



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 13, 2010

WikiLeaks: Asking the Right Questions

Nearly everyone with an internet connection knows the website WikiLeaks.org to be the notorious publisher of inconvenient truths about the secret machinations of government and military operations. Scarcely fewer know that the founder, Julian Assange, was arrested last week in London. Only a few are asking the right questions.

In an interview in April, Assange was quite forthright about his intentions. He said:

WikiLeaks is an international public service. It helps people who have suppressed information to get it out to the public where it can do some good....



Then once that important information is public, we keep it public. That is quite a difficult thing because of legal attacks and illegal attacks...by governments and corporations when you try to get something out that may achieve reform.

The number of files of information he receives is massive, and goes through a nominal “vetting” process before being put online. The information comes into Sweden, then is passed on to Belgium and then on to another unnamed country. The reason is that these countries have substantial protections for the rights to anonymity and privacy for the suppliers. He explains:

We have used this not just to stop seizure of our servers or records in Sweden and Belgium but also to prevent investigations occurring in other countries....

There have been more than 100 attempts, legal attempts, to attack us. Some of them [were] quite serious, all of which we have succeeded [to thwart] successfully with help from our friends.

Assange started WikiLeaks over four years ago, and some of his information has brought major change. He spoke of the removal and replacement of the government in Kenya as a direct result of inside information that came out in time to have an impact on the election. The Defense department chief for Denmark resigned when certain suppressed information was published by WikiLeaks. And the prime minister of Tanzania also resigned following publication of incriminating information. Assange considers his website “a force for a free press. We publish the material which is in the greatest need of a free press ... material which other people cannot publish. We are a publisher of last resort.”

When pressed about his ideology, Assange claimed to have none.

Our goal is justice. Our goal is to have a just civilization. That is sort of a personal motivating goal. And the message is transparency ... It is not right [and] it is not left. It is about understanding ... first you have to understand what is actually going on. Civilization needs good information for good decisions to happen.

Assange was asked about historians controlling the future, and he quoted George Orwell’s [dictum](#): He who controls the past, controls the future. His efforts, he says, are simply to bring full light to bear on



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the present.

Accordingly, his efforts have caught the attention of governments around the world. His interviewer asked Assange: “[they] are now preparing for an epic struggle to try to shut WikiLeaks down. How would they try to do that? How do [you] make sure that WikiLeaks can never be shut down?”

Well, we have a lot of supporters in difference countries. I mean people who believe in liberty, who believe in justice, or people who want to see corrupt governments suffer.

Assange filled in the details of what happened in Kenya in 2007:

We got hold of something called the Crowe report which was a secret report produced by a UK private intelligence organization...to find out where all the money went from the previous Kenyan government. They paid probably around \$3 million to produce [it]. The stated intent was [it would] be released to the public. [It was never] released. Instead the Kibaki government kept this report which revealed extensive money laundering and looting of state funds...that allowed Moi, the previous president...to walk away.

When we released [the report], there was political outrage from [government officials], from the people, and yes that did have an effect on the election. But I think something else had a greater effect, and that is that all the people named in that report started to see that the other people named in that report were getting more than they thought they were getting when they were cutting up the money...so they fell in on themselves...[and] they all lost [the election].

The *Daily Bell* has followed Assange and WikiLeaks closely for several months, with a [mixture](#) of concern and delight. It has been so highly effective in exposing sins to daylight that the *Bell* fears those exposed will use this as an opportunity to oppress the Internet itself: “We may raise the question whether in fact Mr. Assange, the defender of free speech, is being instrumentalized, consciously or unconsciously, in the interest of his declared enemy.

Clearly, no matter how you look at it, the internet is a force that governments are having a hard time keeping in check. It appears they are determined to assert more control, if that is indeed in any way possible.

The [announcement](#) by the FCC that it would change its internal definition of the internet so that it also would fall under its jurisdiction chilled many observers.

After all, the internet has permitted the rise of independent media like this website, and has fueled Establishment-busting movements like the presidential candidacy of Ron Paul. It has helped educate millions of people...a free and open Internet has been the single most important force that has helped to turn the tide of Big Government...

And [the arrest](#) of Assange, according to Charles Scaliger, is “the first-ever act of deliberate systematic censorship of the Web by the U. S. government ... it is a very small step from the crusade against WikiLeaks to broader efforts to purge the Internet of all dissent labeled as ‘hate speech.’”

Ron Paul made a critical point that much about WikiLeaks has been pointed away from the key question: what should United States foreign policy be? What is it that requires so much backroom maneuvering and suspicion and pressure to make deals?

No one questions the status quo or suggests a wholesale rethinking of our foreign policy. No one suggests that the White House or the State Department should be embarrassed that the U. S. engages in spying and meddling. The only embarrassment is that it was made public.



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The questions raised by and about WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange, are important ones, and it is hoped that his efforts to shed the disinfecting rays of sunshine into dark corners continue to be successful. At the same time, the WikiLeaks saga is only a small skirmish in the major battle being fought daily: the battle of light versus darkness.



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