GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Washington Moves To Silence WikiLeaks

By Bill Van Auken
Global Research, October 19, 2016
World Socialist Website

Region: USA
Theme: Intelligence, Media Disinformation, US NATO War Agenda
In-depth Report: U.S. Elections

The cutting off of Internet access for Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, is one more ugly episode in a US presidential election campaign that has plumbed the depths of political degradation.

Effectively imprisoned in the Ecuadorian embassy in London for over four years, Assange now is faced with a further limitation on his contact with the outside world.

On Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry of Ecuador confirmed WikiLeaks' charge that Ecuador itself had ordered the severing of Assange's Internet connection under pressure from the US government. In a statement, the ministry said that WikiLeaks had "published a wealth of documents impacting on the US election campaign," adding that the government of Ecuador "respects the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states" and "does not interfere in external electoral processes." On that grounds, the statement claimed, the Ecuadorian government decided to "restrict access" to the communications network at its London embassy.

This statement from the bourgeois government of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa is a study in hypocrisy and cowardice. By abetting the US government's suppression of WikiLeaks, Quito has intervened in the US elections on the side of the ruling establishment and against the rights of the American people. If Correa expects that his professed sensitivity toward the "principle of non-intervention" will be reciprocated, he should recall the fate of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, who was toppled in a coup orchestrated by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009.

WikiLeaks cited reports that Secretary of State John Kerry had demanded that the government of Ecuador carry out the action "on the sidelines of the negotiations" surrounding the abortive Colombian peace accord last month in Bogota. The US government intervened to prevent any further exposures that could damage the campaign of Clinton, who has emerged as the clear favorite of the US military and intelligence complex as well as the Wall Street banks.

Whether the State Department was the only entity placing pressure on Ecuador on behalf of the Clinton campaign, or whether Wall Street also intervened directly, is unclear. The timing of the Internet cutoff, in the immediate aftermath of the release of Clinton's Goldman Sachs speeches, may be more than coincidental.

In the spring of 2014, the government of Ecuador agreed to transfer more than half of its gold reserves to Goldman Sachs Group Inc. for three years, in an attempt to raise cash to cover a growing deficit brought on by the collapse in oil prices. It reportedly sent 466,000

ounces of gold to Goldman Sachs, worth about $580 million at the time, in return for "high security" financial instruments and an anticipated profit on its investment. It is hardly a stretch of the imagination to believe that such a relationship would give Goldman Sachs considerable leverage in relation to the Ecuadorian government.

In any case, it is evident that the US ruling establishment is growing increasingly desperate to stanch the flow of previously secret emails and documents that are exposing the real character not only of Clinton, but of capitalist politics as a whole. While WikiLeaks has released over 17,000 emails from the account of Clinton campaign manager and top establishment Democrat John Podesta, it is believed that there are more than 33,000 still to come.

The transcripts of Clinton's speeches to Goldman Sachs and other top banks and employers' groups, for which she was paid on average $200,000 per appearance, are the most incriminating. They expose the workings of the oligarchy that rules America and the thinking and actions of a politician prepared to do anything to advance the interests of this ruling stratum, while simultaneously accruing ever greater riches and power for herself.

While on the campaign trail, Clinton has postured as a "progressive," determined to hold Wall Street's feet to the fire. But in her speeches to Goldman Sachs, she made clear her unconditional defense of the banks and financial houses. Under conditions of popular outrage against the bankers and their role in dragging millions into crisis in the financial meltdown of 2008, Clinton gave speeches praising the Wall Street financiers and insisting that they were best equipped to regulate themselves. She apologized to them for supporting the toothless Dodd-Frank financial regulatory law, saying that it had to be enacted for "political reasons."

In front of her Wall Street audiences, Clinton made clear she had no inhibitions about ordering mass slaughter abroad. While telling her public audiences that she supports a "no-fly zone" in Syria as a humanitarian measure to save lives, she confidentially acknowledged to her Goldman Sachs audience that such an action is "going to kill a lot of Syrians" and become "an American and NATO involvement where you take a lot of civilians." In the same speech she declared her willingness to bomb Iran.

