvarligt skadat förtroendet för den amerikanska rättsstaten.

Dessutom har Barack Obamas administration jagat läckor med osedvanlig aggressivitet. Och det politiska etablissemanget— demokrater och republikaner— har slutit upp mangrant kring NSA och massövervakningen. Snowden må ha vunnit över en allmän opinion på sin sida både på borta- och hemmaplan— åtminstone före flykten till Ryssland sade en majoritet amerikaner att de stöder hans avslöjande. Men i USA finns för honom ändå sannolikt inget annat än ett långt fängelsestraff att hämta.

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AB: 2013-06-25

Anna, 34, talar ut om Assanges övergrepp

Anna, 34, berättade för polisen om Julian Assanges övergrepp. Sedan dess har hon utsatts för förföljelser och hot.

– Den vildaste historien av alla var att jag är en CIA-agent, säger hon i en ny amerikansk dokumentär om Wikileaks.

Den nya amerikanska dokumentärfilmen "We steal secrets: The story of Wikileaks" visades första gången på independentfestivalen Sundance i USA i januari. I samband med premiärvisningen twittrade Assange: "En oetisk och partisk titel i samband med pågående brottsmål. Det är åklagarens hävdan och det är falskt".

Filmen skildrar till en början Assange otroliga idealistiska framgångssaga, då han av många beskrevs som "öppenhetens John Lennon", men **landar i en sorglig bild av en ensam, hemlös, paranoid man som utsätter sina egna medarbetare för samma censur som han ville utrota**, och vars rotlöshet som grundats i den kringflackande barn- domen dövas med digitala David- och Goliatsegrar och den köttsliga driften att göra kvinnor med barn.

Organisationens avslöjanden om bankskandaler, 9/11-attacken och amerikanska arméns övergrepp mot civila i kriget i Afghanistan och Irak, gjorde Assange till viltbråd bland världens makthavare. Amerikanska politiker talade i tv om att "låta en drönare ta honom".

Tog av sig kondomen

Mitt i kalabaliken kring honom 2010 polisanmälde han plötsligt i Sverige, efter att två kvinnor, Sofia, 26, och Anna, 31, uppgett för polisen att han vid två separata tillfällen trots att de krävt kondom, **tagit av sig kondomen under sex.**

Sofia uppgav dessutom att hon, efter att ha haft frivilligt sex med Assange, vaknade av att han **hade sex med henne utan skydd mot hennes vilja**.

Kvinnorna ville via polisen tvinga Assange att testa sig för könssjukdomar, men polisen bedömde händelserna som brott. Assange begärdes häktad i sin frånvaro misstänkt för våldtäkt och ofredande.

Sedan ett år gömmer han sig i London på Ecuadors ambassad som beviljat honom asyl, för att undvika att utlämnas till Sverige.

Våldtäktsmisstankarna mot Assange har väckt enorm uppståndelse över hela världen, demonstrationer i London med häcklande plakat mot svenskorna som påstås ha utsatt Assange för en "honungsfälla".

"De kom till mitt hem"

Många, även kända personer som dokumentärfilmaren Michael Moore, propagerar för att sexanklagelserna är en förtalskampanj och konspiration för att stoppa Assange. Anna och Sofia har utsatts för svåra förföljelser och hot. Under en tid **har Sofia levt under skydd**. Anna, nu 34, deltar nu i dokumentären, filmad med peruk och i motljus.

– Det förekom så många rykten och rena fantasier. Den vildaste historien var att jag var en CIA-agent, säger Anna och fortsätter:

– **Det här är ett brottsfall, ingen offentlig debatt.**

På nätet florerar mängder av hotfulla bilder och kränkande budskap mot Anna och Sofia.

– Vi har varit utsatta förföljelser. Under två år har människor kommit till mitt hem. Det har varit hot, mest sexuella hot, säger Anna.

Spädde på konspirationsteorierna

Hon tar upp att många vill jämföra den nu fängslade läckan Bradley Manning och Julian Assange situation:

– Det är ju löjligt. Assange sitter inte i fängelse. Han har låst in sig för att slippa svara på ett par rätt enkla frågor.

Enligt tidigare nära medarbetare till Assange var det Assange själv som beslutade att kommunikativt utåt "slå ihop" sexanklagelserna mot honom och den politiska jakten som handlade om att få stopp på Wikileaks för att ge bränsle åt konspirationsteorierna.

– Julian gjorde det medvetet, och det fungerade, **säger en tidigare talesman för Wikileaks.**

– Han kunde själv ha stoppat ryktena, säger Anna.

Aftonbladet har varit i kontakt med Anna som inte vill kommentera ytterligare.

”Ingen motsvarighet”

Advokat Claes Borgström, Annas målsägandebiträde, beskriver hetsen som kvinnorna utsatts för:

– Det finns ingen motsvarighet till det de fått utstå. Att brottsoffer fått ta emot så mycket hat och hot. Det har inte gjort något, utan har berättat något som polis och åklagare bedömt som brottsligt, säger han till Aftonbladet.

Om läget just nu i fallet säger han:

– Det är ett absolut dödläge. Det är status quo. Det finns ingen möjlighet att påverka varken från svenska eller brittiska myndigheter. Han sitter på ambassaden och det är bara han som kan göra något åt det här.

Har fyra barn

Enligt Borgström är det faktum att situationen är så låst besvärlig.

– Ovissheten är naturligtvis jobbigt för henne. Att det aldrig kommer till ett avslut. Men hon är en klok person. Hon arbetar och lever sitt liv som vanligt numera.

I polisförhören med den yngre kvinnan Sofia framkommer att Assange gärna ville skoja om att hon skulle råka bli med barn. En ex-Wikileaksmedarbetare påpekar i dokumentären att Assange har fyra barn med fyra olika kvinnor runtom i världen.

– Assange är den ultimata digitala människan. Kanske att han kompenserar med den köttliga driften att göra kvinnor med barn.

Journalisten Donald Boström var i kontakt med Assange om journalistiskt samarbete om Wikileaks och stod i daglig kontakt med både honom och Anna under Assanges Sverigevistelse, då Anna erbjöd att bo i sin lägenhet.

Därför har Boström vittnat i polisförhör och vittnar även i dokumentären. Till Aftonbladet säger han:

– Ingen har ju varit med i sovrummen, men av den dagliga kontakten jag hade med både Julian och Anna, har jag kunnat dra två enkla slutsatser: att vare sig Anna eller Sofia konspirerade med USA, och att det inte handlade om någon våldtäkt. Det är inte svart och vitt. Jag tror alla parter tjänar på att det kommer fram, inte minst för Wikileaks och Assange.

– Mitt råd direkt till Assange var att konfrontera och diskutera saken. I efterhand håller ju alla med om att det inte finns grund för någon grövre brottsmisstanke.

– Huvudansvaret ligger ju hos svenska myndigheter, som borde åka till London och förhöra honom. Det har gjorts förr, exempelvis i Trustoraffären. Men mitt råd till Assange är fortfarande att han tjänar på att ta sig hit så fort som möjligt

Många vändor i Assangefallet

I Sverige

20 augusti 2010

En 26-årig kvinna uppger att hon, efter att ha haft frivilligt sex med kondom, under morgonen den 17 augusti vaknade av att Assange hade sex med henne utan skydd mot hennes vilja i sitt hem i Enköping.

En 31-årig kvinna anmäler Assange för ofredande. Hon uppger att han den 13 augusti medvetet, mot hennes vilja, haft sönder sin kondom och fått utlösning i henne under sex.

26-årig kvinna Jouråklagare anhåller Julian Assange i sin frånvaro, misstänkt för våldtäkt och ofredande.

21 augusti 2010

Ärendet överförs till ordinarie åklagare på City åklagarkammare i Stockholm.

25 augusti 2010

Åklagaren beslutar att lägga ned förundersökningen om våldtäkt.

27 augusti 2010

Advokat Claes Borgström, målsägarbiträde till de kvinnor som anmält Assange, begär överprövning av åklagarens beslut om att lägga ned förundersökningen om våldtäkt. Överprövningsbegäran skickas till Utvecklingscentrum Göteborg.

1 september 2010

Överåklagare Marianne Ny beslutar återuppta förundersökningen om våldtäkt. Förundersökningen om ofredande utvidgas till att omfatta samtliga händelser i anmälan.

September 2010

Julian Assange anhålls i sin frånvaro.

