

# Twitter Restricts Account of Julian Assange's Mother

The social media giant has given no reason to Christine Assange who had turned to Twitter to campaign for the liberty of her son.

By **Joe Lauria**

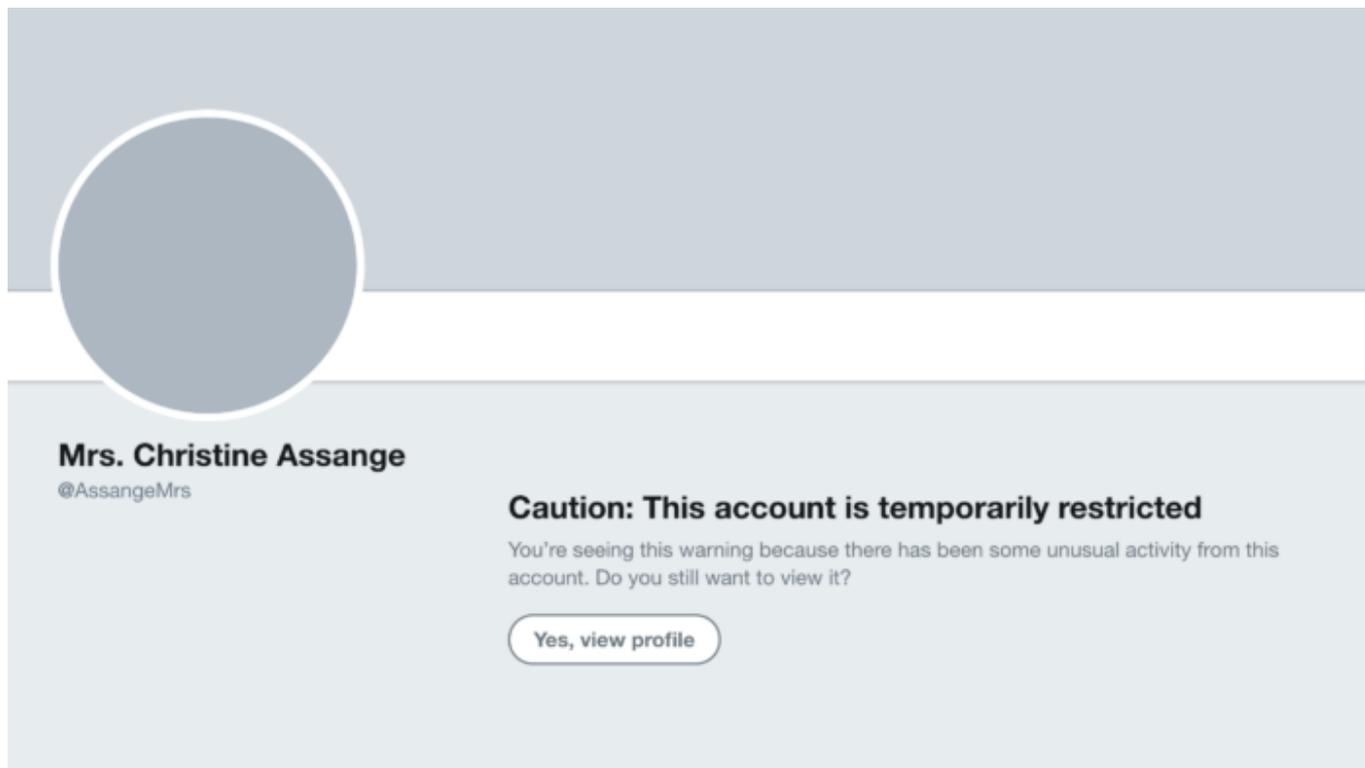
*Special to Consortium News*

The Twitter account of Christine Assange, the mother of the arbitrarily detained founder of WikiLeaks, has been restricted, she told **Consortium News** on Tuesday.

"My Twitter account has been 'blocked due to 'unusual activity,'" Ms. Assange wrote in a text message. Twitter, however, has provided her no reason for its action.

Ms. Assange is a prolific user of Twitter in her campaign to free her son who has been a refugee in the Ecuador embassy in London since 2012.

Twitter has posted the following message on her [page](#):



While a user can access her page by agreeing to view her profile, Ms. Assange told **Consortium News** she is unable to post new Tweets to her account nor see anyone else's.

Her last post, at 11:55 am on Tuesday in Australia, where she lives, is a retweet of an [article](#) published about her son. She posted 12 tweets in the past 24 hours. "Interesting that it followed on from a day of my tweets about free speech and calling on journalists globally to stand up for Julian," Ms. Assange said in a text message.

## **Clinton and Bolton**

In the past ten days, Ms. Assange tweeted direct replies to Hillary Clinton and John Bolton, the U.S. national security adviser. Bolton had tweeted on March 9: "US military should use [#Wikileaks](#) for cyber warfare target practice. Take down their capabilities & prevent further harm to nat'l security."

Ms. Assange's reply to Bolton is no longer visible under his tweet. Nine replies to Bolton are now "unavailable." Ms. Assange said in a text message that her reply began by calling Bolton's tweet, "Fascist talk!"

In response to the New Zealand massacre, Clinton tweeted on March 15: "My heart breaks for New Zealand & the global Muslim community. We must continue to fight the perpetuation and normalization of Islamophobia and racism in all its forms."

Ms. Assange directly replied to Clinton: "Hang on Hillary! My son, published your pre Presidential run bragsheet 'Tick Tock' (email) on [#Libya!](#) As a result of your trophy War in Libya, you were responsible for 40,000 deaths, ISIS expansion, womens slave market in Libya, & the subsequent refugee crisis in Europe!"

Clinton was "in nauseating false sympathy," Ms. Assange said in a text message.

### **Under Congressional Pressure**

Twitter uses algorithms unknown to the public to remove, block, suspend or restrict accounts of its users. Like other social media companies, Twitter has also come under intense U.S. congressional [pressure](#) to censor accounts deemed hostile to U.S. interests.

Julian Assange has remained in the embassy to avoid arrest by British authorities for skipping bail from an investigation by Sweden that has since been dropped. He has not been charged with a crime by either Sweden or Britain.

Assange was granted political asylum by the previous

government of Ecuador seven years ago. The current government, however, has made it known it wants him to leave and has made various moves to force him out. His contact with the outside world has been restricted. Twitter deleted his account on March 28, 2018. British authorities have not permitted him to leave the embassy for urgent medical treatment without being arrested.

Assange fears that if he is arrested by London police once he leaves the embassy that he will be extradited to the United States where a secret grand jury is preparing an indictment against him, most likely under the Espionage Act. Grand jury proceedings are still underway in an Alexandria, Virginia courtroom.

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# PATRICK LAWRENCE: Why the Dust Won't Settle After Mueller's Report

It won't be "full and thorough" and Democrats will continue to look for political payoff from Russia-gate, writes Patrick Lawrence.

By **Patrick Lawrence**

*Special to Consortium News*



Last week gave us mounting indications that Robert Mueller has finished his two-year probe into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 elections and is about to issue his long-awaited report.

But those who hope to read the results of the "full and thorough investigation" promised when Mueller was appointed special counsel should adjust their expectations. After spending upward of \$12 million, Mueller is almost certain to hand Attorney General William Barr a light-on-evidence document that dodges many more questions than it resolves. Neither is it clear whether the AG will make all, part, or none of the Mueller report public.

There are two certainties we can rely upon as we await Mueller's final word, none a cause for relief.

- The special counsel's office did not undertake a credible investigation of the two core charges related to the 2016 elections—that Russian intelligence hacked Democratic National Committee email servers while colluding with Donald Trump as he sought the presidency. Mueller failed to call numerous key witnesses, and

failed to pursue alternative theories, a duty of any investigator in Mueller's position. These omissions are more or less fatal to the legitimacy of Mueller's work.

- Among the mainstream Democrats who have incessantly hyped the "Russia-wrecked-our-elections" story, there is no remorse for the damage it has done to our governing institutions, our foreign policy, and our national security. Russia-gate has consolidated Cold War II. The chance to rebuild mutually beneficial relations with Moscow has been damaged.

### **Sequence of Events**

There is a sequence of events leading up to the completed Mueller report that is important to follow. Earlier this month the House Judiciary Committee announced that it has requested documents from 81—yes, 81—government agencies, entities such as *Wikileaks*, and (mostly) individuals. These last include the president's two sons, Eric and Donald Trump Jr.; Jared Kushner, his son-in-law; Allen Weisselberg, the Trump Organization's chief financial officer; former AG Jeff Sessions, and former White House Counsel Douglas McGahn.

The committee purports to be looking for obstructions of justice, collusion with Russia, and other possible transgressions—this after Mueller spent two years investigating the same things. It is not hard to read this for what it is: the first indication that the Democrat-controlled House wants enough grist to keep the post-Mueller Russia-gate mill running for its political advantage.

"Russia-gate," in short, is not about to pass into history. It looks now as if this political spectacle will be

sustained as long as President Trump remains in office.

Numerous other signs that Mueller is folding his tent have followed. Various members of his investigative team have either left or will do so soon. Last week Mueller relieved Michael Flynn, once and briefly Trump's national security adviser, of further questioning. A federal judge then gave Paul Manafort, Trump's one-time campaign manager, his final sentence: He gets seven and a half years in prison on financial fraud charges. This now looks like the biggest fish Mueller has caught—and never mind that Manafort's crimes had nothing to do with either the Trump campaign or allegations of Russian interference.

Last Thursday the House voted 420–0 (with four abstentions) to back a resolution calling for Justice to make the full Mueller report public once it goes to Barr's office. “Mission accomplished” is the only way to read all this. Now what?

It is not yet clear what Justice will do with Mueller's report. In the Republican-controlled Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is not saying whether he will back a make-it-public vote. He blocked a bipartisan resolution similar to the House's earlier this year. Barr is obliged only to show some of what is in the Mueller report to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

For his part, Trump has been all over the place as to what Barr should do. Last Friday he insisted Mueller “should never have been appointed and there should be no Mueller report.” A day later the president claimed he told House Republicans to back the make-it-public resolution, as they

did. "Makes us all look good and it doesn't matter," the president said in a Twitter message Saturday.

The Mueller report is in for endless spin no matter what is in it. In a weekend opinion item carried in *The Guardian*, the usually sensible Robert Reich, a former U.S. Labor secretary, suggested the impending report leaves the president trapped and desperate. "So what does a cornered president do?" Reich asked. "For starters, he raises the specter of violence against his political opponents."

Setting aside such paranoiac hyperbole, Trump's second thought—publish it all—is the wiser. It is next to impossible that Mueller found hard evidence to support either of the two primary allegations that have driven the special counsel's investigations.

