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Feb 22, 2024 · 23 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1760645157370712386](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce an Australian hacker, publisher and activist, Julian Assange. He's best-known as the founder of WikiLeaks, leaking hacked and stolen data, cooperating with the Russian intelligence, and for being under criminal investigation in the US.

1/22



Julian's activism probably comes from his father, John Shipton, an "anti-war activist" who's helped Julian with launching WikiLeaks and the WikiLeaks Party. He also arranged a trip to Syria to meet with Bashar al-Assad and even planned to open an office for the party there.

2/22

WikiLeaks Party prepare for election campaign as Julian Assange remains stranded in London

Lateline / By Jason Om

Posted Thu 11 Jul 2013 at 5:44pm, updated Thu 11 Jul 2013 at 5:58pm



Julian Assange's father John Shipton and members of the WikiLeaks Party. (ABC News: Jason Om)

abc.net.au/news/wikileaks-party-gears-up-...

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WikiLeaks

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WikiLeaks party members reported to have met high-ranking Syrian officials

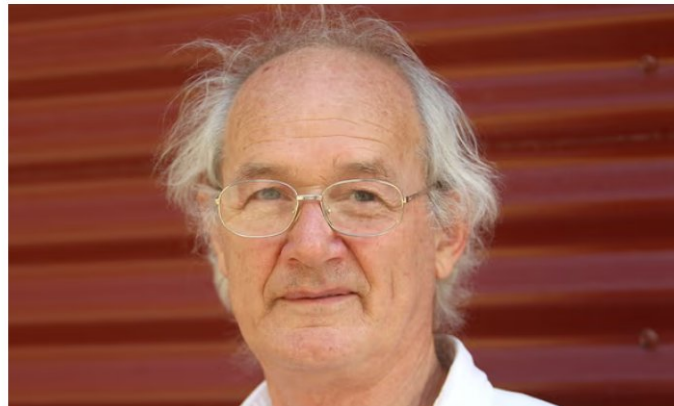
Photo on Twitter appears to show delegates with president Bashar al-Assad as part of 'peace and reconciliation' trip

Oliver Milman

@olliemilman

Mon 30 Dec 2013 08:40 CET

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Party chairman John Shipton - Julian Assange's father - in Sydney. Photograph: Marianna Massey/AAP Photograph: Marianna Massey/AAP

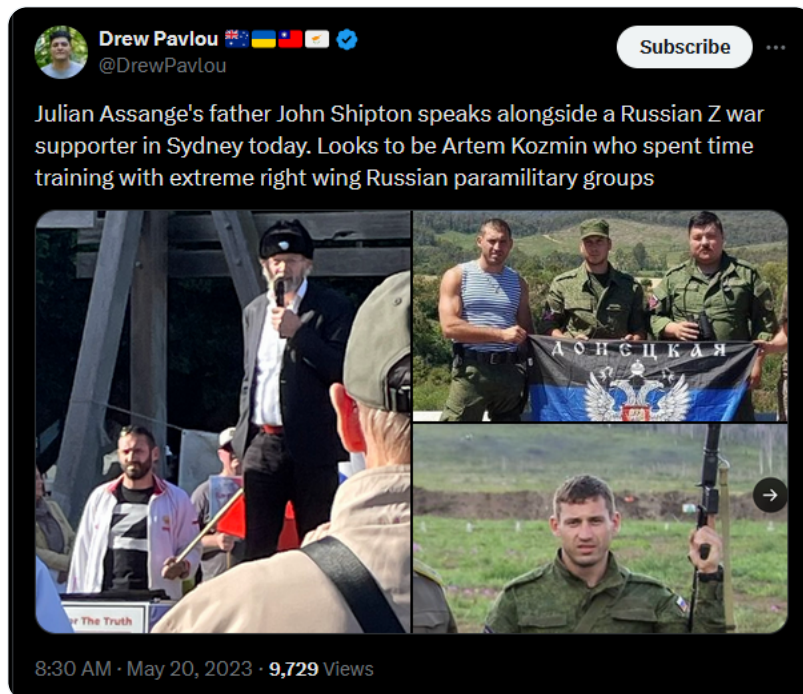
A delegation from Australia's **WikiLeaks** party has reportedly met with high-ranking Syrian officials, including president Bashar al-Assad, as part of a "peace and reconciliation" trip.

The party said the delegation, which met several regime figures last week, aimed to "show solidarity with the Syrian people and their nation", as well as warn against the "deadly consequences" of any western military intervention into the civil war that has raged in **Syria** for almost three years.



In recent years, Shipton has been seen regularly at Australian "Z-rallies" in support of the Kremlin's war on Ukraine. Incidentally, Shipton got interested in Julian after he became famous in Australia - before that, he was almost completely absent from Julian's life.

3/22



Shipton met Assange's mother, Christine, then aged 17, at an antiques shop on his way to a Vietnam war demonstration - which she joined. Little is known about the relationship, except that it had ended by the time of their son's first birthday - if not earlier. Christine then married theatre director Brett Assange.

Shipton told el País that he first got to know his son after Christine rang his Sydney home in 1996. Assange was 25 at the time. "It was extraordinary," Shipton said. "Certain of his thought processes made it seem like I was staring into a mirror. I could barely believe it. He had the same logic, the same intense curiosity, the same obtuse way of constructing sentences ... that never end."