18 november 2010

Marianne Ny begär Julian Assange häktad i sin frånvaro, på sannolika skäl misstänkt för våldtäkt, tre fall av sexuellt ofredande samt olaga tvång. Skälet är att han inte kunnat höras under förundersökningen.

Stockholms tingsrätt beslutar att häkta Assange i sin frånvaro, i enlighet med häktningsframställan.

För att verkställa häktningsbeslutet beslutar åklagaren att efterlysa Assange internationellt och utfärda en så kallad europeisk arresteringsorder.

22 november 2010

Julian Assange överklagar tingsrättens häktningsbeslut till Svea hovrätt.

24 november 2010

Svea hovrätt avslår överklagandet och beslutar att han ska vara fortsatt häktad, på sannolika skäl misstänkt för olaga tvång, två fall av sexuellt ofredande samt våldtäkt, mindre grovt brott.

Den internationella efterlysningen och den europeiska arresteringsordern justeras i enlighet med hovrättens beslut.

30 november 2010

Julian Assange överklagar Svea hovrätts häktningsbeslut till Högsta domstolen

2 december 2010

Högsta domstolen beslutar att inte medge Julian Assange prövningstillstånd. Svea hovrätts beslut står därmed fast.

På begäran av brittisk polis kompletteras den europeiska arresteringsordern med information om maxstraffen för brotten sexuellt ofredande och olaga tvång.

I Storbritannien**7 december 2010**

Julian Assange grips av brittisk polis.

16 december 2010

Häktningsförhandling i Westminster Magistrates Court i London. Domstolen beslutar att han ska släppas fri mot borgen.

7-8 februari 2011

Förhandling i London om överlämnande enligt en europeisk arresteringsorder.

24 februari 2011

Domstolen (Westminster Magistrates Court) tillkännager sitt beslut om att överlämna Julian Assange enligt arresteringsordern.

Mars 2011

Julian Assange överklagar beslutet om överlämnande till Sverige.

12-13 juli 2011

Förhandling i High Court i London om överlämnande enligt en europeisk arresteringsorder.

2 november 2011

High Court i London beslutar att överlämnande ska ske i enlighet med den europeiska arresteringsordern. Beslutet kan överklagas.

15 november 2011

Julian Assange begär prövning av beslutet från High Court att han ska överlämnas till Sverige. Detta ska prövas av The Administrative Court, där en förhandling ska hållas den 5 december.

5 december 2011

Domstolen ger Assange rätt att inom 14 dagar begära prövningstillstånd vid Storbritanniens Högsta domstol.

16 december 2011

Storbritanniens högsta domstol, the Supreme Court, ger Assange prövningstillstånd. Förhandlingen startar den 1 februari 2012.

1-2 februari 2012

The Supreme Court prövar om åklagare är att anse som en rättslig myndighet enligt den engelska lagstiftningen om den europeiska arresteringsordern.

30 maj 2012

The Supreme Court meddelar att man beslutat att avslå Assanges överklagan och att han därmed ska överlämnas till Sverige. Man beviljar dock försvaret 14 dagar att lämna in en begäran om att domstolen ska öppnas för fortsatta överläggningar.

12 juni 2012

Assange lämnar in begäran om att domstolen ska återuppta förhandlingarna.

14 juni 2012

The Supreme Court avslår Assanges begäran om att förhandlingarna ska återupptas. Man beslutar också att tidsperioden för att hämta Assange till Sverige inte ska börja löpa förrän efter 14 dagar.

19 juni 2012

Assange begär politisk asyl på ecuadorianska ambassaden i London.

16 augusti 2012

Ecuador beviljar Assange asyl.

• Lisa Röstlund

[Detta reportage är grovt missvisande. Jämför med fakta i "Misstänkt beteende" på: <http://www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/historia.htm> —A.B.]

Postcard from Ecuador: A Living, Breathing Democracy

Austin Mackell

Wikileaks Party (Australia)

June 25, 2013

Quito, nestled high in the Central Andes between snowcapped volcanic peaks, feels in many ways more like a European city than the capital of a third world country. The city is dotted with beautiful public parks endowed with sports fields, bike and skateboard ramps. Beautifully adorned squares and arches space out the restored and brightly painted buildings of the historic centre. Well maintained footpaths line the streets, as does an extensive network of bike-lanes, down which people often ride the shared bikes provided by the city, use of which is available for a tiny yearly fee. Every Sunday a north south route through the city, including Avenue Amazonas, one of the city's main arteries, is given over entirely to cyclists and pedestrians, who come out in the thousands. The old airport, having been engulfed by urban expansion and replaced earlier this year, has also been turned over to the public as a park, and is already in use.

In Sydney, that space would have sat unused for months, or more likely years, as developers, Macquarie Bank and the slime-balls from the two major parties bargained

and leveraged for prime positions at the trough. Then the feeding frenzy would have started. Have a look at Barangaroo, or watch the progress of the docks and train-yards yards at Glebe Island for confirmation of my thesis.

Quito's extensive public transport system, it's newish vehicles and clean seats also reminiscent of the first world, offers the traveller their first glimpse beneath the hood and into the engine that has driven this remarkable growth in what was once the original banana republic. **Most taxis and many of the buses in Quito are operated by cooperatives**, part of the booming solidarity sector made up of tens of thousands of community banks and credit unions and worker owned enterprises in the manufacturing, housing, agriculture and transport industries. It's important to note that this sector has grown alongside, rather than instead of the traditional private and public sectors which have also seen healthy expansion.

Of course, outside the big cities, indeed outside the nice parts of the big cities, Ecuador is still a wild, poor and dangerous place where arguments are on occasion still brought to a close via machete to the side of the head of one participant. The gap is closing however, as living standards shoot up (from a very low baseline) and inequality falls. Basic services and economic support have been rolled out to a population used to begging, borrowing and doing without.

Almost all this progress has occurred under the leadership of President Rafael Correa, a former economics professor who was made finance minister in 2005 during one of Ecuador's recurrent economic crises, running for the presidency the following year, assuming the office in 2007, and quickly bringing an era of unprecedented stability and prosperity. **By the end of 2012, unemployment had fallen to 4.1 percent, its lowest level on record and the poverty rate to 27.3 percent— that's 27 percent below what it was when Correa took power.**

That does not mean he can take credit alone, in a sense, fixing the country was the easy part. The hard part was what happened beforehand to make it possible: mass movements, grassroots organisations of indigenous people, workers, students, academics, small businesses and alliances between them, had risen up in reaction to the constant economic injustice and repression imposed by US backed and trained (in free-market economics and counter insurgency) elites. Before Correa, the last president to serve out a complete term without being ousted was Sixto Durán Ballén, (from 1992 to 1996). For a decade, one leader after another, emerging from and owing loyalties to the existing elite, was unable to act in accordance with the will of the people.

Correa broke the stalemate, coming into power with a mandate from the people to **challenge the "twenty families" who traditionally ruled the country. They also owned the banks who owned the TV channels. Correa's media diversity bill proposed splitting the spectrum into 34% of all frequencies to community media, 33% to public ones, and 33% to for-profit private businesses, causing ferocious debates about its implementation and putting Correa on a collision course with the media.**

This, of course, is exactly the kind of context missing from the frequent, and rather shill reporting on Ecuador's press freedom that have, coincidentally, become so common since the Latin American country offered asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

A clear demonstration of the cynical, hypocritical and hollow nature of these attacks can be made using the case of Alexander Barankov, a Belarus dissident who, for a brief period between overstaying his visa and being granted asylum, was detained in an Ecuadorian prison— just like hundreds of asylum seekers currently in Australian immigration detention centres, only with better access to lawyers and press, (and they haven't set up a special processing centre in the Falklands).

In their barrel scraping desperation, many of the corporate shills who pose as an adversarial press corp somehow attempted to turn this into a freedom of expression issue. Articles about “Ecuador's Julian Assange” popped up everywhere, as the fate of this former soldier and policeman suddenly mattered— until it didn't any more.

Compare the ferocious attention paid to any possible encroachment by the government of Ecuador with the attention (or lack of it) that these brave protectors of free speech have given to Honduras, where a coup government is (strongly) suspected of having murdered 22 journalists, and many dozen more peasant and worker activists, in the three years since the US backed military threw out the elected government.

I find myself reminded of Chomsky's recent comments when asked about the “issue” of press freedom in Venezuela. He replied that the topic was “a bit of a joke...” continuing:

“There's a strong opposition press bitterly attacking him all the time. Much more of an opposition press than there is in most of Latin America... Globovision, which is cable TV... a huge audience... was very anti Chavez... there is some repression of the press, but it's mostly kind of verbal intimidation... there was one channel RCTV... which wasn't shut down, it was moved over to cable... and it continued to function... I was asked about it at the time, I said I agreed that it was the wrong thing to do and that it couldn't happen in the United States. But I added something that prevented my comment from being published. I said it couldn't happen in the United States because if say, CBS, had done anything like what RCTV had done, you wouldn't wait a couple of years for their license to be changed to cable, because the managers and owners would have been lined up before a firing squad and shot. They supported the overthrow of the government, a coup to overthrew the government...”

He then, tiredly, compares the minor aggravations faced by Venezuela's press with the horrors of “US Domains” such as El Salvador and Columbia, “the list goes on”. The interviewer, who clearly considers himself informed and politically aware, if not radical, is apparently oblivious. Such is the success of the “fair and balanced” propaganda model.

As highly motivated as these “press freedom” concerns are our Western Liberal worries about environmental and indigenous rights in Ecuador, and how they are threatened by mountaintop removal gold mining projects in the south-east, near the Peruvian border that Correa is rushing forward with, despite local opposition... **except the locals aren't all so opposed.**

Take this story, by Salon's Alexander Zaitchik, where we are presented with the positions of various “tribal leaders” and “chiefs” depicted in full traditional headgear with spears and all— no doubt representing a vital and unique element of the local culture and society— but just one.

Zaitchik allows these men to present their opinion as one which is shared universally by their compatriots. The reality, as usual, is a little more complex. Of the two major political foundations established by the Shuar people— which are at least as much of a factor in their continued cultural existence than the tradition of fearsome military resistance which Zaitchik emphasises— **one has thrown it's weight behind the mining project**, believing the Correa government's promises that this time, the locals will benefit too in the form of roads and schools and hospitals.

It's also interesting to note, that as real as the environmental concerns might be, the moral algebra is different than in the west. Mining issues usually pit the interests of the environment and local populations, often indigenous, against those of the very wealthy. When a politician in Australia tried to take 40% he got stomped like a lightbulb under a tank.

Correa, soon after coming to power, reversed the proportions of government vs private revenues from oil extraction. **Now Ecuador gets a little over 80% and the companies get a little under 20%. It used to be the other way round.**

When the profits from domestic resource extraction are going not into the pockets of Gina Rinehart and the one percent, but into the coffers of a government that has shown a willingness and capacity to dramatically improve the lives of its citizens, the issue becomes more difficult. As does commending from the already rich (and environmentally rapacious) West, the wisdom of— literally— sitting on a goldmine.

That is not to underestimate the risks. The history of such projects should give even Correa's strongest supporters pause for thought. Of particular note is the horrific damage done by Texaco (now Chevron) and it's dodgy oil drilling practices, including direct dumping of waste into rivers and soil, over decades. In this case the Correa administration is clearly on the side of the indigenous, who are without doubt suffering terrible health consequences from the company's neglect. Just recently a Canadian court blocked enforcement of an 19 billion dollar ruling against the company. Zaitchik and his ilk were, amazingly, nowhere to be seen.

This conflict between material development and enviro-cultural preservation, two of the left's most important impulses, is a real issue in Latin America and the developing world more generally for this reason. It is a conflict, however, that for the moment the developmentalists seem to be winning. If the Shuar are split, the broader Ecuadorian population has a clear preference. As Correa pointed out, slightly smugly, during a recent interview, the anti-mining parties mustered only three percent of the vote in the last election, compared with his sixty.

Perhaps these governments of the Latin left are replaying the mistakes previously made by their English speaking counterparts, but it would be very wrong of us to assume this. In so many ways the countries of the long, sustained, Bolivarian Spring, are way out ahead of us.

They are still poor, but their wealth is growing and their politics is full of hope. While left wing academics moan in comfort of the impossibility of change, the people of this region have united against much greater odds, much fiercer repression and won.

This struggle has, in the Latino context, been associated with left wing governments, however, it was only when these governments embraced democratic popular struggle, rather than armed conflict, that they found success. What's more their moderation has been mirrored by the Latin American right, which has begun producing leaders capable of economic compromise, and who seek more and more to disassociate themselves from paramilitary thugs and other local manifestations of US power. They just want to be conservative politicians, and while they want to win, they increasingly see the value of doing so inside the democratic system. The presence of Columbia and Chile's right wing leaders at Chavez's funeral (and their acceptance of his successor Maduro's victory in recent elections, despite the United State's arrogant refusal to do so) is a testimony to this.

The key to this rebirth of regional unity and national self determination has been a commitment to democracy as a living breathing force— one which can re-shape the world. It has been driven by political inclusion and an empowerment of the popular imagination. This is the same principle that motivates WikiLeaks and the global community that has formed around it, and that has inspired the formation of this party.

More than any specific policy or social vision, followed by Ecuadorians or anyone else, what the WikiLeaks Party is about is raising the intellectual, technological and democratic standards by which our decisions are made. As Ecuador's explosive success in the face of opposition from the world's superpower demonstrates, democracy, when pursued with enthusiasm, works wonders.

• *Austin Mackell is an Australian freelance journalist with a special interest in the Middle East and a progressive outlook. He has reported from Lebanon during the 2006 Israeli invasion, Iran during the turbulent 2009 elections and recently moved to Cairo to report on the transition to democracy. He tweets on @austingmackell and blogs on The Moon Under Water. He now lives in Quito Ecuador with his wife Aliya and their cat.*

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DN: 2013-06-26

Ytterligare en caudillo

Correas engagemang för Assange och Snowden handlar knappast om rätten att ha avvikande åsikter.

Ledare av Martin Liby Alonso

För drygt ett år sedan erbjöds Julian Assange asyl i Ecuador— och en halvt permanent bostad i dess Londonambassad. Därmed placerades landet i det internationella rampljuset. Utrikesminister Ricardo Patiños bekräftelse på Twitter att också Edward Snowden vill ha en fristad i Ecuador betyder att landet kommer att stanna där.

Fallen Assange och Snowden bör i grund och botten inte blandas samman. Assange flyr undan svensk rättvisa därför att han är anklagad för våldtäkt på två kvinnor. Snowden håller sig undan det amerikanska rättsväsendet för att han avslöjat säkerhetsmyndigheten NSA:s massövervakning.

Men i båda fallen har Ecuadors regering valt att motivera sitt agerande med att man vill värna informations- och yttrandefrihet. Det är dock något landets president Rafael Correa visat lite intresse av i sin egen maktutövning. Och det är sannolikt inte hans egentliga motiv.

Faktum är att utvecklingen i Ecuador sedan Correa valdes till president 2006 påminner mycket om den i Venezuela under Hugo Chávez tid.

I båda fallen handlar det om länder som under flera år präglades av politisk instabilitet. Och där sönderslagna partisystem skapade ett vakuum för karismatiska populisterna. Dessa har sedermera koncentrerat makten, attackerat kritiker och successivt förvandlats till typiska caudillos— Latinamerikas starka män.

Innan Correa valdes hade Ecuador styrts av tre olika presidenter på åtta år. Samtliga tvingades bort i förtid av antingen parlamentet, folkliga protester eller en kombination av de två.

Samtidigt hade Ecuador djupa ekonomiska problem. Under slutet på 90-talet led landet av låga oljepriser och väderfenomenet El Niño skadade jordbruket. Hyperinflation tvingade 2000 landet att överge sin egen valuta till förmån för dollarn.

Correa lovade förändring: stabilitet, kontinuitet och handlingskraftigt ledarskap. Det har Ecuador fått— i alltför hög dos.

Sedan han valdes till president har Correa systematiskt lagt beslag på mer makt och försvagat sina motståndare. Fram till sitt andra omval tidigare i våras saknade hans parti PAIS egen majoritet i kongressen— som han i stället kringgick genom flitigt användande av dekret, veton och folkomröstningar. Inför vårens val ändrade regeringen lagarna så att distrikt där den har starkt stöd väljer fler ledamöter än andra.