First and very conspicuously, Mueller's investigators never consulted those who could have shed light on these assertions. These include Julian Assange, the *WikiLeaks* founder; Christopher Steele, who wrote the now-infamous dossier purporting to establish evidence of Russian collusion, and prominent technical and forensic scientists who have done extensive work on the digital trail left by those responsible for the theft of email from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman and the Democratic National Committee.

Second and yet more persuasively, the just-noted technical and forensic experts have demonstrated that the mail operations in mid-2016 were not hacks — by Russians or anyone else — but leaks executed by someone with access to the Podesta and DNC emails who used a storage device such as

a memory key. Mueller's office has never examined this work in pursuit of alternative evidence in the email case. There is no legitimate justification for this dereliction.

Last week **Consortium News** published the latest report from Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, which does its own forensic work while also coordinating with various independent forensic investigators. There are now three layers of evidence indicating that the 2016 mail compromises were an inside job: the speed of the downloads, the manipulation of files to implant Russian "fingerprints," and – this most recently – the numerical codes on the stolen files, which demonstrate that the probability of a remote hack via the internet is 1-in-2 to the 500<sup>th</sup> power.

None of those working on the stolen mail's metadata, including Bill Binney, formerly a technical director at the National Security Agency and the lead scientist at VIPS, has ever been contacted by the special counsel's investigators. "Nobody wants to talk about evidence," Binney said by telephone over the weekend. "What Mueller's doing now is clearing the report of anything that conflicts with the forensics already produced. Given this work has been done, he can't afford to allege collusion or Russian involvement, so there'll be nothing substantive in the report about either."

If Binney is right, the Mueller report will resemble the "Intelligence Community Assessment" published in January 2017. Virtually devoid of evidence, the ICA was more or less fraudulent in its reliance on loosely reasoned inferences and innuendo.

If this proves the outcome after Mueller's two-year effort, we may never know who was responsible for the 2016 email thefts or the role of U.S. law-enforcement and intelligence agencies since then; countless other questions will go unanswered. "The sole objective is to perpetuate 'Russia-gate,'" Binney said last weekend. That will come at a high price when measured by the distortions of our political institutions, our judiciary and our foreign policy priorities.

Patrick Lawrence, a correspondent abroad for many years, chiefly for the *International Herald Tribune*, is a columnist, essayist, author, and lecturer. His most recent book is "Time No Longer: Americans After the American Century" (Yale). Follow him @thefloutist. His web site is [www.patricklawrence.us](http://www.patricklawrence.us). Support his work via [www.patreon.com/thefloutist](http://www.patreon.com/thefloutist).

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## WILLIAM BLUM: Sucking Liberals into a New Cold War

Out of fury against President Trump, many liberals have enlisted in the ranks of the New Cold War against Russia,

seeming to have forgotten the costs to rationality and lives from the first Cold War, warned the late William Blum.

*A memorial service was held on Sunday in Washington for William Blum, a former State Department official whose disillusionment with the Vietnam War turned him into a fierce critic of U.S. foreign policy. In books such as Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II; Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire and Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower, as well as on his blog, [The Anti-Empire Report](#), Blum educated a generation of Americans about the rapacious aims of the U.S. abroad, debunking the myth of Washington's good intentions for the peoples of the world. Blum died on December 9, 2018. He was a contributor to Consortium News and we reprint one of his last articles that appeared here. Originally published on Dec. 6, 2017.*

**By [William Blum](#)**

Cold War Number One: 70 years of daily national stupidity.  
Cold War Number Two: Still in its youth, but just as stupid.

“He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did.” – President Trump re Russian President Vladimir Putin after their meeting in Vietnam. [*Washington Post*, Nov. 12, 2017]

Putin later added that he knew “absolutely nothing” about Russian contacts with Trump campaign officials. “They can do what they want, looking for some sensation. But there are no sensations.”

Numerous U.S. intelligence agencies have said otherwise.

Former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, responded to Trump's remarks by declaring: "The president was given clear and indisputable evidence that Russia interfered in the election."

As we'll see below, there isn't too much of the "clear and indisputable" stuff. And this of course is the same James Clapper who made an admittedly false statement to Congress in March 2013, when he responded, "No, sir" and "not wittingly" to a question about whether the National Security Agency was collecting "any type of data at all" on millions of Americans. Lies don't usually come in any size larger than that.

Virtually every member of Congress who has publicly stated a position on the issue has criticized Russia for interfering in the 2016 American presidential election. And it would be very difficult to find a member of the mainstream media who has questioned this thesis.

What is the poor consumer of news to make of these gross contradictions? Here are some things to keep in mind:

How do we know that the tweets and advertisements "sent by Russians" -- those presented as attempts to sway the vote -- were actually sent by Russians? The Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), composed of National Security Agency and CIA veterans, recently declared that the CIA knows how to disguise the origin of emails and tweets. The *Washington Post* has as well reported that Twitter "makes it easy for users to hide their true identities." [Washington Post, Oct. 10, 2017]

**Russians! Russians! Russians!**

Even if these communications were actually sent from Russia, how do we know that they came from the Russian government, and not from any of the other 144.3 million residents of Russia?

Even if they were sent by the Russian government, we have to ask: Why would they do that? Do the Russians think the United States is a Third World, under-developed, backward Banana Republic easily influenced and moved by a bunch of simple condemnations of the plight of blacks in America and the Clinton "dynasty"? Or clichéd statements about other controversial issues, such as gun rights and immigration? If so, many Democratic and Republican officials would love to know the secret of the Russians' method. Consider also that Facebook has stated that 90 percent of the alleged-Russian-bought content that ran on its network did not even mention Trump or Clinton. [*Washington Post*, Nov. 15, 2017]

On top of all this is the complete absence of even the charge, much less with any supporting evidence, of Russian interference in the actual voting or counting of votes.

After his remark suggesting he believed Putin's assertion that there had been no Russian meddling in the election, Trump – of course, as usual – attempted to backtrack and distance himself from his words after drawing criticism at home; while James Clapper declared: "The fact the president of the United States would take Putin at his word over that of the intelligence community is quite simply unconscionable." [*Reuters*, Nov. 12, 2017]

Given Clapper's large-size lie referred to above, can Trump be faulted for being skeptical of the intelligence

community's Holy Writ? Purposeful lies of the intelligence community during the first Cold War were legendary, many hailed as brilliant tactics when later revealed. The CIA, for example, had phony articles and editorials planted in foreign newspapers (real Fake News), made sex films of target subjects caught *in flagrante delicto* who had been lured to Agency safe houses by female agents, had Communist embassy personnel expelled because of phony CIA documents, and much more.

The *Post* recently published an article entitled "How did Russian trolls get into your Facebook feed? Silicon Valley made it easy." In the midst of this "exposé," The *Post* stated: "There's no way to tell if you personally saw a Russian post or tweet." [*Washington Post*, Nov. 2, 2017]

### **A Case or Not?**

So ... Do the Cold Warriors have a case to make or do they not? Or do they just want us to remember that the Russkis are bad? So it goes.

An organization in Czechoslovakia with the self-appointed name of European Values has produced a lengthy report entitled "The Kremlin's Platform for 'Useful Idiots' in the West: An Overview of RT's Editorial Strategy and Evidence of Impact." It includes a long list of people who have appeared on the Russian-owned TV station RT (formerly *Russia Today*), which can be seen in the U.S., the U.K. and other countries. Those who've been guests on RT are the "idiots" useful to Moscow. (The list is not complete. I've been on RT about five times, but I'm not listed. Where is my Idiot Badge?)

RT's YouTube channel has more than two million followers and

claims to be the “most-watched news network” on the video site. Its Facebook page has more than 4 million likes and followers. Can this explain why the powers-that-be forget about a thing called freedom-of-speech and treat the station like an enemy? The U.S. government recently forced *RT America* to register as a foreign agent and has cut off the station’s Congressional press credentials.

The Cold War strategist, George Kennan, wrote prophetically: “Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy.”

Writer John Wight has described the new Cold War as being “in response to Russia’s recovery from the demise of the Soviet Union and the failed attempt to turn the country into a wholly owned subsidiary of Washington via the imposition of free market economic shock treatment thereafter.”

So let’s see what other brilliance the New Cold War brings us. ... Ah yes, another headline in the *Post* (Nov. 18, 2017): “British alarm rising over possible Russian meddling in Brexit.” Of course, why else would the British people have voted to leave the European Union? But wait a moment, again, one of the British researchers behind the report “said that the accounts they analyzed – which claimed Russian as their language when they were set up but tweeted in English – posted a mixture of pro-‘leave’ and pro-‘remain’ messages regarding Brexit. Commentators have said that the goal may simply have been to sow discord and division in society.”

Was there ever a time when the *Post* would have been embarrassed to be so openly, amateurishly biased about Russia? Perhaps during the few years between the two Cold Wars.

In case you don't remember how stupid Cold War Number One was ...

- 1948: The *Pittsburgh Press* published the names, addresses, and places of employment of about 1,000 citizens who had signed presidential-nominating petitions for former Vice President Henry Wallace, running under the Progressive Party. This, and a number of other lists of "communists," published in the mainstream media, resulted in people losing their jobs, being expelled from unions, having their children abused, being denied state welfare benefits, and suffering various other punishments.
- Around 1950: The House Committee on Un-American Activities published a pamphlet, "100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A." This included information about what a communist takeover of the United States would mean: ?Q: What would happen to my insurance?? A: It would go to the Communists.? Q: Would communism give me something better than I have now?? A: Not unless you are in a penitentiary serving a life sentence at hard labor.
- 1950s: Mrs. Ada White, member of the Indiana State Textbook Commission, believed that Robin Hood was a Communist and urged that books that told the Robin Hood story be banned from Indiana schools.
- As evidence that anti-communist mania was not limited to

the lunatic fringe or conservative newspaper publishers, here is Clark Kerr, president of the University of California at Berkeley in a 1959 speech: "Perhaps 2 or even 20 million people have been killed in China by the new [communist] regime." One person wrote to Kerr: "I am wondering how you would judge a person who estimates the age of a passerby on the street as being 'perhaps 2 or even 20 years old.' Or what would you think of a physician who tells you to take 'perhaps 2 or even twenty teaspoonsful of a remedy'?"

- Throughout the cold war, traffic in phony Lenin quotes was brisk, each one passed around from one publication or speaker to another for years. Here's *S. News and World Report* in 1958 demonstrating communist duplicity by quoting Lenin: "Promises are like pie crusts, made to be broken." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles used it in a speech shortly afterward, one of many to do so during the cold war. Lenin actually did use a very similar line, but he explicitly stated that he was quoting an English proverb (it comes from Jonathan Swift) and his purpose was to show the unreliability of the bourgeoisie, not of communists. "First we will take Eastern Europe, then the masses of Asia, then we will encircle the United States, which will be the last bastion of capitalism. We will not have to attack. It will fall like an overripe fruit into our hands." This Lenin "quotation" had the usual wide circulation, even winding up in the *Congressional Record* in 1962. This was not simply a careless attribution; this was an out-and-out fabrication; an extensive search, including by the Library of Congress and the United States Information

Agency failed to find its origin.