The emails have laid bare the nexus of corrupt connections between the State Department, the Clinton Foundation, her various campaigns and her network of financial and corporate donors, which together constitute a quasi-criminal influence-peddling enterprise that could best be described as "Clinton, Inc."

The revelations contained in the WikiLeaks material have been ignored or downplayed by the corporate media, which instead has focused unrelentingly on the charges of sexual misconduct leveled against Clinton's Republican rival, Donald Trump.

The Clinton camp itself has sought to deflect any questions regarding what the candidate said in her speeches or the corrupt operations of her campaign by claiming, with no evidence whatsoever, that the material released by WikiLeaks had been hacked by the Russian government and therefore cannot be trusted.

This line of argumentation serves not only to divert attention from the WikiLeaks material, but also to further the Clinton campaign's neo-McCarthyite claims of Kremlin intervention on behalf of Trump and advance a propaganda campaign aimed at preparing popular opinion

for a direct military confrontation with Russia.

There is an air of desperation in the attempt to quash the WikiLeaks material. CNN news anchor Chris Cuomo, an open supporter of Clinton, went so far as to lie to his audience, claiming it was illegal for them to access the emails and insisting they could obtain any information on them only through the filter of the corporate media.

Well before the release of documents related to the Democratic Party, the determination of ruling circles to suppress WikiLeaks had found repeated and violent expression. State Department officials have come forward with a report that in 2010, in the midst of WikiLeaks' mass release of State Department cables exposing US imperialist operations around the world, Clinton, then secretary of state, asked subordinates, "Can't we just drone this guy?" She recently said she could not remember the remark, but if she made it, it was a joke.

During the same period, however, Clinton supporter and longtime Democratic campaign operative Bob Beckel declared in a television interview in relation to Assange: "A dead man can't leak stuff. This guy's a traitor, he's treasonous, and he has broken every law of the United States… there's only one way to do it: illegally shoot the son of a bitch."

To this point, the American ruling class has limited itself to judicial frame-ups and character assassination, counting on the help of its servants within both the media and the pseudo-left, large sections of which have either joined the witch-hunt against Assange or downplayed his victimization.

The principal vehicle for this campaign of persecution had been fabricated allegations of sexual misconduct pursued by Swedish authorities acting in league with the US and British governments. Earlier this year, the UN's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued findings that Assange had been "deprived of his liberty in an arbitrary manner," meaning the body had reached the conclusion that the Swedish case constituted a politically motivated frame-up.

In the midst of the current attempt to silence Assange, an even more bizarre and filthy frame-up has been concocted, attempting to smear the WikiLeaks founder with charges of taking Russian money as well as pedophilia.

At the center of these allegations is a little known online dating service, Toddandclare.com, which first attempted to lure Assange into a supposed deal to film an ad for the site, for which he supposedly would be paid $1 million, to be provided by the Russian government. When WikiLeaks rejected this preposterous provocation, the same site claimed that Assange had been charged with inappropriate contact through the site with an eight-year-old Canadian child visiting the Bahamas. This accusation was then invoked in an attempt to pressure the UN to drop its demand for an end to the persecution of Assange.

Even a cursory investigation makes clear that these allegations constitute a grotesque fabrication. Bahamian police have stated that there are no charges or any case whatsoever against Assange. The dating service has no business address, working phone number or corporate presence anywhere in the US, having all the earmarks of a dummy company created by US intelligence for the purpose of hounding Assange.

The use of such tactics is a measure of how terrified the US ruling class has become in the

face of growing mass hostility to both major political parties and their two abhorrent candidates. Their fear is that the relentless exposure of the inner workings of a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich is robbing the existing political setup of what little legitimacy it had left within the population, and creating the conditions for a political radicalization within the working class and social upheavals, whoever is elected on November 8.

The original source of this article is World Socialist Website
Copyright © Bill Van Auken, World Socialist Website, 2016

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Bill Van Auken

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca