

Facing the Warmongers: An Assange Update

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Global Research, October 11, 2022

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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On the latest slimed path Julian Assange has been made to trod, a few things have presented themselves. The rusty sword of Damocles may be suspended above him (he, we are informed, [has contracted](#) COVID-19), but there are those, in the meantime, willing to defend him with decent conviction against his dispatch to the United States, where he is certain to perish.

From the side of decent conviction and steadfastness came the October 8 protests across a number of cities, attended by thousands. A [human chain](#) numbering some 7,000 persons formed around the Houses of Parliament in London demanding the release of the WikiLeaks publisher from Belmarsh Prison.

Then there was the Boadicea-like performance that his wife is becoming famous for. On the ideologically dry-cured medium of Piers Morgan's *Uncensored Program*, a taster of that vengeance US justice is famous for could be gathered [from an encounter](#) between Stella, and the trumpeting warmonger and failed Trump advisor, John Bolton.

Bolton, it should be remembered, was the only evidence that President George W. Bush, dyslexic and reformed drunk, had a mild sense of humour. Sending that man to the United Nations as US ambassador was the equivalent of appointing a randy, murderous fox to guard unsuspecting chickens. That appointment had it all: resentment, masochism and disgust for that concept known as international law.

There is much to say that former President Donald Trump, for all his insufferable foibles, insoluble perversions and naggingly vicious pettiness, never embarked on the eschatological murderous destiny that Bolton believes the US is destined for. The messianic types always find some higher meaning for death and sacrifice, as long they are not the ones doing it. The difference between the suicide bomber and the deskbound scribbler keen on killing is one of practice, not conviction. Both believe that there is a higher meaning written in blood, inscribed in the babble of post-life relevance and invisible virtue. For us humble folk, life is good enough, and should be preserved.

According to Bolton, the 175 years Assange might receive for exposing the abundant dirty laundry known as US foreign policy and imperial violence was hardly sufficient. He would, naturally, get a “fair trial” in the United States (never explain the ideologically self-evident), though absolute fairness was dependent on him receiving 176 years. “Well, I think that’s a small amount of the sentence he deserves.” With such a fabulous nose for justice, Bolton shares common ground with the commissars and gauleiters.

Unsurprisingly, Stella Assange had a view markedly at odds with such an assessment. Her husband was being pursued,

“For receiving information from a source and publishing it, and it was in the public interest. It was US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he revealed tens of thousands of civilian deaths that had not been acknowledged before.”

Morgan, an incarnation of that guttersnipe, sewerage swilling demon virtually unsurpassed in modern British media, tried to sound cerebral and moral at points. Did WikiLeaks redact the material from Chelsea Manning, one of the key sources for the disclosures? Or had WikiLeaks been drunkenly cavalier in exposing all and sundry to the world? Best ignore reading trial transcripts, Piers. Knowledge drawn upon the cobblestones of truth is bound to be rough.

To those familiar with WikiLeaks, its practices and, indeed, the trial at the Old Bailey regarding Assange’s extradition, such claims could only be seen as decidedly weak. Stella explained that WikiLeaks did “redact all of those documents that Manning gave to WikiLeaks, and in fact it was in cooperation with those newspapers.” The trial itself made it clear that the secret spiller, as Assange has often been accused of being, was none other than the *Guardian* itself, whose journalists [had left](#), with tantalising promise, the decryption key in their book *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange’s war on secrecy*.

Stella, aflame with purpose and aware of her brief, also reminded the audience who she was talking to. Bolton, she shot with acid fury, “sought to undermine the international legal system, sought to ensure that the US is not under the International Criminal Court’s jurisdiction.”

Then came the well fashioned grenade, pin removed.

“And if it was, Mr Bolton might in fact be prosecuted under the ICC [International Criminal Court]. He was one of the chief cheerleaders of the Iraq war, which Julian then exposed through these leaks, so he has a conflict of interest.”

There have been other befouling episodes that can only be of concern to Assange and his family. It has now come to light that security officials, in Australia’s Parliament, were under “significant pressure” to seize books from the Assange delegation during their August visit to Canberra. A letter to Greens Senator David Shoebridge by the Department of Parliamentary Services [explained](#) that it was all linked to a protest.

The nature of the bureaucrat’s tone is to mock the valuable and diminish the relevant. In the considered [view](#) of the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services, Rob Stefanic,

“I appreciate that Assange’s family may not have viewed the screening procedure in a positive light, but having reviewed the processes followed by security staff, I am

confident they performed their duties with respect and due diligence.”

Such reasoning would suffice for most police states, where bureaucrats sup at the same table with the security wonks.

The Department, it transpired, [had tripped up](#). The claim about the protest was inaccurate, as neither Assange’s father, John Shipton, nor his brother, Gabriel, had attended any protests.

“It is apparent that there are factual inaccuracies in the letter to Senator Shoebridge and the secretary will be writing to correct the record.”

The world has turned full circle. Those opening the cabinet of secrets are considered the nasty tittle-tattles, who simply revealed the fact that daddy fiddled and mummy drank. In this world, homicidally excited types like Bolton revel in expressing unsavoury views in the open; those who expose the bankruptcy of such views are to be punished. We await the next grotesquery with resigned disgust.

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