Dessutom har domstolarnas oberoende kraftigt beskurits. Obekväma jurister har bytts ut mot anhängare till presidenten. Demokratiinstitutet Freedom House konstaterade inför vårens val att Correa har "administrerat en av Latinamerikas största demokratiska nedgångar det senaste decenniet".

Särskilt iögonfallande är begränsningarna av pressfriheten. Flera tidningar har förstatligats och gjorts till mega-foner för regeringen. Dessutom använder sig Correa— liksom Chávez gjorde— frekvent av möjligheten att avbryta reguljära radio- och tv-sändningar för att tala direkt till nationen. Ursprungligen avsedd att användas i krissituationer har Correa utnyttjat möjligheten fler än 1 300 gånger och ofta till direkta och hårda verbala angrepp på sina kritiker.

Framför allt har attackerna på privata medier varit hårda. Utöver verbala utfall— Correa har bland annat jämfört kritiska journalister med mördare— har han använt sig av domstolarna. Misshagliga reportrar har dömts till höga böter och fängelse— även om de sedan benådats. En ny medielag som klubbades igenom i förra veckan ger staten ytterligare möjlighet att reglera innehållet i mediernas rapportering. Correas anhängare hyllade den bland annat för att den förbjuder "medier att lyncha", vilket av hans motståndare tolkas som att tuff granskning av presidenten görs olaglig.

Människorättsorganisationen Human Rights Watch sammanfattar i sin årliga rapport att Correa "har undergrävt pressfriheten genom att utsätta journalister för offentliga fördömanden och rättslig hämnd".

Correa är en klassisk latinamerikansk populist. Och hans engagemang för Assange och Snowden handlar knappast om rätten att ha avvikande åsikter. Det handlar i stället— liksom så mycket gjorde för Hugo Chávez— om möjligheten att vara en nagel i ögat på USA.

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[Jämför med Austin Mackells reportage här ovan. --A.B.]

DN: 2013-06-26



Hon ska skydda den jagade Snowden

Hon är den som finns vid Edward Snowdens sida när han med världspresen hack i häl försöker undkomma det amerikanska rättsväsendets långa arm. Brittiskan Sarah Harrison har tidigare gjort sig känd som en profil inom organisationen Wikileaks.

Någonstans inne på flygplatsen Sheremetyevo i Moskva gömmer sig just nu Sarah Harrison och hennes skyddsling Edward Snowden, mannen som avslöjade USA:s massövervakning på nätet. Hennes uppgift är att bistå Snowden när han försöker sätta sig säkerhet.

Harrison fanns där redan när kineserna tittade åt ett annat håll och lät Snowden och henne kliva på planet i Hongkong som förde dem till Moskva. Nu hänger de två i ett limbo i den ryska flygplatsens transithall. USA anklagar honom för spioneribrott och

kräver att få lägga vantarna på honom. Ryssarna vägrar än så länge att ingripa. Ecuador och Venezuela säger sig överväga möjligheterna att ge den jagade amerikanen asyl.

Kring dramat hopar sig de juridiska frågorna och då kan Sarah Harrison tyckas vara ett något förvånande val av följeslagare. Visserligen ingår hon i Wikileaks juridiska stab, som leds av den kände spanske undersökningsdomaren Baltasar Garzon. Men till skillnad mot exempelvis Julian Assanges försvarare Jennifer Robertson är hon inte advokat.

Sin bakgrund har hon istället inom journalistiken och det var på så vis hon kom i kontakt med Wikileaks. Harrison gjorde praktik på den brittiska grävgruppen Centre for Investigative Journalism. Hon blev involverad i gruppens samarbete med Assange och Wikileaks inför publiceringen av de hemligstämplade amerikanska krigsdagböckerna från Afghanistan.

Nu har hon arbetat för Wikileaks i två år och beskrivs som en av Julian Assanges närmaste rådgivare. Hennes roll blev enligt The Guardian viktigare när Wikileaks inre kärna splittrades och centrala personer tyske Daniel Domscheit Berg hoppade av. [*Domscheit Berg var aldrig någon "central person" och den "inre kärnan" är intakt. --A.B.*]

Harrison var inblandad när Wikileaks publicerade de uppmärksammade amerikanska diplomatrapporterna. Under rättegångarna i London angående Sveriges begäran att Julian Assange skulle utlämnas till Sverige för förhör om misstänkta sexbrott sågs hon ofta vid Wikileaksgrundarens sida.

• *Hans Rosén*

Bitcoiners donate to WikiLeaks to support Edward Snowden

*Emily Spaven
Coin Desk
June 26, 2013*

Bitcoin donations to WikiLeaks increased 1,894% yesterday after Julian Assange pledged his support to whistle-blower Edward Snowden.

The Blockchain shows 0.36 bitcoins were transferred to the WikiLeaks wallet address on Sunday, increasing to 7.18 BTC on Monday, following Assange's telephone conference call with reporters.

"I have personal sympathy with Snowden having gone through similar personal experiences," Time Magazine reports Assange as saying during the 75-minute call.

The WikiLeaks founder is currently residing in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he has been for the past year, fighting extradition to Sweden on sexual-assault charges. He recently claimed he would not leave the embassy even if the sex charges were dropped as he fears moves are underway to extradite him to the US over the leaking of sensitive information to his whistle-blowing website.

Snowden, however, is currently on the run after leaking details of top-secret American and British government mass surveillance programs to the press.

Assange said yesterday that Snowden was “healthy and safe”, but would not offer any further insight into where the 29-year-old was or when and how they had spoken. “If we lived in a better world we would be able to go into those details. Unfortunately, we live in a world, as illuminated by Mr Snowden, where most communications are intercepted unlawfully.”

It was thought Snowden had travelled from Hong Kong to Russia on Sunday morning, but Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov announced today that the former technical contractor and CIA employee had not crossed the border into the country.

Wherever he is, it is thought he is now receiving bitcoin donations via WikiLeaks, allowing him to make transactions that cannot be traced by the CIA. This form of transfer also gives anonymity to those making donations.

“Supporters know their donation is more difficult to track back to them than a wire transfer would be,” said Tuur Demeester of MacroTrends.

Since Assange’s talk with the press yesterday, 14.85 BTC (currently worth around \$1,568) have been donated to WikiLeaks.

Back in December 2010, Bank of America, VISA, MasterCard, PayPal and Western Union blocked donations to WikiLeaks following the release of secret US diplomatic cables the previous month. There are fears a similar block could be enforced again in the future, which is another reason why bitcoin donations are increasing in popularity.

“WikiLeaks supporters know their donations cannot be blocked and that funds that are not used immediately will appreciate over time,” said Demeester.

He went on to explain that the 800 BTC donated to WikiLeaks up until August last year was worth approximately \$8,000 at the time, but now those same bitcoins are worth ten times that amount— around \$80,000.

But perhaps the increase in bitcoin donations is motivated by more than just a desire for anonymity and confidence that the currency will appreciate in value, maybe it is a further display of bitcoiners’ anti-government sentiment and their championing of freedom of information.

“I think it confirms that freedom of speech and the right to privacy are indeed values that are dear to the bitcoin community,” said Demeester.

“Rather than posting a meme on Facebook, people are discovering that, with Bitcoin, they can send actual resources straight to the heart of the cause they wish to support—in this case WikiLeaks and the courageous Mr Snowden,” he concluded.

<http://www.coindesk.com/bitcoiners-rally-behind-snowden>

A year on and it's still unclear: Does God have a Julian Assange complex?

Where once we all had an opinion about Assange— seditious sex criminal or heroic freedom fighter? — we have since had our attention turned elsewhere

*Simon Kelner
The Independent
27 June 2013*

Every morning, on my way to the Tube station, I pass an unprepossessing west London mansion block. Yesterday, on a still, sultry morning, the yellow, red and blue flag that normally flies outside the building was **lifeless, drooping, almost sorry for itself**. Pedestrians passed by this unremarkable scene as they made way to Harrods. A lone policeman stood vigil, but seemed more interested in the movements of a team of scaffolders across the road.

How different it all was a year ago, when this corner of Knightsbridge was the focus of the world's attention. The pavement was barricaded to keep all the photographers and cameramen at bay, mobile TV studios lined the road, and a makeshift, Portakabin police station was built to house the regular press conferences, and to quarter the dozens and dozens of constables who surrounded the building.

