

Spurious US 18-Count Indictment of Julian Assange: A Mockery of Justice

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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It was just a matter of time before the Trump regime piled on more spurious charges against Assange, clearly prepared long before Thursday's release.

They're on top of falsely accusing him of "conspiracy to commit computer intrusion," according to an unsealed indictment, dated March 6, 2018.

New charges and the above one are all about waging war on truth-telling investigative journalism the way it should be conducted, providing vital information on issues related to the rule of law, fundamental rights, and the public welfare.

On Thursday, the Trump regime's Justice Department [headlined](#): "WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange Charged in 18-Count Superseding [Indictment](#) — Charges Related to Illegally Obtaining, Receiving and Disclosing Classified Information (sic)."

Spurious charges include the following:

- Criminal No.1:18-cr-l11 (CMH)
- Count1: 18 U.S.C. (US Code) § 793(g) Conspiracy To Receive National Defense Information
- Counts 2-4: 18 U.S.C. & 793(b) and 2 — Obtaining National Defense Information
- Counts 5-8: 18 U.S.C. § 793(c) and 2 — Obtaining National Defense Information
- Counts 9-11: 18U.S.C. §793(d) and 2 — Disclosure of National Defense Information
- Counts 12-14: 18 U.S.C. § 793(e) and 2 — Disclosure of National Defense Information
- Counts 15-17: 18 U.S.C. § 793(e) — Disclosure of National Defense Information
- Count 18: 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 and 1030 — Conspiracy To Commit Computer Intrusion

According an accompanying DOJ statement,

"Assange conspired with (Chelsea) Manning...aid(ing) and abet(ing) her in obtaining classified information with reason to believe that the information was to be used to the injury of the United States or the advantage of a foreign nation" — a bald-faced Big Lie.

Manning is a courageous whistleblower. Material she released exposed US high crimes of war and against humanity, information vital for the public to know about how its

government operates — extrajudicially time and again, accountability never forthcoming.

Assange is an investigative journalist. He earlier explained that WikiLeaks has the right “to publish newsworthy content,” adding: “Consistent with the US Constitution, we publish material that we can confirm to be true.”

Everyone in the US has the same right, what the First Amendment is all about, affirming speech, press, and academic freedoms – the most fundamental of all democratic rights bipartisan hardliners in Washington want compromised and eliminated.

Arresting and detaining Assange by UK authorities for extradition to the US for prosecution on the above charges is all about wanting truth-telling on vital issues suppressed — the same true for actions taken against Manning and other courageous whistleblowers.

The US wants scrutiny of its dirty linen prevented. Targeting individuals courageously revealing it harshly is all about intimidating other potential whistleblowers with damning information to remain silent.

Manning, Assange, and others targeted like them are innocent of charges against them. They’re victims of US judicial unfairness, denied their fundamental habeas, due process, and equal protection under law rights.

Manning is currently detained indefinitely for invoking her constitutional right to remain silent — refusing to give grand jury testimony that could unwittingly be used by prosecutors against Assange, potentially leaving herself vulnerable to new falsified charges.

Like Manning in 2010, Assange is charged under the long ago outdated 1917 Espionage Act, relating to WW I, what should have been rescinded at war’s end.

Following Assange’s unlawful April 11 arrest in London at the behest of the Trump regime, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) called the action against him “an attack on press freedom,” a flagrant First Amendment breach, leaving all independent journalists vulnerable to similar actions against them.

In response to Thursday’s 18-count indictment of Assange, ACLU speech, privacy, and technology project director Ben Wizner said the following:

“For the first time in the history of our country, the government has brought criminal charges against a publisher for the publication of truthful information,” adding:

“This is an extraordinary escalation of the Trump (regime’s) attacks on journalism, and a direct assault on the First Amendment.”

“It establishes a dangerous precedent that can be used to target all news organizations that hold the government accountable by publishing its secrets.”

Each charge against Assange carries a potential 10-year sentence. Trump regime hardliners want him punished and silenced behind bars longterm — for the “crime” of truth-telling journalism the way it should be.

In response to Thursday's indictment, WikiLeaks tweeted: "This is madness." It represents "the end of national security journalism and the first amendment."

At age 47 in poor health from his near seven-year ordeal in Ecuador's London embassy to avoid his current fate, a slow-motion judicial unfairness death sentence likely awaits him.

Given deplorable healthcare for US prison inmates, what greatly shortened human rights lawyer Lynne Stewart's life from her unjustifiable four-year imprisonment ordeal, Assange may not last more than a few years behind bars, especially if abused by US prison authorities.

A Final Comment

Chelsea Manning and her lawyer Moira Meltzer-Cohen said the following in response to Assange's 18-count indictment:

"The continued detention of Chelsea Manning is purely punitive. Today's events underscore what Chelsea has previously said, that "(a)ll of the substantive questions pertained to my disclosures of information to the public in 2010—answers I provided in extensive testimony, during my court-martial in 2013."

"I continue to accept full and sole responsibility for those disclosures in 2010. It's telling that the government appears to have already obtained this indictment before my contempt hearing last week. (The Trump regime) describes the press as the opposition party and an enemy of the people."

"Today, they use the law as a sword, and have shown their willingness to bring the full power of the state against the very institution intended to shield us from such excesses."

Manning's attorney Meltzer-Cohen said "up until now, the Department Of Justice has been reticent to actually indict publishers for work implicating matters of national security, because the first amendment rights of the press and public are so constitutionally valuable."

Assange's 18-count indictment "signals a real shift, and sets a new precedent for the federal government's desire to chill and even punish the vigorous exercise of the free press."

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Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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