- A favorite theme of the anti-communists was that a principal force behind drug trafficking was a communist plot to demoralize the United States. Here's a small sample: Don Keller, District Attorney for San Diego County, California in 1953: "We know that more heroin is being produced south of the border than ever before and we are beginning to hear stories of financial backing by big shot Communists operating out of Mexico City." Henry Giordano, Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, 1964, interviewed in the *American Legion Magazine*: Interviewer: "I've been told that the communists are trying to flood our country with narcotics to weaken our moral and physical stamina. Is that true?" Giordano: "As far as the drugs are concerned, it's true. There's a terrific flow of drugs coming out of Yunnan Province of China. ... There's no question that in that particular area this is the aim of the Red Chinese. It should be apparent that if you could addict a population you would degrade a nation's moral fiber." Fulton Lewis, Jr., prominent conservative radio broadcaster and newspaper columnist, 1965: "Narcotics of Cuban origin – marijuana, cocaine, opium, and heroin – are now peddled in big cities and tiny hamlets throughout this country. Several Cubans arrested by the Los Angeles police have boasted they are communists." We were also told that along with drugs another tool of the commies to undermine America's spirit was fluoridation of the water.
- Mickey Spillane was one of the most successful writers of the 1950s, selling millions of his anti-communist

thriller mysteries. Here is his hero, Mike Hammer, in "One Lonely Night," boasting of his delight in the grisly murders he commits, all in the name of destroying a communist plot to steal atomic secrets. After a night of carnage, the triumphant Hammer gloats, "I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it. I pumped slugs into the nastiest bunch of bastards you ever saw. ... They were Commies. ... Pretty soon what's left of Russia and the slime that breeds there won't be worth mentioning and I'm glad because I had a part in the killing. God, but it was fun!"

- 1952: A campaign against the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) because it was tainted with "atheism and communism," and was "subversive" because it preached internationalism. Any attempt to introduce an international point of view in the schools was seen as undermining patriotism and loyalty to the United States. A bill in the U.S. Senate, clearly aimed at UNESCO, called for a ban on the funding of "any international agency that directly or indirectly promoted one-world government or world citizenship." There was also opposition to UNESCO's association with the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights on the grounds that it was trying to replace the American Bill of Rights with a less liberty-giving covenant of human rights.
- 1955: A U.S. Army 6-page pamphlet, "How to Spot a Communist," informed us that a communist could be spotted by his predisposition to discuss civil rights, racial and religious discrimination, the immigration laws, anti-subversive legislation, curbs on unions, and peace. Good Americans were advised to keep their ears

stretched for such give-away terms as “chauvinism,” “book-burning,” “colonialism,” “demagogy,” “witch hunt,” “reactionary,” “progressive,” and “exploitation.” Another “distinguishing mark” of “Communist language” was a “preference for long sentences.” After some ridicule, the Army rescinded the pamphlet.

- 1958: The noted sportscaster Bill Stern (one of the heroes of my innocent youth) observed on the radio that the lack of interest in “big time” football at New York University, City College of New York, Chicago, and Harvard “is due to the widespread acceptance of Communism at the universities.”
- 1960: U.S. General Thomas Power speaking about nuclear war or a first strike by the U.S.: “The whole idea is to *kill* the bastards! At the end of the war, if there are two Americans and one Russian, we win!” The response from one of those present was: “Well, you’d better make sure that they’re a man and a woman.”
- 1966: The Boys Club of America is of course wholesome and patriotic. Imagine their horror when they were confused with the Dubois Clubs. (W.E.B. Du Bois had been a very prominent civil rights activist.) When the Justice Department required the DuBois Clubs to register as a Communist front group, good loyal Americans knew what to do. They called up the Boys Club to announce that they would no longer contribute any money, or to threaten violence against them; and sure enough an explosion damaged the national headquarters of the youth group in San Francisco. Then former Vice President Richard Nixon, who was national board chairman of the Boys Club, declared: “This is an almost classic example

of Communist deception and duplicity. The 'DuBois Clubs' are not unaware of the confusion they are causing among our supporters and among many other good citizens."

- 1966: "Rhythm, Riots and Revolution: An Analysis of the Communist Use of Music, The Communist Master Music Plan," by David A. Noebel, published by Christian Crusade Publications, (expanded version of 1965 pamphlet: "Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles"). Some chapters: Communist Use of Mind Warfare ... Nature of Red Record Companies ... Destructive Nature of Beatle Music ... Communist Subversion of Folk Music ... Folk Music and the Negro Revolution ... Folk Music and the College Revolution
- 1968: William Calley, U.S. Army Lieutenant, charged with overseeing the massacre of more than 100 Vietnamese civilians in My Lai in 1968, said some years later: "In all my years in the Army I was never taught that communists were human beings. We were there to kill ideology carried by – I don't know – pawns, blobs, pieces of flesh. I was there to destroy communism. We never conceived of old people, men, women, children, babies."
- 1977: Scientists theorized that the earth's protective ozone layer was being damaged by synthetic chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons. The manufacturers and users of CFCs were not happy. They made life difficult for the lead scientist. The president of one aerosol manufacturing firm suggested that criticism of CFCs was "orchestrated by the Ministry of Disinformation of the KGB."
- 1978: Life inside a California youth camp of the ultra anti-communist John Birch Society: Five hours each day

of lectures on communism, Americanism and "The Conspiracy"; campers learned that the Soviet government had created a famine and spread a virus to kill a large number of citizens and make the rest of them more manageable; the famine led starving adults to eat their children; communist guerrillas in Southeast Asia jammed chopsticks into children's ears, piercing their eardrums; American movies are all under the control of the Communists; the theme is always that capitalism is no better than communism; you can't find a dictionary now that isn't under communist influence; the communists are also taking over the Bibles.

- The Reagan administration declared that the Russians were spraying toxic chemicals over Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan – the so-called "yellow rain" – and had caused more than ten thousand deaths by 1982 alone, (including, in Afghanistan, 3,042 deaths attributed to 47 separate incidents between the summer of 1979 and the summer of 1981, so precise was the information). Secretary of State Alexander Haig was a prime dispenser of such stories, and President Reagan himself denounced the Soviet Union thusly more than 15 times in documents and speeches. The "yellow rain," it turned out, was pollen-laden feces dropped by huge swarms of honeybees flying far overhead.
- 1982: In commenting about sexual harassment in the Army, General John Crosby stated that the Army doesn't care about soldiers' social lives – "The basic purpose of the United States Army is to kill Russians," he said.
- 1983: The U.S. invasion of Grenada, the home of the Cuban ambassador is damaged and looted by American

soldiers; on one wall is written "AA," symbol of the 82nd Airborne Division; beside it the message: "Eat shit, commie faggot." ... "I want to fuck communism out of this little island," says a marine, "and fuck it right back to Moscow."

- 1984: During a sound check just before his weekly broadcast, President Reagan spoke these words into the microphone: "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you I have signed legislation to outlaw Russia, forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." His words were picked up by at least two radio networks.
- 1985: October 29 BBC interview with Ronald Reagan: asked about the differences he saw between the U.S. and Russia, the President replied: "I'm no linguist, but I've been told that in the Russian language there isn't even a word for freedom." (The word is "svoboda.")
- 1986: Soviet artists and cultural officials criticized Rambo-like American films as an expression of "anti-Russian phobia even more pathological than in the days of McCarthyism." Russian filmmaker Stanislav Rostofsky claimed that on one visit to an American school "a young girl trembled with fury when she heard I was from the Soviet Union, and said she hated Russians."
- 1986: Roy Cohn, who achieved considerable fame and notoriety in the 1950s as an assistant to the communist-witch-hunting Sen. Joseph McCarthy, died, reportedly of AIDS. Cohn, though homosexual, had denied that he was and had denounced such rumors as communist smears.
- 1986: After American journalist Nicholas Daniloff was arrested in Moscow for "spying" and held in custody for two weeks, New York Mayor Edward Koch sent a group of 10

visiting Soviet students storming out of City Hall in fury. "The Soviet government is the pits," said Koch, visibly shocking the students, ranging in age from 10 to 18 years. One 14-year-old student was so outraged he declared: "I don't want to stay in this house. I want to go to the bus and go far away from this place. The mayor is very rude. We never had a worse welcome anywhere." As matters turned out, it appeared that Danilooff had not been completely pure when it came to his newsgathering.

- 1989: After the infamous Chinese crackdown on dissenters in Tiananmen Square in June, the U.S. news media was replete with reports that the governments of Nicaragua, Vietnam and Cuba had expressed their support of the Chinese leadership. Said the *Wall Street Journal*: "Nicaragua, with Cuba and Vietnam, constituted the only countries in the world to approve the Chinese Communists' slaughter of the students in Tiananmen Square." But it was all someone's fabrication; no such support had been expressed by any of the three governments. At that time, as now, there were few, if any, organizations other than the CIA which could manipulate major Western media in such a manner. [Sources for almost all of this section can be found in William Blum, *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire* (2005), chapter 12; or the author can be queried at [bblum6@aol.com](mailto:bblum6@aol.com) ]

**NOTE:** It should be remembered that the worst consequences of anti-communism were not those discussed above. The worst consequences, the ultra-criminal consequences, were the abominable death, destruction, and violation of human rights that we know under various names: Vietnam, Chile, Korea,

Guatemala, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brazil, Greece, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and many others.

**William Blum (1933-2018) was an author, historian, and renowned critic of U.S. foreign policy. He is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* and *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, among others. [This article originally appeared at the Anti-Empire Report, <https://williamblum.org/> .]**

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## JOHN KIRIAKOU: Another Whistleblower in Solitary Confinement

Marty Gottesfeld is a reminder of the Justice Department's determination to silence truth-tellers, writes John Kiriakou.

By **John Kiriakou**

*Special to Consortium News*



Last year I wrote about a whistleblower from New England who took direct action to save a child's life and who paid for it with his freedom. Marty Gottesfeld is now serving 10 years in prison for trying to save Justina Pelletier from abuse at the hands of her doctors at Children's Hospital in Boston.

At the age of 14, Justine developed searing stomach pain and inexplicable digestive problems. Her parents took her to a series of doctors until a metabolic geneticist at Tufts Medical Center diagnosed her with mitochondrial disease, a genetic malady that can lead to weakened muscles, neurological problems and dementia.