By now, you'll probably have worked out that this is the location of the Ecuadorian Embassy, home for these past 12 months to **Julian Assange, once the most infamous public figure in the world, but who now goes about his daily business of extradition-dodging in the embassy, which apparently involves a rather large period of time on a sun bed, unnoticed and unremarked upon.**

Where once we all had an opinion about Assange— seditious sex criminal or heroic freedom fighter?— we have since had our attention turned towards Edward Snowden, **this year's poster boy for the whistle-blowing classes.**

I met Assange only once, at a small dinner party he was forced to leave early as a condition of his electronic tagging arrangements. I had one direct conversation with him, which I opened with a gentle enquiry about the current state of his legal case. He fixed me with **his alien-like stare**. "The Swedish prosecutor," he said, and then paused **for effect and stress** "...who is the ugliest woman I've ever met." This was the last thing I expected from a man whose sexual behaviour was under the most intense scrutiny, but he warmed to this peculiar theme. **"She's like a cross between a Sherman tank and Joseph Stalin."** I countered with a sarcastic response, along the lines that I never knew that good looks and femininity were important requisites for a senior legal figure, but he carried on regardless, assuring those around the table of his persecution at the hands of evil governments.

We all thought he had a God complex. I believe he thinks that God has got a Julian Assange complex. A year or so on, I still don't quite know what I think about Mr Assange. I believe people can be judged by their friends, and some of those who have supported Mr Assange— the likes of Jemima Khan and the lawyer Geoffrey Robertson— are figures with whom I have generally had common cause. But I was so

put off by that exchange over dinner, which— **superficial and relatively insignificant though it may have been**— is clearly very revealing of the mindset of a man who apparently has a problem with treating women in a respectful way. Which, it should be remembered, is at the root of why he is holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy, and probably will be so for some time to come.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/a-year-on-and-its-still-unclear-does-god-have-a-julian-assange-complex-8676787.html>

DN: 2013-06-27

Ecuadors president rasar över Snowden-bevakning

Den ecuadorianske presidenten Rafael Correa tar bladet från munnen i frågan om Edward Snowden och låter världen få veta vad han tycker om pressen och världsordningen. "Omoralk" kallar han den.

Det började med en ledare i Washington Post på tisdagen där Rafael Correa kallas för enväldshärskare och anti-amerikansk med ambition att ersätta Venezuelas framtidne president Hugo Chavez roll i världspolitiken. Hans Ecuador kallas utarmat och utrustat med yttrandefrihetskränkande lagar som inte minst Correa är tillskyndare av.

Ecuadors president har hållit låg profil bakom utrikesminister Ricardo Patiño tidigare i frågan om Snowden— 30-åringen som nyligen trädde fram som avslöjaren bakom USA:s omfattande internationella signalspaning— men på onsdagen tog han sig ton på Twitter i tre efterföljande inlägg:

"Washington Post 'anklagar' Ecuador för att ha dubbelmoral. Hur har de mage! Inser ni kraften i den internationella pressen? De har lyckats fästa uppmärksamheten på Snowden och på de 'onda' länder som 'stödjer' honom, och på så vis få oss att glömma de hemska saker man har gjort mot det amerikanska folket och hela världen. 'Världsordningen är inte bara orättvis, den är omoralisk.'"

Ecuador har de senaste fem åren— Correa tillträdde 2007— fallit från plats 56 till 119 på Reportrar utan gränsers lista över yttrandefriheten i världen. Den 14 juni klubbades en ny medielag igenom i landet, en lag som utökar myndigheternas makt över pressens innehåll. Correa har hyllat den som demokratiserande, men kritiker menar att den öppnar för godtycklighet och kallar den "ley mordaza"— "munkavlelagen".

• *Ossi Carp*

[Ännu ett nyanserat, opartiskt reportage av Dagens Nyheter. --A.B.]

Snowden affair puts Wikileaks back into spotlight

As the world's media — and US authorities — pursue Edward Snowden, Wikileaks is at his side.

*Becky Branford
BBC News
27 June 2013*

The whistleblowing organisation Wikileaks has become closely embroiled in the story of Edward Snowden— the US intelligence leaker accused of espionage in the US who is currently believed to be seeking a safe haven from the transit zone of Moscow airport.

The affair has given fresh prominence to an organisation whose profile had waned [???] since its headline-grabbing release in 2010 of hundreds of thousands of US state department diplomatic cables along with secret documents relating to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Its reputation has been dented by allegations of sex crimes levelled at its founder Julian Assange— who has now spent a year inside the Ecuadorean embassy in London, avoiding attempts to extradite him to Sweden.

He claims the allegations are part of a witch-hunt against him by the US, where there is an ongoing investigation into Wikileaks and Mr Assange by the US justice department *[and several other agencies --A.B.]*.

The assistance Wikileaks has given Mr Snowden has thrust it back onto the front pages and its representatives back into the TV studios.

According to Elias Groll of Foreign Policy magazine, the two parties were not associated at the start of this saga— as evidenced by the fact that Mr Snowden took his revelations to the Guardian newspaper, bypassing Wikileaks "when this is Wikileaks' natural territory".

So how has Wikileaks assisted Mr Snowden, and how do their interests coincide?
'Two fronts'

Edward Snowden was first publicly identified by the UK's Guardian newspaper as the source of leaks about US surveillance programmes on 9 June, at which point he had been in Hong Kong for three weeks since fleeing from his Hawaii home.

Wikileaks' involvement in the affair first began to be reported more than a week later, when it emerged that it had made an ultimately unsuccessful bid to secure asylum for him in Iceland.

Wikileaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson told the BBC on 24 June that "we have been helping him on two fronts: on one side, our legal team has been in contact and consultation and advising his legal team— for obvious reasons our legal team has vast knowledge in matters of extradition so it's quite natural that they could assist in many ways.

"Secondly we have been a go-between, carrying messages from Mr Snowden and his team to officials and governments."

Mr Assange helped secure a refugee document of passage from the Ecuadorean government after the US revoked his passport, enabling his passage to Moscow—where, Mr Assange confirms, Wikileaks has paid for Mr Snowden's plane tickets, lodging and legal counsel.

Wikileaks confirms that Sarah Harrison— a member of the Wikileaks legal team— "assisted Mr Snowden with his lawful departure from Hong Kong" and is "escorting him at all times" while in Russia.

Ms Harrison, who is still thought to be with Mr Snowden in Moscow, is— London's Evening Standard claims— Julian Assange's "powerful lieutenant and his principal link to the outside world from his room in the Ecuadorean embassy in Knightsbridge".

Baltasar Garzon, the former campaigning Spanish judge and now Wikileaks' legal director, is heading a team advising Mr Snowden on strategies to keep out of the grasp of the US. In a recent tweet, Wikileaks said it had hired a US attorney to represent him in the longer term.

Since Mr Snowden left Hong Kong and disappeared from public view, key Wikileaks figures have taken to the airwaves to explain why he should be hailed and not hounded for his disclosures.

So Wikileaks' best and brightest have been at the heart of efforts to protect Mr Snowden— why?

Asked whether he felt "any feeling of satisfaction or vengeance" at helping Mr Snowden thwart the US government, Mr Assange replied: "I have personal sympathy with Mr Snowden, having lived through a very similar experience, but the Wikileaks organisation more broadly exists to defend the practical rights of whistleblowers to bring their information to the public."

There may be other benefits from Wikileaks' association with Mr Snowden, in the face of a boycott from major financial companies and dwindling public sympathy because of Mr Assange's personal travails.

It has issued multiple appeals for donations since Mr Snowden flew to Moscow, though the BBC has been unable to obtain any comment on how successful those have been.

For Mr Groll, association with Mr Snowden can only be a boon for Mr Assange. "Assange hasn't been much of a success lately [???] — before he was a valiant fighter for transparency, now he's holed up in an embassy.... But now he's riding to the rescue."

The association is a riskier one for Mr Snowden, he says.

"The dangers for Snowden is that he ends up being discredited— Assange is a hate figure in the US... so by associating with him, he's risking his reputation.

"Of course, he doesn't have much choice. We've seen an immense smear campaign against Snowden and Assange— and this is another way they can tarnish [Snowden's] credibility."

