

# Assange's Arrest Affirms US/UK Speech, Media, and Academic Freedoms Are Null and Void

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

*The US First Amendment affirms fundamental speech and media rights without which all others are threatened. No society is free without them. Eliminating them assures totalitarian rule.*

In her 1951 book, titled "The Origins of Totalitarianism," Hannah Arendt said it's "never content to rule by external means (alone)...(T)otalitarianism has discovered a means of dominating and terrorizing human beings from within."

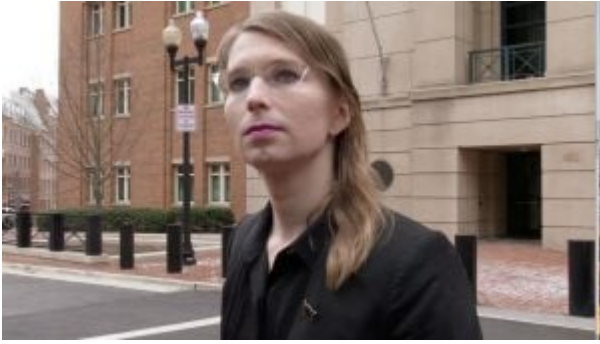
She called it dictatorship based on:

- "(1) an elaborate ideology (militarism and predatory capitalism in the US and UK);
- (2) a single mass party (in the US and UK, its war party);
- (3) (state) terror;
- (4) a technologically conditioned monopoly of communication (in the US and UK, establishment media serving as press agents for wealth, power and privilege, reporting the official narrative, suppressing truth-telling on vital issues);
- (5) a monopoly of weapons (in the US – how it used to be; today Russian super-weapons exceed the best in the West); (and)
- (6) a centrally controlled economy (socialism for the rich in the US and UK by accommodative legislation and government handouts to monied interests, law of the jungle free market capitalism for their exploited people)."

Democracy in both countries is pure fantasy. Elections when held are farcical. Dirty business as usual wins every time. Ordinary people have no say over how they're governed.

US exceptionalism, the indispensable state, and moral superiority don't exist. Police state America is increasingly a totalitarian plutocracy, oligarchy and kleptocracy – unfit and unsafe to live in for its ordinary people. The same goes for the UK and other Western countries.

They honor their worst, persecute some of their best, notably courageous truth-tellers exposing dirty secrets of the imperial state and its partners want suppressed.



The mistreatment of Chelsea Manning, other heroic whistleblowers, and now journalist Julian Assange for doing the right thing constitutes a major body blow to already fast eroding freedoms in the US and UK – heading toward eliminating them altogether.

Right wing Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno acted in cahoots with the UK and US, illegally rescinding Assange's citizenship and asylum status in the country's London embassy – a dark day for the rule of law and fundamental human and civil rights.

Assange's forcible Thursday arrest had nothing to do with earlier dropped phony rape and sexual abuse charges in Sweden, nothing to do with Assange skipping bail in London – everything to do with his virtually certain extradition to the US.

DOJ spokeswoman Nicole Oxman explained it, saying

"I can confirm that Julian Assange was arrested in relation to a provisional extradition request from the United States of America."

The sole fabricated charge against him of "Conspiracy to Commit Computer Intrusion" was used to smooth the extradition process.

Once in US custody, a further indictment is highly likely, maybe certain to follow on espionage charges under the long ago outdated 1917 Espionage Act, a WW I relic, solely pertaining to the war.

It's what Chelsea Manning was unlawfully charged under ahead of her guilt by accusation trial and 35-year prison sentence, commuted by Obama after nearly seven years served.

She's been detained again since March 8 for invoking her constitutional rights not to give grand jury testimony – a secretive, manipulative process designed for prosecutors to get indictments, targeted individuals guilty of no crimes vulnerable, why the system should be abolished.

Assange faces a similar fate as Manning during her earlier kangaroo court trial.

It's why preserving and protecting Net Neutrality is vital – digital democracy, the last front frontier of media freedom.

Note: The US House passed Save the Internet Act (HR 1644) – written to prevent corporate ISPs from acting as online gatekeepers, able to decide how and what people may access digitally.

The GOP-dominated Senate and Trump veto power remain major hurdles to overcome.

By email, Law Professor Francis Boyle explained that

“contrary to (media and other) reports, the US government can add charges after Assange is extradit(ed).”

According to Law Professor Jonathan Turley,

indictment of Assange “under the Espionage Act would be quite challenging for the government, absent some new evidence establishing a nexus and intent,” adding:

“I have handled First Amendment and national security cases, and I would call the Assange arrest the most anticipated case of my generation in defining the outside boundaries of those areas...This could prove one of the most important cases in (US) history.”

On Friday, the Russian embassy in the UK press secretary issued the following statement on Assange’s arrest, saying:

“UK media (reports) called the WikiLeaks founder a ‘puppet of the Kremlin.’ We are not surprised at such statements. The UK media often try to find Russian involvement in all possible issues.”

“Such insinuations around the case of Assange had already taken place earlier” – no evidence ever cited. Without it, allegations and accusations are baseless.

“I would like to point out that WikiLeaks was initially promoted by The Guardian newspaper. One can hardly accuse it of having links to Russia,” the statement added.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called Assange’s forcible arrest “squeezing the throat of freedom.”

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov expressed the same view, call his unacceptable arrest “a blow to media freedom,” adding:

Assange “is being persecuted...(T)his does not correspond to the ideals of freedom of the press, freedom of the media, and their inviolability” – just the opposite, how totalitarian regimes operate.

#### A Final Comment

Assange is being unlawfully detained at London’s Belmarsh prison – classified as Adult Male/Category A, a high-security facility. Known as Britain’s GITMO, it’s described as follows:

It’s for “those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or national security.

Offenses that may result in consideration for Category A or Restricted Status include:

“Murder, manslaughter, wounding with intent, rape, kidnapping, indecent assault, robbery or conspiracy to rob (with firearms), firearms offenses, importing or supplying Class A controlled drugs, possessing or supplying explosives, offenses connected with terrorism and offenses under the Official Secrets Act.”

So-called most dangerous inmates are held in Belmarsh’s secretive high security unit, described as a prison within a prison – likely where Assange is jailed.

[Mark Hughes](#) was the first UK reporter ever allowed in the unit, saying its living conditions are “cramped.”

To gain entry, he “negotiated 15 gated doors and had (his) fingerprints scanned.” Inside, he saw “a windowless” facility “(s)urrounded by CCTV cameras in a small carpeted reception area – the only carpet in the block...”

He had to remove his “shoes and belt and put all (his) belongings through an X-ray machine. (He) walked through a metal detector and a was given a body search – the lining of (his) jeans, the soles of (his) feet and inside (his) mouth were all checked.”

Guards go through the same procedure every time they enter the unit.

“At the end of the reception area is a red iron gate. Passing through this door involves at least a four-minute wait, as it can only be unlocked by staff in the control room who check people’s identity using remote cameras which zoom in to study their faces.”

“Once through you are faced with four more doors, each leading to a different part of the unit. No two doors in the unit can be opened at the same time.”

“The (unit) is on two floors and is split into four ‘spurs.’ Each one has 12 single-occupancy cells.”

The unit “was originally used almost exclusively to house IRA prisoners. But since then it has held KGB agents (sic), al-Qa’ida terrorists (the US and UK support), and even Charles Bronson – Britain’s most violent prisoner – who had a whole spur to himself.”

Some Belmarsh prisoners are isolated in solitary confinement for 22 hours daily, likely how Assange is being mistreated.

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