Her symptoms worsened over the course of the next 18 months until the pain was too much to bear. She began slurring her speech and was unable to stand. Finally, her parents took her to Boston Children's Hospital, a leading institution affiliated with Harvard University. It was there that doctors said Justina didn't have mitochondrial disease at all. They said she had mental illness and her symptoms were psychosomatic. They took her off her medications, but her parents refused to comply. When they went to take Justina home, they were blocked by hospital guards. The hospital took Justina into "state custody" and reported her parents to state officials for "medical child abuse." It was then that the case went off the rails.

### **Transferred to a Psychiatric Ward**

Justina was transferred to the hospital's child psychiatric ward, where her condition worsened even more. She could no longer stand or walk and her hair fell out. Her toenails were actually ripped out when hospital staff dragged her, accusing her of refusing to walk. Justina was allowed one 20-minute call per week with her parents, but that call was monitored by staff, and they were forbidden from discussing her care. She resorted to making crafts out of paper in which she embedded messages and sent them to her parents. One said simply, "I'm being tortured."

Justina's parents sued Children's Hospital with the full support of the original doctor from Tufts. But the doctors at Children's argued that the only danger to Justina's health was her parents. They said that Justina had been overmedicated and that her parents had ignored her mental illness. A judge agreed, at least for the time being. That

was until an investigation by [The Boston Globe](#) found that Children's Hospital had done this before, to other parents. Indeed, in the previous 18 months, the hospital had removed at least five other children from their parents for "medical child abuse," something that hospital staffers called a "parentectomy."

The story drew the attention of Marty Gottesfeld, a computer-security expert. He was appalled at the treatment to which Justina and her family were being subjected and he decided to act. He initiated a denial of service attack against the Children's Hospital computer system and against the Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, where Justina was later moved. Children's complained that the attack cost the institution \$300,000 to mitigate and \$300,000 in lost donations because it took place during the annual pledge drive. But that attack also served to raise public awareness of Justina's plight and may have been the reason she was finally moved to a facility nearer her family in Connecticut.

Justina's parents kept up the pressure on the hospital, the state, and the judge overseeing the case. Justina and her sister were able to smuggle out a 45-second video in which she implored the judge to let her go home to her family. It was clear that after 16 months in a psychiatric ward her problems were not "in her head." They were in her genes. The original Tufts doctor was right. Justina had mitochondrial disease. The judge finally reversed his decision and sent her home.

Prosecutors, however, focused on Gottesfeld and he was soon arrested. His case was assigned to Judge Nathaniel Gorton,

the same judge who oversaw the harsh case against privacy pioneer Aaron Schwartz, who eventually committed suicide under the weight of his spurious federal charges. Gorton is known as a hanging judge; he proved that with Gottesfeld's sentence.

### **Reporting from Prison**

Gottesfeld has tried to make good use of his time since he entered the "justice" system. He has reported on waste, fraud, abuse, and illegality in the Justice Department; he's written about the corruption and conflict of interest of his judge; and he has spoken out against intolerable prison conditions. His punishment has been swift and severe.

Last week Gottesfeld was transferred to the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, New York. This is the same prison that had a power outage last month resulting in conditions so severe that they violated the human rights of the prisoners there and made international news. And to make matters worse, Marty was placed in solitary confinement and is now scheduled to be transferred to something called a Communications Management Unit (CMU).

A CMU puts onerous controls on a prisoner's ability to communicate with the outside world. I was in a "modified CMU" when I was at the Federal Correctional Institution at Loretto, Pennsylvania. With a modified CMU, both my incoming and outgoing mail were read, scanned, and kept in the prison's Investigative Unit. My phone calls were all monitored in real time, and I was subjected to routine and regular "shake downs," where the guards confiscated whatever it was that I happened to be writing at any given time.

Marty's experience will likely be worse. He has been covering Justice Department malfeasance for years now at such sites as *The Western Journal*, *Red State*, *World News Daily*, and now *The Intercept*. But CMU placement will deny him any access to the press whatsoever. It will silence him. This is, of course, a violation of his constitutional right to freedom of speech. But the Justice Department has only to say that Marty's journalism is a "threat to the continuing operation of the institution" to justify this loss of rights. Solitary confinement makes everything even worse.

I called the Justice Department to ask several questions. Why was Marty Gottesfeld transferred to MDC Brooklyn and not directly to a low-security prison? Why was he placed in solitary confinement? And why is he being designated for a CMU? The response was short: No comment.

The Gottesfeld experience should be a reminder for all of us. The Justice Department will stop at nothing to silence truth-tellers. It doesn't want people to know about crooked judges and prosecutors, unsanitary and unhealthy conditions, animal-grade food, and the violation of constitutional rights. It doesn't matter who the president is. They all do it. We just have to keep up the fight.

**John Kiriakou is a former CIA counterterrorism officer and a former senior investigator with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. John became the sixth whistleblower indicted by the Obama administration under the Espionage Act—a law designed to punish spies. He served 23 months in prison as a result of his attempts to oppose the Bush administration's torture program.**

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## Misguided Spying and the New Zealand Massacre

While intelligence agencies were looking in all the wrong places, a conspicuous target slipped through the cracks, writes Suzie Dawson.

**By [Suzie Dawson](#)**

*Special to Consortium News*



**N**ow that the bodies of 49 innocent human beings are lying in a Christchurch, New Zealand, morgue – gunned down [by a heavily armed terrorist](#) – New Zealand media are asking the obvious questions: why didn't our intelligence agencies know there were xenophobic, murderous, white supremacists on the loose in Christchurch?

“Questions are being asked of the nation's security services in the wake of a mass shooting described as ‘one of New Zealand's darkest days,” [Stuff.co.nz reports](#) and quotes a University of Waikato professor of international law, Alexander Gillespie, as saying: ‘If it's a cell we need to

ask why weren't they detected, because that's why we have security services and it may be that those services have been looking under the wrong rocks.' "

According to the same article, in response to the terrorist attack, "A crisis meeting of national security agencies was held at Police National Headquarters in Wellington after the shooting."

In the NZ Herald, veteran intelligence reporter David Fisher asked many pertinent questions in an opinion piece titled "Christchurch massacre – what did we miss and who missed it?"

"We need answers," says Fisher. "The NZSIS [New Zealand's equivalent of the FBI] – and its electronic counterpart, the Government Communications Security Bureau – have more funding than ever, and almost double the staff numbers they had six years ago. They also now have the most powerful legislation they have ever had."

We know thanks to the findings of an inquiry by the State Services Commission last December that as many as a dozen government agencies, including the NZ Police, were too busy squandering their resources spying on NGOs such as Greenpeace NZ; political parties such as the New Zealand Green Party and then-Internet Party aligned Mana Movement, as well as on anti-TPP protesters and activists such as myself.

As if that weren't egregious enough, they were even spying on Christchurch earthquake insurance claimants and historical victims of institutional state child abuse.

An ex-cabinet minister and now chief executive of Greenpeace

New Zealand, Russel Norman called it “New Zealand’s Watergate moment.”

The government contractor engaged to perform the on-the-ground victimization of targets is the notorious Thompson & Clark Investigations Limited – a company I had been publicly naming since April of 2012 for having targeted my independent media team and me. A company that we now know was illegally granted access to New Zealand police databases on thousands of occasions, and that has been linked to the NZ Security Intelligence Services.

Their nefarious activities are not isolated to the private sector. The NZ Police have also been found to have made thousands of warrantless data requests.

In 2014 acclaimed New Zealand investigative journalist Nicky Hager – himself judged by a court to have been wrongfully targeted by the NZ Police as a result of his reporting – revealed in his seminal book “Dirty Politics” that a political network that went as high as the Office of the prime minister of New Zealand– under ex-Prime Minister John Key, who was then minister in charge of the NZ security services – had targeted dozens of journalists, as well as other political targets and issue-based dissenters.

What the police and intelligence agencies of New Zealand must recognize is thus: Journalism is not terrorism. Non-violent pro-democratic activism is not terrorism. Dissent is not terrorism.

Arming yourself with weapons and violently attacking innocent people is terrorism.

## Holding to Account

Agencies that for too long have been blurring the distinction between what is and isn't terrorism, must now be held to account.

I was spied on for my independent journalism and my legal, pro-democratic activism despite having no history of violence, no access to weapons, no weapons training and no extremist ideological beliefs.

Internet entrepreneur Kim Dotcom, founder of the Internet Party of New Zealand of which I am party president, was spied on by both the New Zealand and United States governments for as little as a suspected civil violation, alleged copyright infringement.

On Friday, the mania and obsessive hatred of an actual terrorist in Christchurch in possession of automatic weapons, culminated in his posting a racist manifesto online and then live streaming his hate crime in real time. Yet he was never spied on.



While the intelligence agencies were looking in all the wrong places, someone who should have been a target slipped

through the cracks.

Let that sink in.

Some will say that as injured parties of the intelligence agencies, we just have an axe to grind and are exploiting this tragedy to criticize them.

But as always, it is those very agencies that have failed their charges, who will be first in line to exploit the news cycle in a quest to justify the provision of ever more money, more power, more resources and ultimately, the ability for them to engage in ever more spying.

The question is, how will they choose to employ those gains once they are inevitably granted?

In the absence of meaningful intervention by oversight bodies or an official inquiry – and if their recent history is any measure – the answer may well be: poorly, undemocratically, and unjustly.

**Suzie Dawson is a Kiwi journalist, activist and current president of the Internet Party of New Zealand. She specializes in writing about whistleblowers, intelligence agencies, geopolitics and technology. Her work has been shared by WikiLeaks for the last five years running, as well as by other noteworthy figures. Suzie is the organizer of the #Unity4J movement in support of Julian Assange. Journalists who write truth pay a high price to do so. If you respect and value this work, please consider supporting Suzie's efforts via Bitcoin donation [at this link](#). Thank you! Twitter: [@Suzi3D](#) Official Website: [Suzi3d.com](#)**

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## VIPS: Mueller's Forensics-Free Findings

The final Mueller report should be graded "incomplete," says VIPS, whose forensic work proves the speciousness of the story that DNC emails published by WikiLeaks came from Russian hacking.

March 13, 2019

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** The Attorney General

**FROM:** Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

**SUBJECT:** Mueller's Forensics-Free Findings

### **Executive Summary**

Media reports are predicting that Special Counsel Robert Mueller is about to give you the findings of his probe into any links and/or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump. If Mueller gives you his "completed" report anytime soon, it should be graded "incomplete." Major deficiencies include depending on a DNC-hired cybersecurity company for forensics and failure to consult with those who have done original forensic work, including us and the independent forensic investigators with whom we have examined the data. We stand ready to help.