Wikileaks has confirmed that "there are more revelations to be expected" from Mr Snowden— but it remains to be seen whether, in light of the assistance he has received from them, Mr Snowden will change tack and release the new information through his new allies.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-23077279>

We Steal Secrets: Alex Gibney, WikiLeaks & Julian Assange

Robert Manne

The Monthly (Australia)

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Alex Gibney is one of America's most celebrated and respected documentary film-makers. His major work about Julian Assange, *We Steal Secrets: The story of WikiLeaks*, has just been released, presumably to coincide with Bradley Manning's trial for treason before an American military court.

Nothing concerning Assange is straightforward. Even before the film's release a wild war of words broke out between WikiLeaks and Gibney. WikiLeaks accused Gibney of bias, ignorance and character assassination. To prove its point it published a detailed, annotated version of the film script, based on an audio recording. In response, Gibney has accused Assange of paranoia, a self-destructive desire for control and an inability to accept even legitimate criticism. Gibney's powerful, accomplished and vivid film will for some time help shape opinion, especially among those members of the liberal Left on whom Assange now most relies. So in the conflict between them, it matters who is right.

Stripped of detail, most films tell a simple moral tale. Gibney's goes like this. As a teenager, Assange is an audacious, underground computer hacker. Eventually, he is convicted and punished lightly. At this time, Assange is a humanitarian, anarchist revolutionary. He is interested in "crushing bastards", a David determined to smite Goliath. In his 30s, he creates a whistleblower organisation, WikiLeaks, to do so. Its first really important success is the exposure of a banking scandal in Iceland.

In Iraq, a junior intelligence analyst, Bradley Manning, becomes aware of WikiLeaks. Manning is struggling with a personal crisis of gender identity. In the US intelligence environment after September 11, the "need-to-know" rule about access to classified information has been replaced by "need-to-share". As a result, Manning is in possession of massive amounts of raw intelligence data. Some of the things he sees shock him. In his unstable state, he secretly passes hundreds of thousands of documents to WikiLeaks, perhaps because of Assange's persuasive powers. Abandoned by Assange, Manning unburdens his tormented soul and speaks of his crime in online chats with a supposed pro-WikiLeaks hacker, Adrian Lamo. Painfully torn between loyalty to the US and loyalty to Manning, Lamo chooses the US — and fame. Manning is arrested and then treated shamefully. The film's sympathies are with him. He is somewhat ambiguously a hero and altogether unambiguously a victim.

The film's sympathies, we discover halfway through, are not with Assange. In publishing Manning's material about American war crimes he is no doubt brave, perhaps crazy-brave, but he is also many other things. **One accusation follows another.** Assange, we are told, lives in a digital world where real human beings do not matter. In favouring the release of the unredacted Afghan war logs he is indifferent to whether the Afghan sources mentioned in them live or die. They are, after all, collaborators. The Manning leaks turn Assange into a global star. He enjoys this newfound celebrity rather too much. We see him being made up for a television appearance and admiring photographs of himself in the press. In Sweden he has sex with two women. When they go to the police with complaints about coercion or a deliberately torn condom, he claims he is the victim of a "smear campaign" or, possibly, a CIA "honey trap" operation. Assange fantasises tiresomely about secret surveillance of himself. He exaggerates or even imagines a "secret plot" to extradite him to the US on charges of espionage. This provides his excuse for fighting extradition to Sweden to face the music and then for seeking political asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

In Gibney's moral tale, Assange may deserve praise for publishing Manning's revelations. His enemies in the US administration and on the ideological Right may have used inflammatory rhetoric about cyber-terrorism or even assassination against him. **But it is his character flaws that have tarnished his achievements and destroyed his organisation. Assange believes the purity of his motives justifies his many ruthless and dishonest actions. Even worse, under his leadership WikiLeaks as an organisation has become a mirror image of those it once opposed— secretive, authoritarian, intolerant, unjust.**

This conclusion, as reached in *We Steal Secrets*, rests on a false foundation: that Assange's present fears about extradition to the US are groundless or grossly exaggerated. We are told in a single sentence that Assange was once investigated by the US Department of Justice on possible espionage charges, and are later reminded that after two years no charges had been filed. **This misunderstanding distorts almost everything we learn from the moment Julian Assange's troubles commence,** following WikiLeaks' publication of the Bradley Manning material. In November 2010 the US Attorney-General, Eric Holder, announced a major criminal investigation into WikiLeaks. In Virginia a grand jury was empanelled. According to a leaked secret email from a former deputy chief of counterterrorism inside the State Department's security service, in February 2011 a sealed indictment against Assange was issued. Two years later, on 26 March 2013, the US Attorney's office for the eastern district of Virginia confirmed that the grand jury investigation "remains ongoing".

No one could tell from watching *We Steal Secrets* that, ever since the empanelling of the grand jury, Assange has had excellent reason to believe that if extradited to the United States he will be in danger of spending the remainder of his life in one of its prisons. Assange's fears are not fanciful, as Gibney suggests, but genuine and well founded.

Diminishing Assange's fears is problematic for another reason. Assange challenged the world's most powerful state by publishing the material Manning sent to WikiLeaks. Since then, he has relied upon a team of legal advisers, **the unconditional loyalty of his tight circle of insiders,** and his own high-level political skills to avoid

extradition and its consequences. Not recognising the peril that Assange faces, and the steps he has taken to resist it, systematically distorts Gibney's analysis of his main subject—the history of WikiLeaks over the last two and a half years.

Gibney might have understood this better if Assange had been willing to be interviewed. He was not. Two stories exist about the failure of their protracted negotiation. In *We Steal Secrets* Gibney tells us that Assange informed him that \$1 million was the going rate for an interview, leading his audience to believe that money was a principal reason for Assange's non-participation. Gibney also tells us that Assange suggested he might co-operate if Gibney acted as a spy reporting on his interview subjects. **WikiLeaks' annotations to the script provide an alternative version of the negotiation.** Assange acknowledges that in their talks he told Gibney about the £800,000 he had once been offered by the BBC. In the circumstance, this was a careless boast but not a demand for payment. In the course of their conversations, Gibney told Assange about his interviews with high-ranking US officials, like Michael Hayden, the former CIA director. Assange admits that he told Gibney of his interest in learning about their plans for his extradition and trial. This was an understandable if foolish suggestion. **Yet Gibney fails to tell his audience about the main reason for Assange's unwillingness to be interviewed. Assange was appalled at the misrepresentations of previous documentaries about him and WikiLeaks. They were not just galling but also dangerous. He and his supporters faced serious legal and political risk.**

To tell the inside story of WikiLeaks without interviewing Assange or any of his loyal supporters, Gibney was forced to rely on some of the insiders who have either been dismissed from WikiLeaks, like the German Daniel Domscheit-Berg, or who have defected, like James Ball, the young Englishman. Assange is a charismatic leader of a besieged organisation. **It cannot have been easy for Domscheit-Berg or Ball to part company with Assange gracefully or without guilt. For this reason, the danger of relying uncritically on such witnesses ought to have been obvious. The evidence of *We Steal Secrets* suggests that for Gibney it was not.**

Take the evidence of James Ball, who describes to Gibney his reaction to being asked by Assange to sign a non-disclosure agreement. "I found this a little awkward—being asked by a transparency organisation to sign exactly the kind of document used to silence whistleblowers around the world. It seemed pretty troubling and so I refused." It is an apparently telling judgement. There are, however, problems with it. **It is an oversimplification to call WikiLeaks a transparency organisation. WikiLeaks is based on the idea of seeking to expose corruption by guaranteeing its sources not trans-parency but absolute anonymity. This is one reason non-disclosure agreements might be needed. Nor is it reasonable to expect transparency from a tiny organisation under threat from an almighty state. Even more obviously, as Assange has proven, Ball did in fact sign a first non-disclosure agreement, on 23 November 2010. Ball also claims, damagingly, that Assange did not distinguish between donations to WikiLeaks and to his Swedish legal defence. "No one knows now whether money going to WikiLeaks is going to Julian or elsewhere." As WikiLeaks shows in its annotations, donors were offered a clear choice. "You can help support Julian's defence fund and/or contribute to WikiLeaks." Donations were audited by a firm of accountants.**

Even more importantly, in the final minutes of the film, Gibney relies uncritically on the interpretative judgements of those insiders who have fallen out with

Assange. It is Domscheit-Berg who argues that “WikiLeaks has become what it detests and what it actually tried to rid the world of.” And it is James Ball who identifies what is called “‘noble cause corruption’; essentially you do things which, if anyone else did [them], you would recognise aren’t OK ... but because you know you’re a good guy, it’s different for you.” **These statements, being partly defensive and self-justificatory, are hardly objective and authoritative.**

