

US Senate Calls on Julian Assange to Testify

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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Julian Assange has been asked to testify before the US Senate Intelligence Committee as part of their Russia investigation, according to a letter signed by Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Mark Warner (D-VA) posted by the official WikiLeaks Twitter account.

The letter, delivered to Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London, reads in part

“As part of the inquiry, the Committee requests that you make yourself available for a closed interview with bipartisan Committee staff at a mutually agreeable time and location.”

BREAKING: US Senate Intelligence Committee calls editor [@JulianAssange](#) to testify. Letter delivered via US embassy in London. WikiLeaks' legal team say they are "considering the offer but testimony must conform to a high ethical standard". Also: <https://t.co/pPf0GTjTlp> [pic.twitter.com/TrDKkCKVBx](https://t.co/pPf0GTjTlp)

— WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [August 8, 2018](#)

Wikileaks' says their legal team is “considering the offer but testimony must conform to a high ethical standard,” after which the whistleblower organization added a tweet linking to a list of 10 Democratic Senators who demanded in late June that Assange’s asylum be revoked in violation of international law:

Of note: <https://t.co/pAFas2fgKn>

— WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [August 8, 2018](#)

WikiLeaks also tweeted a link to a [Human Rights Watch](#) article: “UK Should Reject Extraditing Julian Assange to US,” which reads in part:

It has been six years since Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks, fled to the Ecuadorean Embassy in London to seek asylum from possible extradition to the United States to face indictment under the US Espionage Act.

At the time, Assange, an Australian national, was wanted by Sweden for questioning over sexual offense allegations. Assange had also broken the terms of his UK bail. Since then, he has become even more controversial,

having published US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emails and internal emails from Democratic Party officials.

While some admire and others despise Assange, no one should be prosecuted under [the antiquated Espionage Act](#) for publishing leaked government documents. That 1917 statute was designed to punish people who leaked secrets to a foreign government, not to the media, and allows [no defense or mitigation of punishment](#) on the basis that public interest served by some leaks may outweigh any harm to national security.

The US [grand jury investigation](#) of Assange under the Espionage Act was apparently based on his publishing the leaks for which [Chelsea Manning](#), a former US army soldier, was convicted. Her sentence was commuted.
-[HRW.org](#)

Assange has been holed up in the embassy since 2012 for jumping UK bail on a Swedish arrest warrant for an alleged rape. In May, Swedish prosecutors decided to discontinue their investigation into the claims, which Assange denies and has never been formally charged with.

"Chief Prosecutor Marianne Ny has today decided to discontinue the preliminary investigation regarding suspected rape concerning Julian Assange," the prosecutor's office said in a statement, as quoted by Reuters.

Last August, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher travelled to London with journalist Charles Johnson for a meeting with Assange, after which Rohrabacher said the WikiLeaks founder offered "firsthand" information proving that the Trump campaign did not collude with Russia, and which would refute the Russian hacking theory.

After Trump denied knowledge of the potential deal, Rohrabacher raged at Trump's Chief of Staff, John Kelly, for constructing a "wall" around President Trump by "people who do not want to expose this fraud."

And in January of 2017, Julian Assange's legal team approached [Clinton-linked](#) D.C. lobbyist Adam Waldman to reach out and see if anyone in the Trump administration would negotiate with the WikiLeaks founder – only to have James Comey kill the deal.

Waldman, who acted as an intermediary from 2009 – 2011 between Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska and the FBI, worked for Assange pro bono. Assange's bargaining chip was a massive trove of CIA technical documents known as "Vault 7," which detailed the agency's massive cyber-warfare arsenal.

After Assange's team made contact, Waldman reached out to Bruce Ohr – a DOJ official who would later be demoted in December, 2017 for failing to disclose secret meetings with Fusion GPS founder Glenn Simpson. Bruce's wife, Nellie Ohr was hired by Fusion GPS as part of an ongoing anti-Trump effort. Fusion also produced the 35-page "Steele Dossier," written by former MI6 spy Christopher Steele.



Waldman and Ohr would meet in person on Feb. 3, 2017 in Washington, while Waldman and Assange met three times in London.

After Assange made clear that he would be open to redactions at most to protect the names of exposed officials, Ohr took Assange's offer up the chain of command at the DOJ – which by and large held Assange in contempt.

Although the intelligence community reviled Assange for the damage his past releases caused, officials “understood any visibility into his thinking, any opportunity to negotiate any redactions, was in the national security interest and worth taking,” says a senior official involved at the time. –[The Hill](#)

After Assange's request was run up the flag pole, Senator Warner was issued a “stand-down” order by Comey.

“He told me he had just talked with Comey and that, while the government was appreciative of my efforts, my instructions were to stand down, to end the discussions with Assange,” Waldman told [The Hill](#).

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