We veteran intelligence professionals (VIPS) have done

enough detailed forensic work to prove the speciousness of the prevailing story that the DNC emails published by WikiLeaks came from Russian hacking. Given the paucity of evidence to support that story, we believe Mueller may choose to finesse this key issue and leave everyone hanging. That would help sustain the widespread belief that Trump owes his victory to President Vladimir Putin, and strengthen the hand of those who pay little heed to the unpredictable consequences of an increase in tensions with nuclear-armed Russia.

There is an overabundance of “assessments” but a lack of hard evidence to support that prevailing narrative. We believe that there are enough people of integrity in the Department of Justice to prevent the outright manufacture or distortion of “evidence,” particularly if they become aware that experienced scientists have completed independent forensic study that yield very different conclusions. We know only too well – and did our best to expose – how our former colleagues in the intelligence community manufactured fraudulent “evidence” of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

We have scrutinized publicly available physical data – the “trail” that every cyber operation leaves behind. And we have had support from highly experienced independent forensic investigators who, like us, have no axes to grind. We can prove that the conventional-wisdom story about Russian-hacking-DNC-emails-for-WikiLeaks is false. Drawing largely on the unique expertise of two VIPS scientists who worked for a combined total of 70 years at the National Security Agency and became Technical Directors there, we

have regularly published our findings. But we have been deprived of a hearing in mainstream media – an experience painfully reminiscent of what we had to endure when we exposed the corruption of intelligence before the attack on Iraq 16 years ago.

This time, with the principles of physics and forensic science to rely on, we are able to adduce solid evidence exposing mistakes and distortions in the dominant story. We offer you below – as a kind of *aide-memoire*– a discussion of some of the key factors related to what has become known as “Russia-gate.” And we include our most recent findings drawn from forensic work on data associated with WikiLeaks’ publication of the DNC emails.

We do not claim our conclusions are “irrefutable and undeniable,” a la Colin Powell at the UN before the Iraq war. Our judgments, however, are based on the scientific method – not “assessments.” We decided to put this memorandum together in hopes of ensuring that you hear that directly from us.

If the Mueller team remains reluctant to review our work – or even to interview willing witnesses with direct knowledge, like WikiLeaks’ Julian Assange and former UK Ambassador Craig Murray, we fear that many of those yearning earnestly for the truth on Russia-gate will come to the corrosive conclusion that the Mueller investigation was a sham.

In sum, we are concerned that, at this point, an incomplete Mueller report will fall far short of the commitment made by then Acting Attorney General Rod Rosenstein “to ensure a

full and thorough investigation,” when he appointed Mueller in May 2017. Again, we are at your disposal.

## **Discussion**

The centerpiece accusation of Kremlin “interference” in the 2016 presidential election was the charge that Russia hacked Democratic National Committee emails and gave them to WikiLeaks to embarrass Secretary Hillary Clinton and help Mr. Trump win. The weeks following the election witnessed multiple leak-based media allegations to that effect. These culminated on January 6, 2017 in an evidence-light, rump report misleadingly labeled “Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA).” Prepared by “handpicked analysts” from only three of the 17 U.S. intelligence agencies (CIA, FBI, and NSA), the assessment expressed “high confidence” in the Russia-hacking-to-WikiLeaks story, but lacked so much as a hint that the authors had sought access to independent forensics to support their “assessment.”

The media immediately awarded the ICA the status of Holy Writ, choosing to overlook an assortment of banal, full-disclosure-type caveats included in the assessment itself – such as:

“When Intelligence Community analysts use words such as ‘we assess’ or ‘we judge,’ they are conveying an analytic assessment or judgment. ...Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact. ... Assessments are based on collected information, which is often incomplete or fragmentary ... High confidence in a judgment does not imply that the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong.”

To their credit, however, the authors of the ICA did make a highly germane point in introductory remarks on “cyber incident attribution.” They noted: ***“The nature of cyberspace makes attribution of cyber operations difficult but not impossible. Every kind of cyber operation – malicious or not – leaves a trail.”*** [Emphasis added.]

## **Forensics**

The imperative is to get on that “trail” – and quickly, before red herrings can be swept across it. The best way to establish attribution is to apply the methodology and processes of forensic science. Intrusions into computers leave behind discernible physical data that can be examined scientifically by forensic experts. Risk to “sources and methods” is normally not a problem.

Direct access to the actual computers is the first requirement – the more so when an intrusion is termed “an act of war” and blamed on a nuclear-armed foreign government (the words used by the late Sen. John McCain and other senior officials). In testimony to the House Intelligence Committee in March 2017, former FBI Director James Comey admitted that he did not insist on physical access to the DNC computers even though, as he conceded, “best practices” dictate direct access.

In June 2017, Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Richard Burr asked Comey whether he ever had “access to the actual hardware that was hacked.” Comey answered, “In the case of the DNC ... we did not have access to the devices themselves. We got relevant forensic information from a private party, a high-class entity, that had done the work. ...” Sen. Burr

followed up: “But no content? Isn’t content an important part of the forensics from a counterintelligence standpoint?” Comey: “It is, although what was briefed to me by my folks ... is that they had gotten the information from the private party that they needed to understand the intrusion by the spring of 2016.”

The “private party/high-class entity” to which Comey refers is CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm of checkered reputation and multiple conflicts of interest, including very close ties to a number of key anti-Russian organizations. Comey indicated that the DNC hired CrowdStrike in the spring of 2016.

Given the stakes involved in the Russia-gate investigation – including a possible impeachment battle and greatly increased tension between Russia and the U.S. – it is difficult to understand why Comey did not move quickly to seize the computer hardware so the FBI could perform an independent examination of what quickly became the major predicate for investigating election interference by Russia. Fortunately, enough data remain on the forensic “trail” to arrive at evidence-anchored conclusions. The work we have done shows the prevailing narrative to be false. We have been suggesting this for over two years. Recent forensic work significantly strengthens that conclusion.

## **We Do Forensics**

Recent forensic examination of the Wikileaks DNC files shows they were created on 23, 25 and 26 May 2016. (On June 12, Julian Assange announced he had them; WikiLeaks published them on July 22.) We recently discovered that the files

reveal a FAT (File Allocation Table) system property. ***This shows that the data had been transferred to an external storage device, such as a thumb drive, before WikiLeaks posted them.***

FAT is a simple file system named for its method of organization, the File Allocation Table. It is used for storage only and is not related to internet transfers like hacking. Were WikiLeaks to have received the DNC files via a hack, the last modified times on the files would be a random mixture of odd-and even-ending numbers.

Why is that important? The evidence lies in the “last modified” time stamps on the Wikileaks files. When a file is stored under the FAT file system the software rounds the time to the nearest even-numbered second. Every single one of the time stamps in the DNC files on WikiLeaks’ site ends in an even number.

We have examined 500 DNC email files stored on the Wikileaks site. All 500 files end in an even number—2, 4, 6, 8 or 0. If those files had been hacked over the Internet, there would be an equal probability of the time stamp ending in an odd number. The random probability that FAT was not used is 1 chance in 2 to the 500th power. Thus, these data show that the DNC emails posted by WikiLeaks went through a storage device, like a thumb drive, and were physically moved before Wikileaks posted the emails on the World Wide Web.

This finding alone is enough to raise reasonable doubts, for example, about Mueller’s indictment of 12 Russian intelligence officers for hacking the DNC emails given to WikiLeaks. A defense attorney could easily use the forensics

to argue that someone copied the DNC files to a storage device like a USB thumb drive and got them physically to WikiLeaks – not electronically via a hack.

## **Role of NSA**

For more than two years, we strongly suspected that the DNC emails were copied/leaked in that way, not hacked. And we said so. We remain intrigued by the apparent failure of NSA's dragnet, collect-it-all approach – including “cast-iron” coverage of WikiLeaks – to provide forensic evidence (as opposed to “assessments”) as to how the DNC emails got to WikiLeaks and who sent them. Well before the telling evidence drawn from the use of FAT, other technical evidence led us to conclude that the DNC emails were not hacked over the network, but rather physically moved over, say, the Atlantic Ocean.

Is it possible that NSA has not yet been asked to produce the collected packets of DNC email data claimed to have been hacked by Russia? Surely, this should be done before Mueller competes his investigation. NSA has taps on all the transoceanic cables leaving the U.S. and would almost certainly have such packets if they exist. (The detailed slides released by Edward Snowden actually show the routes that trace the packets.)

The forensics we examined shed no direct light on who may have been behind the leak. The only thing we know for sure is that the person had to have direct access to the DNC computers or servers in order to copy the emails. The apparent lack of evidence from the most likely source, NSA, regarding a hack may help explain the FBI's curious

preference for forensic data from CrowdStrike. No less puzzling is why Comey would choose to call CrowdStrike a “high-class entity.”

Comey was one of the intelligence chiefs briefing President Obama on January 5, 2017 on the “Intelligence Community Assessment,” which was then briefed to President-elect Trump and published the following day. That Obama found a key part of the ICA narrative less than persuasive became clear at his last press conference (January 18), when he told the media, “The conclusions of the intelligence community with respect to the Russian hacking were not conclusive ... as to how ‘the DNC emails that were leaked’ got to WikiLeaks.

### **Is Guccifer 2.0 a Fraud?**

There is further compelling technical evidence that undermines the claim that the DNC emails were downloaded over the internet as a result of a spearphishing attack. William Binney, one of VIPS’ two former Technical Directors at NSA, along with other former intelligence community experts, examined files posted by Guccifer 2.0 and discovered that those files could not have been downloaded over the internet. It is a simple matter of mathematics and physics.

There was a flurry of activity after Julian Assange announced on June 12, 2016: “We have emails relating to Hillary Clinton which are pending publication.” On June 14, DNC contractor CrowdStrike announced that malware was found on the DNC server and claimed there was evidence it was injected by Russians. On June 15, the Guccifer 2.0 persona emerged on the public stage, affirmed the DNC statement,

claimed to be responsible for hacking the DNC, claimed to be a WikiLeaks source, ***and posted a document that forensics show was synthetically tainted with "Russian fingerprints."***

Our suspicions about the Guccifer 2.0 persona grew when G-2 claimed responsibility for a "hack" of the DNC on July 5, 2016, which released DNC data that was rather bland compared to what WikiLeaks published 17 days later (showing how the DNC had tipped the primary scales against Sen. Bernie Sanders). As VIPS reported in a wrap-up Memorandum for the President on July 24, 2017 (titled "Intel Vets Challenge 'Russia Hack' Evidence)," forensic examination of the July 5, 2016 cyber intrusion into the DNC showed it NOT to be a hack by the Russians or by anyone else, but rather a copy onto an external storage device. It seemed a good guess that the July 5 intrusion was a contrivance to preemptively taint anything WikiLeaks might later publish from the DNC, by "showing" it came from a "Russian hack." WikiLeaks published the DNC emails on July 22, three days before the Democratic convention.

As we prepared our July 24 memo for the President, we chose to begin by taking Guccifer 2.0 at face value; i. e., that the documents he posted on July 5, 2016 were obtained via a hack over the Internet. Binney conducted a forensic examination of the metadata contained in the posted documents and compared that metadata with the known capacity of Internet connection speeds at the time in the U.S. This analysis showed a transfer rate as high as 49.1 megabytes per second, which is much faster than was possible from a remote online Internet connection. The 49.1 megabytes speed coincided, though, with the rate that copying onto a thumb

drive could accommodate.

Binney, assisted by colleagues with relevant technical expertise, then extended the examination and ran various forensic tests from the U.S. to the Netherlands, Albania, Belgrade and the UK. The fastest Internet rate obtained – from a data center in New Jersey to a data center in the UK – was 12 megabytes per second, which is less than a fourth of the capacity typical of a copy onto a thumb drive.

The findings from the examination of the Guccifer 2.0 data and the WikiLeaks data does not indicate who copied the information to an external storage device (probably a thumb drive). But our examination does disprove that G.2 hacked into the DNC on July 5, 2016. Forensic evidence for the Guccifer 2.0 data adds to other evidence that the DNC emails were not taken by an internet spearphishing attack. The data breach was local. The emails were copied from the network.

### **Presidential Interest**

After VIPS' July 24, 2017 Memorandum for the President, Binney, one of its principal authors, was invited to share his insights with Mike Pompeo, CIA Director at the time. When Binney arrived in Pompeo's office at CIA Headquarters on October 24, 2017 for an hour-long discussion, the director made no secret of the reason for the invitation: "You are here because the President told me that if I really wanted to know about Russian hacking I needed to talk with you."

Binney warned Pompeo – to stares of incredulity – that his people should stop lying about the Russian hacking. Binney then started to explain the VIPS findings that had caught

President Trump's attention. Pompeo asked Binney if he would talk to the FBI and NSA. Binney agreed, but has not been contacted by those agencies. With that, Pompeo had done what the President asked. There was no follow-up.

### **Confronting James Clapper on Forensics**

We, the *hoi polloi*, do not often get a chance to talk to people like Pompeo – and still less to the former intelligence chiefs who are the leading purveyors of the prevailing Russia-gate narrative. An exception came on November 13, when former National Intelligence Director James Clapper came to the Carnegie Endowment in Washington to hawk his memoir. Answering a question during the Q&A about Russian “hacking” and NSA, Clapper said:

“Well, I have talked with NSA a lot ... And in my mind, I spent a lot of time in the SIGINT business, ***the forensic evidence was overwhelming about what the Russians had done.*** There's absolutely no doubt in my mind whatsoever.”  
[Emphasis added]

Clapper added: “... as a private citizen, understanding the magnitude of what the Russians did and the number of citizens in our country they reached and the different mechanisms that, by which they reached them, to me it stretches credulity to think they didn't have a profound impact on election on the outcome of the election.”

(A transcript of the interesting Q&A can be found [here](#) and a commentary on Clapper's performance at Carnegie, as well as on his longstanding lack of credibility, is [here](#).)

Normally soft-spoken Ron Wyden, Democratic senator from

Oregon, lost his patience with Clapper last week when he learned that Clapper is still denying that he lied to the Senate Intelligence Committee about the extent of NSA surveillance of U.S. citizens. In an unusual outburst, Wyden said: "James Clapper needs to stop making excuses for lying to the American people about mass surveillance. To be clear: I sent him the question in advance. I asked him to correct the record afterward. He chose to let the lie stand."

The materials brought out by Edward Snowden in June 2013 showed Clapper to have lied under oath to the committee on March 12, 2013; he was, nevertheless, allowed to stay on as Director of National Intelligence for three and half more years. Clapper fancies himself an expert on Russia, telling *Meet the Press* May 28, 2017 that Russia's history shows that Russians are "typically, almost genetically driven to co-opt, penetrate, gain favor, whatever."

Clapper ought to be asked about the "forensics" he said were "overwhelming about what the Russians had done." And that, too, before Mueller completes his investigation.

*For the steering group, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity:*

**William Binney**, former NSA Technical Director for World Geopolitical & Military Analysis; Co-founder of NSA's Signals Intelligence Automation Research Center (ret.)

**Richard H. Black**, Senator of Virginia, 13th District; Colonel US Army (ret.); Former Chief, Criminal Law Division, Office of the Judge Advocate General, the Pentagon (associate VIPS)

**Bogdan Dzakovic**, former Team Leader of Federal Air Marshals and Red Team, FAA Security (ret.) (associate VIPS)

**Philip Giraldi**, CIA, Operations Officer (ret.)

**Mike Gravel**, former Adjutant, top secret control officer, Communications Intelligence Service; special agent of the Counter Intelligence Corps and former United States Senator

**James George Jatras**, former U.S. diplomat and former foreign policy adviser to Senate leadership (Associate VIPS)

**Larry C. Johnson**, former CIA and State Department Counter Terrorism officer

**John Kiriakou**, former CIA Counterterrorism Officer and former senior investigator, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

**Karen Kwiatkowski**, former Lt. Col., US Air Force (ret.), at Office of Secretary of Defense watching the manufacture of lies on Iraq, 2001-2003

**Edward Loomis**, Cryptologic Computer Scientist, former Technical Director at NSA (ret.)

**David MacMichael**, Ph.D., former senior estimates officer, National Intelligence Council (ret.)

**Ray McGovern**, former US Army infantry/intelligence officer & CIA analyst; CIA Presidential briefer (ret.)

**Elizabeth Murray**, former Deputy National Intelligence Officer for the Near East, National Intelligence Council & CIA political analyst (ret.)

**Todd E. Pierce**, MAJ, US Army Judge Advocate (ret.)

**Peter Van Buren**, US Department of State, Foreign Service Officer (ret.) (associate VIPS)

**Sarah G. Wilton**, CDR, USNR, (ret.); Defense Intelligence Agency (ret.)

**Kirk Wiebe**, former Senior Analyst, SIGINT Automation Research Center, NSA

**Ann Wright**, retired U.S. Army reserve colonel and former U.S. diplomat who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Iraq War

**Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)** is made up of former intelligence officers, diplomats, military officers and congressional staffers. The organization, founded in 2002, was among the first critics of Washington's justifications for launching a war against Iraq. VIPS advocates a US foreign and national security policy based on genuine national interests rather than contrived threats promoted for largely political reasons. An [archive](#) of VIPS memoranda is available at [Consortiumnews.com](http://Consortiumnews.com).

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## US Regime Change Blueprint Proposed Venezuelan Electricity Blackouts as 'Watershed Event'

The group that trained Juan Guaidó and his allies laid out plans for galvanizing public unrest in a 2010 memo, Max Blumenthal reports for Grayzone.

By [Max Blumenthal](#)

## Grayzone



A [September 2010 memo](#) by a U.S.-funded soft power organization that helped train Venezuelan coup leader Juan Guaidó and his allies identifies the potential collapse of the country's electrical sector as “a watershed event” that “would likely have the impact of galvanizing public unrest in a way that no opposition group could ever hope to generate.”

The memo has special relevance today as Guaidó moves to exploit nationwide blackouts caused by a major failure at the Simon Bolivar Hydroelectric Plant at Guri dam – a crisis that Venezuela's government blames on U.S. sabotage.

It was authored by [Srdja Popovic](#) of the Center for Applied Non-Violent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), a Belgrade-based “democracy promotion” organization funded by the U.S. that has trained thousands of U.S.-aligned youth activists in countries where the West seeks regime change.

This group reportedly hosted Guaidó and the key leaders of his Popular Will party for a series of training sessions, fashioning them into a “Generation 2007” determined to foment resistance to then-President Hugo Chavez and sabotage his plans to implement “21st century socialism” in Venezuela.

In the 2010 memo, published by WikiLeaks, CANVAS's Popovic declared, “A key to Chavez's current weakness is the decline in the electricity sector.” Popovic explicitly identified the Simon Bolivar Hydroelectric Plant as a friction point, emphasizing that “water levels at the Guri dam are dropping, and Chavez has been unable to reduce consumption

sufficiently to compensate for the deteriorating industry.”

Speculating on a “grave possibility that some 70 percent of the country’s electricity grid could go dark as soon as April 2010,” the CANVAS leader stated that “an opposition group would be best served to take advantage of the situation and spin it against Chavez and towards their needs.”

A key to Chavez’s current weakness is the decline in the electricity sector. There is the grave possibility that some 70 percent of the country’s electricity grid could go dark as soon as April 2010. Water levels at the Guri dam are dropping, and Chavez has been unable to reduce consumption sufficiently to compensate for the deteriorating industry. This could be the watershed event, as there is little that Chavez can do to protect the poor from the failure of that system. This would likely have the impact of galvanizing public unrest in a way that no opposition group could ever hope to generate. At that point in time, an opposition group would be best served to take advantage of the situation and spin it against Chavez and towards their needs. Alliances with the military could be critical because in such a situation of massive public unrest and rejection of the presidency, malcontent sectors of the military will likely decide to intervene, but only if they believe they have sufficient support. This has been the pattern in the past three coup attempts. Where the military thought it had enough support, there was a failure in the public to respond positively (or the public responded in the negative), so the coup failed.

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Flash forward to March 2019, and the scenario outlined by Popovic is playing out almost exactly as he had imagined.

On March 7, just days after Guaidó return from Colombia, where he participated in the failed and demonstrably violent Feb. 23 attempt to ram a shipment of U.S. aid across the Venezuelan border, the Simon Bolivar Hydroelectric Plant experienced a major and still unexplained collapse.

Days later, electricity remains sporadic across the country. Meanwhile, Guaidó has done everything he can “to take advantage of the situation and spin it” against President Nicolas Maduro – just as his allies were urged to do over eight years before by CANVAS.

### **Rubio Vows ‘Period of Suffering’**

Venezuela has placed the blame squarely on Washington,

accusing it of sabotage through a cyber-attack on its electrical infrastructure. Key players in the U.S.-directed coup attempt have done little to dispel the accusation.

In a tweet on March 8, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo framed the electricity outage as a pivotal stage in U.S. plans for regime change:

The power outage and the devastation hurting ordinary Venezuelans is not because of the USA. It's not because of Colombia. It's not Ecuador or Brazil, Europe or anywhere else. Power shortages and starvation are the result of the Maduro regime's incompetence.