Assange’s spectacular fallings-out have not only been with former WikiLeaks insiders. Almost as bruising were those with some of his mainstream media partners at the New York Times and the Guardian. Gibney does not pretend to explain why these explosions occurred. **He allows the Australian journalist Mark Davis to record the hypocrisy and condescension of the New York Times,** which first published WikiLeaks’ material and then ridiculed Assange before abandoning him to his fate. More questionably, it is one of Assange’s most implacable enemies, Nick Davies of the Guardian, the hero of the News of the World phone hacking scandal, who makes some of the film’s most damaging charges. **On screen, Davies bristles with aggression towards Assange. He is the film’s most important witness regarding Assange’s supposed indifference to the fate of the Afghan sources named in the US war logs.** In this dispute between Davies and Assange, the evidence is mixed. In *We Steal Secrets* Davies claims that Assange told him in a personal conversation that if Afghans were collaborators with the Americans they deserved to die. Assange has always denied using such words, though he uses as his defence the eyewitness testimony of a Der Spiegel journalist concerning a quite different occasion, a dinner conversation involving a second detested Guardian journalist, David Leigh. In another instance regarding the Afghan-indifference accusation, Assange is on firmer ground. Davies tells Gibney of his “amazement” when he heard Assange tell journalists at a press conference on 25 July 2010 about his harm minimisation strategy. **“Julian had no harm minimisation in place.” The WikiLeaks annotations quote from an article published in the Guardian that very morning, in part written by Davies, which outlined clearly WikiLeaks’ strategy for harm minimisation.** Almost everyone agrees that Assange’s first impulse—to publish the Afghan war logs unredacted—was wrong. But it was a lesson he learnt and never consciously repeated.

There are also legitimate questions about the film’s account of the Swedish sexual allegations. Some arise from the way Gibney has edited material from contemporary interviews with Assange. In one, Assange is shown to be saying: “I have never said this is a honey trap. I have never said it’s not a honey trap.” And shortly after: “There are powerful interests that have incentives to promote these smears.” Here is a fuller version of the interview Gibney draws upon:

Assange: I have also never criticised these women. We don’t know precisely what pressures they have been under, exactly. There are powerful interests that have incentives to promote these smears. That doesn’t mean that they got in there in the very beginning and fabricated them.

Interviewer: So you’re not suggesting this was a honey trap?

Assange: I have never said that this is a honey trap.

Interviewer: You don’t believe it?

Assange: I have never said it’s not a honey trap. I’m not accusing anyone until I have proof.

The differences between the original interview and the comments seen on screen are subtle but significant. Gibney's misleading edit underpins the scathing assessment by Davies that follows directly and which carries the film's final interpretative weight: "What Julian did was to start the little snowball rolling down the hill, that this was some kind of conspiracy." Davies is hardly an objective witness on this matter. Responsible for the first analysis in the British press of the leaked Swedish police report concerning the allegations, his competence and fair-mindedness were immediately challenged by Assange and his supporters. One of his most acerbic critics was Guy Rundle, in an article in this magazine. Several months after its publication, a still-enraged Davies threw a glass of wine in Rundle's face.

Far more importantly, Gibney misleads his audience about the reason Assange has fought so fiercely to avoid extradition to Sweden. The interpretation he favours is best expressed by one of Assange's Swedish accusers, Anna Ardin: "He has locked himself up to avoid coming to Sweden to answer a few pretty simple questions." This is utterly unconvincing. There is direct evidence that the US is delaying action until the conclusion of the Swedish cases. Indeed, Assange's lawyers believe that US legal authorities are compelled to wait for decisions on both the request for extradition from Britain and the hearing in Sweden of possible charges before moving on Assange. Those interested can find their detailed reasoning in the tightly argued and cogent document, '[Extraditing Assange](#)'. In these circumstances Assange is, to put it mildly, right to be cautious. One false move might earn him a lifetime in jail. In *We Steal Secrets*, Gibney breezily ignores all this. He claims rather that "members of Assange's legal team admitted that it would be easier for the United States to extradite Assange from Britain." At best, this is a vast oversimplification. **Gibney relies here on an interview fragment from Baroness Helena Kennedy, who has since told Assange that she has been misrepresented.**

The wronged party in *We Steal Secrets* is Bradley Manning. Once more, however, there are problems about the way Gibney presents the crucial evidence. There are only two direct sources for Manning's state of mind at the moment of his fateful decision to pass on to WikiLeaks hundreds of thousands of military and diplomatic documents: his confessional chat logs with Adrian Lamo, where the emphasis is on his crisis of gender identity, and his statement before the military court at Fort Meade on 28 February this year, in which he outlines lucidly the political reasons for his disillusionment with his country's behaviour and decision. **Because Gibney relies exclusively on the confessional chat logs, his audience is led to believe that it was profound psychological breakdown rather than sincerely held political principle that best explains Manning's motives.** Although Assange and many of his supporters argue that interest in Manning's psychic state is prurient or irrelevant to Gibney's story, and that Manning should be seen as nothing but a principled war crimes whistleblower, with Manning, at the moment of his critical decision, the personal and the political were self-evidently and inscrutably entangled. Nonetheless it seems wrong and puzzling for Gibney to omit the best evidence we have of Manning's political motivation. **Nor can Gibney argue that Manning's testimony came too late to be included. One small detail in the film—Manning's claim that he approached both the Washington Post and the New York Times before approaching WikiLeaks—proves that Gibney had read Manning's statement to the court in time.**

At its conclusion, *We Steal Secrets* tries to drive a moral wedge between Julian Assange and Bradley Manning. James Ball suggests that Manning turned to his betrayer, Lamo,

only because he was abandoned by WikiLeaks. **This is simply untrue. In his statement to the court, Manning spoke about the many long and enjoyable conversations he had with his contact at WikiLeaks**, whom he called "Nathaniel". In this testimony Manning does not identify "Nathaniel". The Lamo chat logs suggest that almost certainly he was Assange. Further to Ball, Assange's most bitter enemy, Daniel Domscheit-Berg, offers a contrast between the situations facing Assange and Manning: "We must get away from this understanding that we see Julian as the saviour, as some noble guru, as some new hero or some new pop star or whatever that's going to change all of it ... Bradley Manning is the courageous guy. He is the one that took all the risk and, in the end, now is suffering."

In the moral economy of *We Steal Secrets*, Domscheit-Berg's words come close to serving as a final judgement. They also involve several telling distortions. Assange and Manning have been loyal to each other throughout what is their mutual crisis. The risks facing Assange are very real, and if there is one quality in him that cannot possibly be doubted, it is his quite extraordinary courage.

Shortly before this film was released, the *New Yorker* launched a whistleblower drop-box coded by another young electronic freedom fighter, Aaron Swartz, who earlier this year took his life rather than face trial following a grand jury indictment for illegally downloading large numbers of academic articles. And, at the time of writing, the world learnt that the American government had been secretly collecting the phone, email and text records of its citizenry, a practice that Al Gore described as "obscenely outrageous". Julian Assange is the fearless and imaginative inventor of a political means by which individuals in the electronic age can expose the encroachment and corruption of state and corporate power. For this reason, he seems to me to deserve far more sympathy and credit than is found in **Alex Gibney's superficially impressive but ultimately myopic film.**

*Note: Robert Manne appears in *We Steal Secrets*, having written a major profile of Julian Assange for this magazine in 2011.*

• *Robert Manne is a professor of politics at La Trobe University and has twice been voted Australia's leading public intellectual. He is the author of *Left, Right, Left: Political Essays, 1977-2005* and *Making Trouble*. Visit his blog. See also *The Stolen Generations*— a documentary collection*

<http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2013/july/1372600800/robert-manne/we-steal-secrets-alex-gibney-wikileaks-julian-assange>

A Real Journalist Wouldn't Appear So Eager to Take Down Julian Assange

Kevin Gosztola

Firedog Lake

June 30, 2013

WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange appeared on ABC's Sunday morning program, "This Week," hosted by George Stephanopoulos, to provide an update on NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. He was joined by Justice Department whistleblower and Government Accountability Project director of the national security and human rights division, Jesselyn Radack.

Assange said he wished he could give more details on the situation with Snowden but said it was a "matter of international of diplomatic negotiations now." He said, "Why is it that Mr. Snowden is not in the United States? He should feel that he should be afforded to justice in the United States, but his situations is very similar to a situation that I face and my staff face, where we are being sucked into a grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia. That's where the charges for Edward Snowden came from."

"Asylum decisions are always a mixture of the political and legal," Assange replied when asked if any country would grant him asylum. "I think there are several countries where it is politically possible for Mr. Snowden to receive asylum and many countries, of course, where he is legally entitled to that kind of protection."

Assange attempted multiple times to put the focus on the content of what Snowden had revealed. He declared, "Without the will of the American people, without the will of the American Congress, we now have a state within a state. We have a transnational surveillance apparatus." He highlighted how journalist Glenn Greenwald had said, when speaking to attendees at the Socialism Conference in Chicago, that the NSA had brand new technology for putting into repositories 1 billion phone calls a day.

Stephanopoulos played comments from Secretary of State John Kerry, who said people could die because of Snowden's whistleblowing. To that Assange responded, "We were subject to exactly this kind of rhetoric two or three years ago and it all proved to be false. We had this terrible discussion about, which even exists in some of the tabloid press today about WikiLeaks causing harm but not a single US government official." (In fact, "This Week" played a clip of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saying, "It puts people lives in danger, threatens our national security," before the interview with Assange.)

"No one from the Pentagon. No one from any government has said that any of our revelations in the last six years has caused anyone to come to physical harm and the revelations by Snowden, these are even more abstract than the war crimes we were publishing," Assange added.

Stephanopoulos asked him about Snowden's father, Lonnie Snowden, suggesting WikiLeaks had manipulated Snowden.

"Mr Snowden's father, as a parent, of course he is worried," Assange replied. "Every father would be worried in this situation. We have established contact with Mr. Snowden's father's lawyer to put some of his concerns to rest."

When asked if the secrets Snowden had would get out no matter what, he answered, "There is no stopping the publishing process at this stage. Great care has been taken to make sure that Mr. Snowden can't be pressured by any state to stop the publication process. I mean, the United States, by canceling his passport, has left him for the moment marooned in Russia. Is that really a great outcome by the State Department? Is that really what it wanted to do?"

Assange condemned the United States for revoking Snowden's passport and noted that there was still no "international warrant out for his arrest."

As the interview wore on, Stephanopoulos became more adversarial toward Julian Assange. He asked about an email supposedly revealed from you by Bart Gellman in "Time" magazine, said that "You hoped the revelations from WikiLeaks would bring about the total annihilation of the US regime."

First, that is not the full quote and, if the full quote had been read, it would have sounded like, "The total annihilation of the current U.S. regime or any other regime that holds its authority through mendacity alone could be accelerated or advanced by several years if WikiLeaks does its job right," which is a lot less sinister, right?

Anyway, this is the exchange that took place next:

ASSANGE: I did not say that and there is no such email. That is simply false.

STEPHANOPOULOS: It's quoted in "Time" magazine in December 2010.

ASSANGE: Yes. Well, I mean, "Time" magazine. But this is — it's very interesting that you raised such a thing like that. We are in a situation where we have these extraordinary revelations that are causing great embarrassment to a new national security state that is arising in the U.S. It's not just the U.S. Similar national security states are rising in other countries, but it is trying to evade democratic will. It's treating Congress like a bunch of fools. And we saw Clapper up there lying, bald-face lying to Congress. We have secret interpretations of the law. What does the law mean if there are secret interpretations in secret courts?

We have Bradley Manning's trial starting — continuing tomorrow. A young man, a good man, as far as anyone can tell, motivations are entirely political as far as anyone argues. The same with Snowden. Being put through this meat grinder, where a new precedent is trying to be set, which is communicating with the press is committing espionage. And it's not just a precedent that is trying to be set on these whistle-blowers. It's a precedent that's trying to be set on journalists and politicians as well. We saw that in the case of—

STEPHANOPOULOS: Meantime, Mr. Assange, meantime, you're being—

ASSANGE: — James Rosen.

STEPHANOPOULOS: — safe harbored (ph) by the Ecuadorian government. That — the Correa administration has been admonished by human rights organizations for restricting press freedoms, prosecuting journalists. The Inter American Press Association calls its new media law, quote, "the most serious setback for freedom of the press in the recent history of Latin America." So does it make you

uncomfortable to be harbored by a government that goes after journalists, and do you see a double standard there?

And those in the US media wonder why Edward Snowden has refused to do interviews. He does not want to answer questions that purely consist of propagandistic talking points or conventional wisdom derived from smears.

Stephanopoulos had a brief exchange with Radack about the law and contended what Snowden revealed truly showed that the secret surveillance programs were legal, which Radack heavily contested.

STEPHANOPOULOS: That's not what he's saying, sir. He has also broken the law. Let me bring that now to Jesselyn Radack, who is also here with me right now. Julian Assange mentioned Edward Snowden's father, who has also written — his attorney has written a letter to Eric Holder, the attorney general, saying that he believes that his son would be willing to come back to the United States if he would not be detained or imprisoned prior to trial, if he would not be subject to a gag order, if he would be tried in the venue of his choosing. Do you think it would make sense for Snowden to return under those circumstances? RADACK: I actually don't. I have represented people like Thomas Drake, who was an NSA whistleblower, who actually did go through every conceivable internal channel possible, including his boss, the inspector general of his agency, the Defense Department inspector general and two congressional committees, and the U.S. turned around and prosecuted him. And did so for espionage and threatened to tie him up for the rest of his life in jail. I think Snowden's outlook is bleak here, and instead of focusing on Snowden and shooting the messenger, we should really focus on the crimes of the NSA. Because whatever laws Snowden may or may not have broken, they are infinitesimally small compared to the two major surveillance laws and the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution that the NSA's violated.

STEPHANOPOULOS: But these surveillance programs, as the president has pointed out, were passed by the Congress, are overseen by a court.

RADACK: Well, both of those are incorrect. Congress has not been fully informed. Only the—

STEPHANOPOULOS: They passed the laws, there is oversight, or there is (inaudible).

RADACK: OK, but there is a secret interpretation of Section 215 of the Patriot Act, which nobody knows, except for the Intel Committee of Congress, and even they say that they think most Americans would be appalled by that. And to say that it's been approved by the courts is a misnomer, because it gives the impression that federal courts have approved this, when in reality, it's the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which has rubber-stamped every single—

STEPHANOPOULOS: Which is a federal court.

RADACK: No, it is a secret court set up at the Justice Department that has federal judges on it. But last year, it approved 2,000 out of 2,000 applications. They hear only the government's side, and they have never — they have rejected an application one time since 1978.

But, Stephanopoulos did not want to talk about what Snowden revealed. He did not want to seriously address the issue of whistleblowing or press freedom in the United States or the fact that WikiLeaks is still the target of a Justice Department investigation or even that Wired published a story on the FBI having a paid informant that attempted to infiltrate WikiLeaks.

He, like CNN's Erin Burnett, wanted to show he was a tough television journalist who could take down Julian Assange. But one is not a better journalist if they can confront a leader of a leaks organization, whose right to publish and participate in freedom of the press is being directly targeted by a widespread investigation into him and his organization's entire staff.

"A real journalist," as New York Times public editor Margaret Sullivan recently wrote, "is one who understands, at a cellular level, and doesn't shy away from, the adversarial relationship between government and press – the very tension that America's founders had in mind with the First Amendment."

Under that partial definition, it would be hard to consider Stephanopoulos a real journalist, especially since he appears to revel in his ability to defend and parrot the positions of government officials when met with people like Assange or Radack, who have a commitment to defending truth-tellers with the courage to stand up to power.

ABC interview:

<http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/week-transcript-wikileaks-julian-assange/story?id=19521380#.UdB-oeuVvLK>

<http://dissenter.firedoglake.com/2013/06/30/julian-assange-jesselyn-radack-interviewed-on-this-week-with-george-stephanopoulo>

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Links to other parts of the series

Part 1: 14 August 2010 – 16 December 2010
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case1.pdf

Part 2: 17 December 2011 – 17 February 2011
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case2.pdf

Part 3: 20 February 2011 – 17 July 2011
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case3.pdf

Part 4: 8 August 2011 – 30 June 2012
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case4.pdf

Part 5: 1 July 2012 – 27 October 2012
www.nnn.se/nordic/assange/docs/case5.pdf

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