



WikiLeaks' Assange Accuses Some Critics of Terror, Calls for Prosecution

Critics of WikiLeaks and founder Julian Assange have called for everything from prosecution and new laws to extrajudicial kidnapping and even assassination to stop the embarrassing leaks and deter future whistleblowers. But the now-famous Australian is fighting back, calling for criminal “incitement-to-murder” prosecutions over the most extreme and prominent outbursts.



Among his targets are people such as failed GOP presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee; former Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin; University of Calgary political-science Professor Tom Flanagan, an advisor to former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper; Vice President Joe Biden; and others around the world who have called for his head — literally.

“Why was he not pursued with the same urgency we pursue al-Qaida and Taliban leaders?” [wondered](#) Palin in a Facebook message. She suggested “cyber tools” be used to permanently shut down WikiLeaks. Vice President Joe Biden [likened](#) Assange to a “high-tech terrorist.” And of course, the Obama regime [claims the power to assassinate even U.S. citizens](#) suspected of terrorism no matter where in the world they may be — with no charges, trial, jury, or due process.

Former Arkansas Governor Huckabee also went on the offensive, saying any penalty short of execution for the whistleblower would be “too kind.” While not referring to Assange in the first comment, later in the same interview he said the people responsible for the leaks were guilty of “treason.” He also blasted the *New York Times*, which was even working with government censors to make sure nothing the regime didn’t like was printed.

Establishment neoconservative Newt Gingrich [called](#) Assange “an active enemy combatant who is engaged in information warfare against the United States.” He also said the leaker should be tried for treason, and that the regime should work on censorship to prevent leaks coming out in the media. Numerous talking heads including Fox News personality Bill O’Reilly have [called](#) for the leaker to be executed for treason as well.

But in an interview with MSNBC, Assange [fought back](#); calling for the politicians and talking heads to be punished for their remarks, which he likened to terrorism. “Oh, it’s just another idiot trying to make a name for himself,” Assange [said](#) of Huckabee, calling him and Palin shock jocks. “But it’s a serious business. I mean if we are to have a civil society, you cannot have senior people making calls on national TV to go around the judiciary and illegally murder people. That is incitement to commit



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 4, 2011

murder. That is an offense.”

Assange also said alleged whistleblower Bradley Manning, accused of leaking the documents, was a “political prisoner.” He asked if the U.S. actually obeys the rule of law as well. “Because Europeans are starting to wonder whether it is still obeying the rule of law. And it needs to be very careful,” he warned. “Is it going to descend into an anarchy where those great Bill of Rights traditions about due process are just thrown to the wind whenever some shock jock politician thinks that they can use it to make a name for themselves? Or do we take things according to laws expressly made by the people and their representatives? That is the way things should be done.”

Finally, the WikiLeaks founder called for criminal prosecutions. “When people call for illegal, deliberate assassination and kidnapping of others, they should be held to account,” Assange told the MSNBC host, referring to Democrats and Republicans alike. “They should be charged for incitement to commit murder.”

Another prominent commentator was even more straightforward in [calling for the extrajudicial murder](#) of the Australian editor of WikiLeaks. “Well, I think Assange should be assassinated, actually,” [said](#) former Harper advisor Professor Tom Flanagan in an interview with a state-run Canadian television station. “I think Obama should put out a contract and maybe use a drone or something.”

The CBC news anchor, recognizing the seriousness of the remarks, offered Flanagan the opportunity to retract his statement. Flanagan refused. “Well I’m feeling very manly today,” he said, noting that “I would not be unhappy if Assange disappeared.”

In a live question-and-answer session on the U.K. *Guardian*’s website, Assange [responded](#) by calling for the Canadian’s prosecution as well. “Mr. Flanagan and the others seriously making these statements should be charged with incitement to commit murder,” Assange wrote. He also said that in WikiLeaks’ four year history, there has been no “credible allegation” — even by the Pentagon — of a single person being harmed by the leaks.

But Flanagan eventually changed his tune, saying he regretted the extreme remarks after [police announced](#) that they were investigating his comments and would refer the information to prosecutors. “I never seriously intended to advocate or propose the assassination of Mr. Assange,” he told CBC. “But I do think that what he’s doing is very malicious and harmful to diplomacy and endangering people’s lives, and I think it should be stopped.”

Canada does have a law forbidding incitement, but the action in question must actually take place for the law to take effect. So unless Assange is murdered, Flanagan is probably in the clear for now. At least one Canadian lawyer [suggested](#) the comments could lead to other charges, however.

The U.S., on the other hand, does not really have federal criminal incitement laws per se. But if incitement is aimed at producing “imminent lawless action” and if it is “likely” to happen, it could theoretically be criminal. And it has happened before, even recently. Hal Turner, a racist agent provocateur paid by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was [prosecuted](#) for urging supporters to “take up arms” against corrupt officials.

One of Assange’s lawyers also [recommended prosecution](#) over the statements. “These calls for his assassination are absolutely outrageous and indeed illegal. I think that the prosecuting authorities ought to consider prosecuting these individuals for incitement to violence,” the attorney told the “Democracy Now” radio program. “Obviously, assassination is illegal, and we take these concerns very seriously.” The lawyer also said Sarah Palin’s remarks could prevent a fair trial for Assange in U.S.



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courts.

And Assange has picked up some prominent allies who strongly criticized the assassination outbursts. "We condemn and reject every incitement to murder, incarcerate or in any way harm Mr. Assange," [wrote](#) a coalition of American activists in a joint statement. "Government representatives have issued serious and unjustified threats against Mr. Assange and his non-profit media organization which serve only to maintain a cloak of secrecy around high crimes and violations of international law, including torture, tampering with democratically elected governments, illegal bombings and wars, surveillance, mass slaughter of innocent civilians and more."

The group also urged broader condemnation of the U.S regime's efforts from the rest of society. "We call on all governments, organizations, and individuals of conscience forcefully to condemn and reject all U.S. efforts to fraudulently criminalize the legitimate journalism of Julian Assange, WikiLeaks and related efforts to expose an increasingly lawless U.S. government to the indispensable democratic requirement of public scrutiny," they wrote.

Assange is currently [out on bail](#) under house arrest in the U.K. over the almost ludicrous charges of having sex without a condom in Sweden. He could be extradited to face Swedish prosecutors early this year.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder [announced](#) that the Department of Justice is investigating Assange and WikiLeaks. But so far, despite the shrill bipartisan calls for prosecution for conspiracy or espionage, no U.S. charges have been filed yet.

The whistleblowing organization has said it has a back-up plan in case its leader is jailed or murdered. In addition to releasing all of the rest of the documents anyway, Assange has spread a massive encrypted file dubbed "The Insurance" far and wide. If anything happens to him, he will release the encryption key which would reveal to the world the file's contents — presumably damning information on U.S. authorities and others.

WikiLeaks offered to work with U.S. officials to black out sensitive names or information that could place sources at risk. But the regime refused. And while some legislators have taken a stand for the organization or even praised it, they are still few and far between. Most American politicians who have spoken out are howling for some sort of U.S. prosecution of Assange and his organization at the very least.

But Assange is taking the threats seriously and doing what he can to protect himself and his affiliates. "The threats against our lives are a matter of public record, however, we are taking the appropriate precautions to the degree that we are able when dealing with a superpower," he said.

Photo: Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, poses for photographers in the grounds of Ellingham Hall, the home of Front Line Club founding member Vaughan Smith, at Bungay, England, Dec. 17, 2010: AP Images

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