– Secretary Pompeo (@SecPompeo) March 8, 2019

At noon on March 7, during a hearing on Venezuela at the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, Sen. Marco Rubio explicitly called for the U.S. to stir “widespread unrest,” declaring that it “needs to happen” in order to achieve regime change.

“Venezuela is going to enter a period of suffering no nation in our hemisphere has confronted in modern history,” Rubio proclaimed.

Around 5 p.m., the Simon Bolivar Hydroelectric Plant experienced a total and still unexplained collapse. Residents of Caracas and throughout Venezuela were immediately plunged into darkness.

At 5:18 p.m., a clearly excited Rubio took to Twitter to announce the blackout and claim that “backup generators have failed.” It was unclear how Rubio had obtained such specific information so soon after the outage occurred. According to Jorge Rodriguez, the communications minister of

Venezuela, local authorities did not know if backup generators had failed at the time of Rubio's tweet.

Back in Caracas, Guaidó immediately set out to exploit the situation, just as his CANVAS trainers had advised over eight years before. Taking to Twitter just over an hour after Rubio, Guaidó declared, "the light will return when the usurpation [of Maduro] ends." Like Pompeo, the self-declared president framed the blackouts as part of a regime change strategy, not an accident or error.

Two days later, Guaidó was at the center of an opposition rally he convened in affluent eastern Caracas, bellowing into a megaphone: "Article 187 when the time comes. We need to be in the streets, mobilized. It depends on us, not on anybody else."

Article 187 establishes the right of the National Assembly "to authorize the use of Venezuelan military missions abroad or foreign in the country."

Upon his mention of the constitutional article, Guaidó's supporters responded, "Intervention! Intervention!"

## **Exploiting Crisis**

As Dan Cohen and I reported here at the Grayzone, Guaidó's rise to prominence – and the coup plot that he has been appointed to oversee – is the product of a decade-long project overseen by the Belgrade-based CANVAS outfit.

CANVAS is a spinoff of Otpor, a Serbian protest group founded by Srdja Popovic in 1998 at the University of Belgrade. Otpor, which means "resistance" in Serbian, was the student group that worked alongside U.S. soft power

organizations to mobilize the protests that eventually toppled the late Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

CANVAS has been funded largely through the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA cut-out that functions as the U.S. government's main arm of promoting regime change.

According to leaked internal emails from Stratfor, an intelligence firm known as the "shadow CIA," CANVAS "may have also received CIA funding and training during the 1999/2000 anti-Milosevic struggle."

A leaked email from a Stratfor staffer noted that after they ousted Milosevic, "the kids who ran OTPOR grew up, got suits and designed CANVAS... or in other words an 'export-a-revolution' group that sowed the seeds for a NUMBER of color revolutions. They are still hooked into U.S. funding and basically go around the world trying to topple dictators and autocratic governments (ones that U.S. does not like ;)."

Stratfor subsequently revealed that CANVAS "turned its attention to Venezuela" in 2005, after training opposition movements that led pro-NATO regime change operations across Eastern Europe.

In September 2010, as Venezuela headed for a parliamentary election, CANVAS produced a series of memos outlining the plans they had hatched with "non-formal actors" like Guaidó and his cadre of student activists to bring down Chavez. "This is the first opportunity for the opposition to get back into a position of power," Popovic wrote at the time.

In his memo on electricity outages, Popovic highlighted the importance of the Venezuelan military in achieving regime change. "Alliances with the military could be critical

because in such a situation of massive public unrest and rejection of the presidency,” the CANVAS founder wrote, “malcontent sectors of the military will likely decide to intervene, but only if they believe they have sufficient support.”

While the scenario Popovic envisioned failed to materialize in 2010, it perfectly describes the situation gripping Venezuela today as an opposition leader cultivated by CANVAS seeks to spin the crisis against Maduro while calling on the military to break ranks.

Since the *Grayzone* exposed the deep ties between CANVAS and Guaidó’s Popular Will party, Popovic has attempted to publicly distance himself from his record of training Venezuela’s opposition.

Today, however, Popovic’s 2010 memo on exploiting electricity outages reads like a blueprint for the strategy that Guaidó and his patrons in Washington have actively implemented. Whether or not the blackout is the result of external sabotage, it represents the “watershed event” that CANVAS has prepared its Venezuelan cadres for.

**Max Blumenthal is an award-winning journalist and the author of books including best-selling “Republican Gomorrah,” “Goliath,” “The Fifty One Day War” and “The Management of Savagery,” which will be published in March 2019 by Verso. He has also produced numerous print articles for an array of publications, many video reports and several documentaries including “Killing Gaza” and “Je Ne Suis Pas Charlie.” Blumenthal founded the *Grayzone* Project in 2015 to shine a journalistic light on America’s state of perpetual**

war and its dangerous domestic repercussions.

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## A Tale of Two Incarcerated Women

Chelsea Manning has done a great service in finally stripping away the last vestige of excuse from the figures who refuse to support Julian Assange, says Craig Murray.

**By Craig Murray**

[CraigMurray.org.uk](http://CraigMurray.org.uk)



**O**n International Women's Day on March 8 Chelsea Manning was imprisoned yet again, this time for refusing to testify against Julian Assange before a Grand Jury. Chelsea has already suffered over seven years of total imprisonment – no American had ever previously spent more than three years in jail for releasing government secrets to the public, in a land which had historically valued free speech.

I am in awe of Chelsea's courage in refusing to testify, and shocked at a system that imprisons somebody for contempt of court for maintaining dignified silence.

Chelsea has also done a great service in finally stripping away the last vestige of excuse from the figures who refuse to support Julian Assange, pretending that they do not believe he faces extradition to the United States, and that the legal issue is not about Wkileaks' right to publish.

The potential charges in Sweden – always based on quite ludicrous accusations – were dropped years ago after he was finally interviewed in the Ecuadorean Embassy by Swedish

police and prosecutors, and it became very plain indeed there was no viable case against him.

Chelsea has gone to prison for refusing to participate in the prosecution of Wikileaks for publishing materials that revealed war crimes in the American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Chelsea is a whistleblower, not a publisher. Assange is a publisher, not a whistleblower. If Assange can be prosecuted for publishing official secrets, then so can every newspaper editor or television editor involved in the receipt of whistleblower material.

There is a massive, a fundamental, media freedom issue at stake here. Even so, the MSM in the UK do not even have the guts to state the truth about what causes Julian to be confined to the Ecuadorean Embassy, let alone to support his right to publish.

### **Meanwhile in Iran**

Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe is in jail in Iran for spying for the British. She is certainly not an MI6 officer, and I can't see that she would have sufficient access to information to make her of much use as an agent (as MI6 calls its informants). That she was involved in training Iranian journalists or citizen journalists in ways the Iranian government did not like is much more probable, but does not amount to espionage. Even if she were some kind of low level informant to MI6 (which I doubt), the Iranian authorities have sufficiently made their point and it is time to let her go.

The British government's attitude to this case has been particularly interesting and extremely unusual. I cannot

criticise them for the things they have done, because they are the things I used to get frustrated with them for never doing. But their handling of this case is truly out of the ordinary.

The UK allows dual citizenship. It has been longstanding Foreign Office policy that the UK does not give consular protection to UK dual nationals in the country where they are also a national. If the other state does not allow dual citizenship, it might not recognise any British standing in the matter. But there is another compelling reason for the standard policy of not assisting in these circumstances.

When working in Embassies, I used to get infuriated by cases where I wished to help people but was not allowed to, because they were dual citizens. It was explained to me, that if in Nigeria alone we accepted as consular cases all the British/Nigerian dual nationals in Nigerian jails, that would already double the FCO's entire consular caseload worldwide. To accept dual nationals as consular cases everywhere in their other homeland would increase consular work by a large multiple and require a very large increase in FCO resources.

I nevertheless always felt we could do more. That the British government had, prior to yesterday, already done so much to try to help Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe, even though she was an Iranian dual national in Iran, was already extremely unusual. That the UK has now "adopted" the case, raising it to the level of a state dispute, is something not just unusual, but which I don't think has happened since the First World War. Please note this is not the same process as granting Zaghari Ratcliffe herself diplomatic status, which

has not been done.

Again, I can't criticise the FCO for this, because adoption is something I had urged them to do in a past case while I was on the inside, (shout out to my friend John Carmichael), again being told by the FCO it was not possible as we never do it.

Whether the move is effective or wise in this case, is quite another question. It seems to me likely the Iranians will take it as confirmation that she is a spy. I would urge the Iranian government to take this course; they should now declare the the adoption of the case as a state dispute proves that Zaghari Ratcliffe is a spy, and having been proven right before the world, they will let her go as an example of mercy and compassion.

There are two fundamental points here. The first is that Iran has been subjected for years to crippling sanctions and an international campaign of hate spread by western government propaganda and their MSM. Western governments have aligned themselves with Saudi and Israeli sponsored brutal proxy wars against Shia communities across the Middle East, which look to Iran for protection. If the Iranian government is defensive and suspicious, is that really surprising? The week after the British government declared Hezbollah, the political and security organisation of Lebanese Shias, to be nothing but a terrorist organisation, do the Tories really think the Iranians will be looking kindly on them and their demands over Zaghari Ratcliffe?

The second point is that the entire purpose of the state "adopting" a case, is to make available the dispute

resolution mechanisms which operate between states. But the UK only a few days ago repudiated the International Court of Justice, the final arbiter of such disputes, over the Chagos Islands. As the UK shows total contempt for international law, this attempt to access its remedies will be met with derision by the wider international community.

**Craig Murray is an author, broadcaster and human rights activist. He was British Ambassador to Uzbekistan from August 2002 to October 2004 and Rector of the University of Dundee from 2007 to 2010.**

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## The Prisoner Says 'No' to Big Brother

The refusal by Australia's foreign ministry to honor the UN's declaration that Julian Assange is the victim of "arbitrary detention" is a shameful breach of the letter and spirit of international law, says John Pilger.

By John Pilger  
in Sydney, Australia



Whenever I visit Julian Assange, we meet in a room he knows too well. There is a bare table and pictures of Ecuador on the walls. There is a bookcase where the books never change. The curtains are always drawn and there is no natural light. The air is still and fetid.

This is Room 101.

Before I enter Room 101, I must surrender my passport and phone. My pockets and possessions are examined. The food I

bring is inspected.

The man who guards Room 101 sits in what looks like an old-fashioned telephone box. He watches a screen, watching Julian. There are others unseen, agents of the state, watching and listening.

Cameras are everywhere in Room 101. To avoid them, Julian maneuvers us both into a corner, side by side, flat up against the wall. This is how we catch up: whispering and writing to each other on a notepad, which he shields from the cameras. Sometimes we laugh.

