

Droning Julian Assange and Wikileaks: The Clinton Formula

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"We believe in what we are doing... If you are pushed you push back."

Julian Assange

The mutterings have become furious, and it is clear that the Democratic contender for the White House has again shown how traditional her ploys towards power are going to be. Julian Assange and WikiLeaks have again managed to pull the blinds off an episode of some consequence, not least because it casts insight into the inner workings of the already maligned Clintoncomplex.

For one, it shows that Hillary Clinton will not be averse to muddying the waters of international law she is so happy to proclaim against Russia, China and other contesting bug bears. For another, it does not suggest that a Clinton administration is going to go soft on whistleblowers, or the secrecy complex. The latter is richly ironic given the Secretary's own slap dash attitude to secrecy protocols when heading the State Department.

The latest WikiLeaks related fuss began a few days ago with the publication on *True Pundit* that claimed, referring to "State Department Sources" that Clinton had queried the use of a drone to silence the growing nuisance of Assange before the document release that came to be known as Cablegate.[1]

The "early morning November meeting [in 2010] of State's [the State Department] top brass" has Clinton posing the question: "Can't we just drone this guy?" This was suggested by *True Pundit* as being a product of pure frustration, one increased in vain attempts to "cut off Assange's delivery of the cables" and failing that, forging "a strategy to minimize the administration's public embarrassment over the contents of the cables."

Was such a blood thirsty query made in jest, the normalised, crude product of a culture already used to remotely directed extra-judicial assassinations? The report claims otherwise. Initial, dismissive laughter from officials in the room "quickly died off" before the terse manner of the Secretary. "Clinton said that Assange, after all, was a relatively soft target, 'walking around' freely and thumbing his nose without any fear of reprisals from the United States."

Such casual talk about eliminating a designated enemy of the United States should be of little surprise. Classified emails (yes, *those* emails) were of particular interest to the FBI in its own criminal investigation into Secretary Clinton's butter fingered handling of classified information.

A number touched on the approval process for drone strikes, executed by the Central Intelligence Agency in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan. Only a few of these were ever rejected by Clinton. Even more dire, many, notably those touching on attacks in Pakistan, found their way onto her personal email account.[2]

The retorts to these allegations have been far from convincing, having much the effect of flogging by damp lettuce. (In a campaign featuring such characters as Clinton and Trump, these could never be any other way.) Clinton's campaign manager, Robbie Mook, began to see allies of Trump coming out of every cyber nook and cranny.

Donald Trump and his allies are trying to do everything they can to change the debate here right now. Donald Trump failed at the debate, he became increasingly unwound, was tweeting at 3 a.m., making wild accusations of his own against the former Miss Universe and against Hillary Clinton. [3]

For Mook, Trump's arsenal, supplemented by assistance from his allies (these are not necessarily elaborated with any distinction), had to "find some way to change this up, and they're trying to do that by doubling down on conspiracy theories."

Having drawn a web around his own conspiracy theory of compliance, slotting WikiLeaks, by innuendo and suggestion, into a Trump universe, he had to contend with the direct allegations about the drone strike. The lettuce started looking damper than ever. "I'm reticent to comment on anything that the WikiLeaks people have said. They've made a lot of accusations in the past."

Many of these accusations have had the rather brutal semblance of truth to them, not to mention the previous spectacular of the DNC disclosures. These did not reveal so much a conspiracy of theory, but of solid fact in efforts, ruthlessly contrived, to eliminate Bernie Sanders as a threat to the Clinton campaign.

WikiLeaks has been thrilling, horrifying and agitating its audiences with the top hits of disclosure over the ten years it has been in existence. On Tuesday, the organisation celebrated 10 years of an often heady existence, which comprised the release of over ten million classified documents.

It was fitting that this pearler, featuring such a recurring figure of notoriety as Hillary Clinton, should surface at this moment of commemoration. Clinton's campaign coven have been less than convincing in denying this point. This stands to reason, given that previous denials have tended to vanish before the onslaught of reality.

Like many previous WikiLeaks revelations, it will be up to voters, opinion makers, and the chattering classes to decide what this means. In the case of Tunisia, these assisted the first disruptions that came to be known as the Arab Spring. In the case of the United States, it may harden pre-existing sentiment, the sort fairly immune to any revelations, however grotesque.

A Trump in the White House sends shivers down the spine and turns the stomach of many a voter; but to have a Clinton there, redux of corruption, calamity and mistake, would also shock the sensible and enrage the conscionable.

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Notes

- [1] <http://truepundit.com/under-intense-pressure-to-silence-wikileaks-secretary-of-state-hillary-clinton-proposed-drone-strike-on-julian-assange/>
- [2] <http://www.wsj.com/articles/clinton-emails-in-probe-dealt-with-planned-drone-strikes-1465509863>
- [3] <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/clinton-manager-reticent-to-comment-on-report-about-droning-assange/article/2603505>

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