

Biden Is Trump's Poodle on Case of Journalist Julian Assange and Bogus Espionage Charges

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Attorney General Merrick Garland Must Tell President Biden that Trump Espionage Charges Against WikiLeaks Journalist Julian Assange Are Without Merit...or Indict New York Times Publisher with Same Charges

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Biden, you defeated Trump, yet your administration has NOT rolled back all of the evil caused by Trump.

Take the case of journalist Julian Assange.

Under the Obama administration in which you, Biden, were Vice President for eight years, journalist and publisher Julian Assange was NOT prosecuted for publishing the Collateral Damage video of the U.S. Army murder by Hellfire missile of Reuters reporters nor the classified Afghanistan and Iraq war files.

However, you and the Obama administration did prosecute and won conviction of U.S. Army PFC Bradley Manning for disclosing those classified materials.

As you well know from being the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, journalists and publishers are protected by the First Amendment which allows them to publish classified materials given to them by whistleblowers. But, the First Amendment does NOT protect those who release classified information to journalists, like Bradley Manning, whom you prosecuted.

Fifty years ago, no U.S. publisher, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Los

Angeles Times or any other newspaper in the U.S. or abroad, was prosecuted for publishing the Pentagon Papers, the classified history of the U.S. war on Viet Nam.

Daniel Ellsberg, who released the sordid 7,000-page classified tale of U.S. military involvement (3,000 pages of narrative and 4,000 pages of appended documents), fully expected to be prosecuted, as he was the one who gave classified information to the media. The Nixon administration's attempted theft of Ellsberg's medical records torpedoed Nixon's attempt at prosecuting Ellsberg. Nixon continued to rail against Ellsberg as, in Henry Kissinger's words, "the most dangerous man in America" because he, Nixon, was unable to put Ellsberg in jail.

No publisher in the history of the United States has been prosecuted until the Trump administration came into power. After WikiLeaks and other media published in 2017 "Vault 7," the most CIA materials about CIA hacking capabilities ever to come into the public domain, Trump's Attorney General Bill Barr at the command of CIA Director Mike Pompeo, decided to try a new legal theory, one that had never been used in U.S. history.

CIA Director Pompeo [described WikiLeaks as a "non-state hostile intelligence service"](#) and the Department of Justice charged a non-U.S. citizen, Julian Assange, with espionage against the U.S. and demanded his extradition from England.

A conviction on U.S. charges of espionage could result in Assange being sentenced to 175 years in prison.

At the time of the U.S. charges, Assange had requested asylum from the Ecuadorian government and had been protected by living in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London for five years.

With a change in Ecuadorian governments, and under intense pressure from the British and U.S. governments, the new Ecuadorian administration, in April 2019, allowed British police to break the Embassy's sovereignty and enter the Embassy. London police carried Assange out of the Embassy, put him into a police van and immediately locked him up in the highest security prison in the UK, Belmarsh Prison.

Prior to the police breaching the Ecuadorian Embassy, Assange had been denied his razor for weeks. His haggard appearance as he was carried out of the embassy was part of a negative publicity campaign orchestrated by the British government and, without a doubt, the U.S. government.

Assange Has Been in UK Prison in Solitary Confinement for Almost Five Years with NO CONVICTION on Any Charges

For the past for four years and nine months, Assange has been in Belmarsh Prison, a high security prison for those convicted of violent crimes. He has been in solitary confinement for 22 hours a day, a violation of the right not to be tortured, according to former UN Special Rapporteur Nils Melzer.

Yet, ASSANGE HAS NOT BEEN CONVICTED OF ANY CRIME. Despite no conviction, he has been incarcerated by the British government on behalf of the U.S. government until extradition proceedings to the U.S. are successful.

Almost three years ago, in January 2021, lower court judge Vanessa Baraitser ruled that Assange should be released from Belmarsh Prison. She denied the U.S. request for extradition based on Assange's mental health, his propensity to commit suicide and conditions in U.S. prisons.

The U.S. appealed her decision, issuing "diplomatic assurances" that Assange would not be mistreated in a U.S. prison. The High Court, after a two-day hearing in March 2022, accepted those "assurances" and rejected Assange's appeal and his application to the U.K. Supreme Court to hear the case was then denied. Assange then applied for a new appeal of Baraitser's legal decisions and the Home Secretary's extradition order. His [150-page](#) argument was rejected in a [three-page](#) ruling. The appeal of that decision will now take [place on February 20-21, 2024](#).

Don't Trust the U.S. Government's "Diplomatic Assurances"

As a former U.S. diplomat, I can guarantee Julian that U.S. "diplomatic assurances" mean absolutely nothing. The U.S. breaks its word to individuals and countries frequently...and the U.S. Department of State has no jurisdiction over the Bureau of Prisons which makes decisions unilaterally of how prisoners are treated.

At the [Belmarsh Tribunal held in Washington, D.C. on December 9, 2023](#), former [CIA officer John Kiriakou, who spent nearly two years in federal prison](#) for talking about the CIA's waterboarding program, the existence of which had been in the public domain for years, said that the guarantees that the State Department had made in court documents were meaningless. He said that the Bureau of Prisons makes its own decisions on whether a person will be in solitary confinement and the recommendations of the State Department and Department of Justice are disregarded.

The United States has more prisoners in solitary confinement than any other country. In May 2023, [the watchdog group Solitary Watch](#) and the advocacy coalition Unlock the Box released a groundbreaking joint report showing that at least 122,840 people are locked daily in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails for 22 or more hours a day.

Pressure on Biden from the Australian Government and Members of the U.S. Congress

In October 2023, a bipartisan group of members of the Australian Parliament traveled to the U.S. and lobbied the U.S. government to drop the charges against Assange.

At the end of October, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited Washington where he [raised the Assange issue in a meeting with Biden](#) and repeated his call for President Biden to bring the matter to a close.

On November 8, 2023, [16 Congresspeople from across the political spectrum signed a letter to President Biden](#), calling on him to drop all charges and withdraw the extradition request.

In the letter, the members of the U.S. Congress said "We believe the Department of Justice acted correctly in 2013, during your vice presidency, when it declined to pursue charges against Mr. Assange for publishing the classified documents because it recognized that the prosecution would set a dangerous precedent."

The letter continued, with the Congresspeople stating that they are "well aware that should

the US extradition and prosecution go forward, there is a significant risk that our bilateral relationship with Australia will be badly damaged.”

So Why Hasn't the Biden Administration Dropped the Trump Charges Against Assange?

What is so ironic is that the Biden administration could immediately withdraw the request for extradition from the UK. It wasn't Biden's administration that cooked up the novel legal theory under which Assange is charged—it was the Trump administration.

The Obama administration, for which Biden served as the Vice President for eight years, never charged Julian Assange with a crime.

Is it that Biden fears that right-wing Republican Party members will call him soft on the cooked-up Trump era “non-state actor” legal theory of espionage?

Surely, the former Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee can see through that smear attempt.

It is long past time for U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland to tell President Biden that the Trump charges against Assange, that are the basis for the extradition request, are without merit.

It is long overdue for the United States to cancel its request for extradition of Julian Assange and for Assange to be able to be free from the bogus charges of the past decade.

[Call](#) (Comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414) or [write](#) the White House and the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) today and demand that charges be dropped.

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