I have my designated time slot. When that expires, the door in Room 101 bursts open and the guard says, "Time is up!" On New Year's Eve, I was allowed an extra 30 minutes and the man in the phone box wished me a happy new year, but not Julian.

Of course, Room 101 is the room in George Orwell's prophetic novel, *1984*, where the thought police watched and tormented their prisoners, and worse, until people surrendered their humanity and principles and obeyed Big Brother Julian Assange will never obey Big Brother. His resilience and courage are astonishing, even though his physical health struggles to keep up.

Julian is a distinguished Australian, who has changed the way many people think about duplicitous governments. For this, he is a political refugee subjected to what the United Nations calls "arbitrary detention".

The UN says he has the right of free passage to freedom, but this is denied. He has the right to medical treatment

without fear of arrest, but this is denied. He has the right to compensation, but this is denied.

As founder and editor of WikiLeaks, his crime has been to make sense of dark times. WikiLeaks has an impeccable record of accuracy and authenticity which no newspaper, no TV channel, no radio station, no BBC, no *New York Times*, no *Washington Post*, no *Guardian* can equal. Indeed, it shames them.

That explains why he is being punished.

For example:

Last week, the International Court of Justice ruled that the British Government had no legal powers over the Chagos Islanders, who in the 1960s and 70s, were expelled in secret from their homeland on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and sent into exile and poverty. Countless children died, many of them, from sadness. It was an epic crime few knew about.

For almost 50 years, the British have denied the islanders' the right to return to their homeland, which they had given to the Americans for a major military base.

In 2009, the British Foreign Office concocted a "marine reserve" around the Chagos archipelago.

This touching concern for the environment was exposed as a fraud when WikiLeaks published a secret cable from the British Government reassuring the Americans that "the former inhabitants would find it difficult, if not possible, to pursue their claim for resettlement on the islands if the entire Chagos Archipelago were a marine reserve."

The truth of the conspiracy clearly influenced the momentous decision of the International Court of Justice.

WikiLeaks has also revealed how the United States spies on its allies; how the CIA can watch you through your Iphone; how Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton took vast sums of money from Wall Street for secret speeches that reassured the bankers that if she was elected, she would be their friend.

In 2016, WikiLeaks revealed a direct connection between Clinton and organized jihadism in the Middle East: terrorists, in other words. One email disclosed that when Clinton was US Secretary of State, she knew that Saudi Arabia and Qatar were funding Islamic State, yet she accepted huge donations for her foundation from both governments.

She then approved the world's biggest ever arms sale to her Saudi benefactors: arms that are currently being used against the stricken people of Yemen.

That explains why he is being punished.

WikiLeaks has also published more than 800,000 secret files from Russia, including the Kremlin, telling us more about the machinations of power in that country than the specious hysterics of the Russia-gate pantomime in Washington.

This is real journalism – journalism of a kind now considered exotic: the antithesis of Vichy journalism, which speaks for the enemy of the people and takes its sobriquet from the Vichy government that occupied France on behalf of the Nazis.

Vichy journalism is censorship by omission, such as the untold scandal of the collusion between Australian governments and the United States to deny Julian Assange his rights as an Australian citizen and to silence him.

In 2010, Prime Minister Julia Gillard went as far as ordering the Australian Federal Police to investigate and hopefully prosecute Assange and WikiLeaks – until she was informed by the AFP that no crime had been committed.

Last weekend, the Sydney Morning Herald published a lavish supplement promoting a celebration of “Me Too” at the Sydney Opera House on 10 March. Among the leading participants is the recently retired Minister of Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop.

Bishop has been on show in the local media lately, lauded as a loss to politics: an “icon”, someone called her, to be admired.

The elevation to celebrity feminism of one so politically primitive as Bishop tells us how much so-called identity politics have subverted an essential, objective truth: that what matters, above all, is not your gender but the class you serve.

Before she entered politics, Julie Bishop was a lawyer who served the notorious asbestos miner James Hardie which fought claims by men and their families dying horribly from asbestos.

Lawyer Peter Gordon recalls Bishop “rhetorically asking the court why workers should be entitled to jump court queues just because they were dying.”

Bishop says she “acted on instructions ... professionally and ethically.”

Perhaps she was merely “acting on instructions” when she flew to London and Washington last year with her ministerial chief of staff, who had indicated that the Australian Foreign Minister would raise Julian’s case and hopefully begin the diplomatic process of bringing him home.

Julian’s father had written a moving letter to the then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, asking the government to intervene diplomatically to free his son. He told Turnbull that he was worried Julian might not leave the embassy alive.

Julie Bishop had every opportunity in the UK and the U.S. to present a diplomatic solution that would bring Julian home. But this required the courage of one proud to represent a sovereign, independent state, not a vassal.

Instead, she made no attempt to contradict the British Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, when he said outrageously that Julian “faced serious charges”. What charges? There were no charges.

Australia’s Foreign Minister abandoned her duty to speak up for an Australian citizen, prosecuted with nothing, charged with nothing, guilty of nothing.

Will those feminists who fawn over this false icon at the Opera House next Sunday be reminded of her role in colluding with foreign forces to punish an Australian journalist, one whose work has revealed that rapacious militarism has smashed the lives of millions of ordinary women in many

countries: in Iraq alone, the US-led invasion of that country, in which Australia participated, left 700,000 widows.

So what can be done? An Australian government that was prepared to act in response to a public campaign to rescue the refugee football player, Hakeem al-Araibi, from torture and persecution in Bahrain, is capable of bringing Julian Assange home.

The refusal by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra to honor the United Nations' declaration that Julian is the victim of "arbitrary detention" and has a fundamental right to his freedom, is a shameful breach of the letter and spirit of international law.

Why has the Australian government made no serious attempt to free Assange? Why did Julie Bishop bow to the wishes of two foreign powers? Why is this democracy traduced by its servile relationships, and integrated with lawless foreign power?

The persecution of Julian Assange is the conquest of us all: of our independence, our self respect, our intellect, our compassion, our politics, our culture.

So stop scrolling. Organize. Occupy. Insist. Persist. Make a noise. Take direct action. Be brave and stay brave. Defy the thought police.

War is not peace, freedom is not slavery, ignorance is not strength. If Julian can stand up to Big Brother , so can you: so can all of us.

*John Pilger gave this speech at a rally for Julian Assange*

*in Sydney on March 3, organized by the Socialist Equality Party. You can watch it here:*

Video by Cathy Vogan

**John Pilger** is an Australian-British journalist and filmmaker based in London. Pilger's Web site is: **www.johnpilger.com**. In 2017, the British Library announced a John Pilger Archive of all his written and filmed work. The British Film Institute includes his 1979 film, "Year Zero: the Silent Death of Cambodia," among the 10 most important documentaries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of his previous contributions to Consortium News can be **found here**.

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## Media Serve the Governors, Not the Governed

Since 2006 WikiLeaks has been censuring governments with governments' own words. It has been doing the job the U.S. constitution intended the press to do, says Joe Lauria.

By **Joe Lauria**  
in Sydney, Australia



**I**n his 1971 opinion in the Pentagon Papers case, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote: "In the First Amendment the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government's power to *censor* the press was abolished so that the press would

remain forever free to *censure* the Government.”

That’s what WikiLeaks and Julian Assange have been doing since 2006: censuring governments with governments’ own words pried from secrecy by WikiLeaks’ sources—whistleblowers. In other words, WikiLeaks has been doing the job the U.S. constitution intended the press to do.

One can hardly imagine anyone sitting on today’s U.S. Supreme Court writing such an opinion. Even more troubling is the news media having turned its back on its mission. Today they almost always serve the governors—not the governed.

The question is why.

Consolidation of media ownership has increased obedience of desperate journalists; entertainment divisions have taken over news departments; and careerist reporters live vicariously through the power of those they cover, rejecting the press’ unique power to hold those officials to account.

It comes down ultimately to lifestyles. Men go to war to protect and further their lifestyles. The press cheers them on for residual material betterment and increase in status.

Millions of lives erased for lifestyles.

It used to be accepted in television that news departments would lose money and would be supported by the entertainment division. That’s because news was considered a public service. TV newsmen—they were almost all men in those days—were former wire service and newspaper reporters. But greed has put the presenters’ personalities before

public service, as entertainment masquerades as news. Newspapers have sacrificed investigative units to maximize profit. Government is the winner.

The abdication of the mainstream media of their constitutional responsibility to serve the governed and not the governors has left a void filled for more than a decade by WikiLeaks.

No longer do today's Daniel Ellsbergs need to take their chances with editors at *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, or with their reporters spinning the damning information they risk their freedom to get to the public—no matter how disinterested and distracted the public may be.

Now the traditional media can be bypassed. WikiLeaks deals in the raw material—that when revealed—governments hang themselves with. That's why they want Assange's head. They lust for revenge and to stop further leaks that threaten their grip on power. That the corporate media has turned on Assange and WikiLeaks reveals their service to the state and how much they prioritize their style of life—disregarding the carnage they help bring about.

In that Pentagon Papers' decision, the majority of the court ruled that the First Amendment prohibited the government from exercising prior restraint—or censorship—on the media *before* publication of classified information. But the majority of the court also said the government could prosecute journalists *after* publication.

Indeed the U.S. Espionage Act, which has withstood First Amendment challenges, criminalizes a publisher's or journalist's mere possession, as well as dissemination, of

classified material. A 1961 amendment to the Act extended U.S. jurisdiction across the world. Assange is threatened by it.

U.S. administrations have been reluctant to take the step of post-publication prosecution, however. Nixon did not prosecute Sen. Mike Gravel, who was constitutionally protected when he read the Papers, given to him by Ellsberg, into the Congressional record. But Gravel could have been prosecuted for publishing the Papers as a book. Barack Obama decided to back off Assange when it was plain *The New York Times* and other corporate media would be as liable as Assange and WikiLeaks for publishing classified information. The virulently anti-media Trump administration, however, may take that step if Assange is arrested.

From their point of view it's easy to understand why the U.S. wants to crush Assange. But what is Australia's excuse? Why is it fighting America's battles? Why has the Australian mainstream media also turned against Assange after an election held in the U.S., not here? What has happened to Australia's sovereignty? That's a question that can be answered by Australians coming into the streets, like today—and staying there until their compatriot is at last free to leave that damned embassy. Free to continue to do the job the media refuses to do.

*Joe Lauria gave this speech at a rally for Julian Assange organized by the Socialist Equality Party in Sydney on March 3. You can watch the video of the speech here:*

Joe Lauria is editor-in-chief of Consortium News and a former correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Sunday Times* of London and numerous other newspapers. He can be reached at [joelauria@consortiumnews.com](mailto:joelauria@consortiumnews.com) and followed on Twitter [@unjoe](https://twitter.com/unjoe) .

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