By 1987, Assange had found his way into the hacking community, and by 1991 he was "probably Australia's most accomplished hacker". Many of his hacking operations attacked the US and its "military-industrial complex", including NASA and MILNET.

4/22

Julian Assange

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Julian Assange: the teen hacker who became insurgent in information war

The colourful lives and experiences that shaped underground rebel Julian Assange on the road to WikiLeaks luminary

Buy WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy here

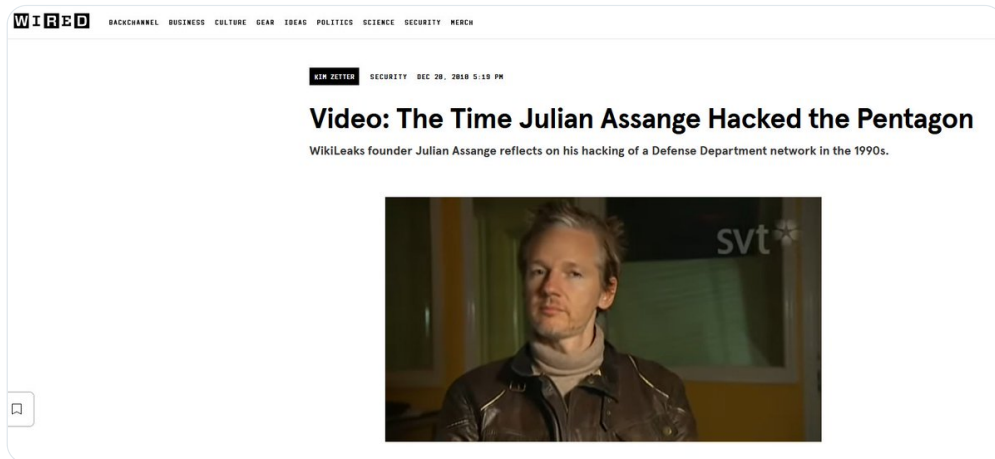
David Leigh and Luke Harding

Sun 30 Jan 2011 21:00 CET

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The 23-year-old Julian Assange on his way to Melbourne's Victoria county court in May 1995. He pleaded guilty to 24 counts of hacking. Photograph: Fairfax Photos



In 1994, he was charged with 31 counts of crimes related to hacking. He eventually struck a plea deal, pleaded guilty and was given a fine of 2100 AUD. He later described the trial as a formative period & as an experience that led him to start WikiLeaks over ten years later.

5/22

Working with two other hackers under the name International Subversives, Assange used the pseudonym Mendax to hack into the systems of various major institutions, including the U.S. Air Force's 7th Command Group. In 1994, he was charged with 31 counts of hacking and related crimes, which carried the possibility of a ten-year prison term. When the case came to trial the following year, Assange pleaded guilty to 25 of the hacking charges and was only required to pay a small amount in damages. The experience set him on the intellectual path that would lead him to found WikiLeaks.

In Dec 2006, Assange published an essay that described WikiLeaks' strategy and purpose: the group would use leaks to force organizations to "reduce levels of abuse and dishonesty". Some of the leaks exposed widespread corruption and had a significant impact in some countries.

6/22

By **Mila Sanina**

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WikiLeaks Cables Help Uncover What Made Tunisians Revolt

World Jan 25, 2011 1:05 PM EST



A protester displays a defaced portrait of ousted president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. Photo by Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Digital media

This article is more than 15 years old

Mark Sweney

@marksweney
Wed 19 Mar 2008 17:50 CET

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Wikileaks defies 'great firewall of China'

Whistleblower website Wikileaks has made 35 censored videos of civil unrest in **Tibet** available in a bid to get round the "great firewall of China".

Wikileaks said that posting the videos was a "response to the Chinese Public Security Bureau's carte-blanche censorship of YouTube, the BBC, CNN, the Guardian and other sites" that had carried sensitive video footage about Tibet.

Wikileaks, which earlier this month **successfully saw off legal action** that threatened to shut the website, is calling on bloggers to post footage to help it circumvent the Chinese internet censorship.

China's internal censorship of online and TV coverage of the unrest in Tibet has drawn heavy criticism.

86 more audios appear from the "Petrogate" case

By Spacio Libre • 28 January 2009 • #86 new audios, Alan García, Alberto Químper, oil corruption, Peru, petroscandalo, Rómulo León Alegría

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Lima, Peru (Spacio Libre/ Peru21.pe).- A total of 86 recordings of telephone conversations by former aprista minister Rómulo León were placed at the disposal of Judge Jorge Barreto of the Third Anti-Corruption Court, who is in charge of the investigations of the alleged irregularities in the granting of five pre-aster lots in favor of the company Discover Petroleum.

The material was handed over to that magistrate by journalist Pablo O'Brien and has been fully uploaded on the [Wikileaks](#) page, so that anyone can hear these files.

To ensure the transparency of the information is that this support (Wikileaks) has been chosen, as it allows citizens to access it freely and as it was delivered by the source. This is all the information we accessed. There is no more, at least in my possession, says O'Brien on his blog.

In Apr 2010, WikiLeaks released a video of alleged US war crimes in Baghdad in Jul 2007. In 2010, they released over 250 000 US diplomatic cables, an incident that later became known as the "Cablegate". Allegedly, Assange was the one who helped to decrypt the data.

7/22



All you gotta do is pick up a weapon.

US embassy cables leak sparks global diplomatic crisis

- More than 250,000 dispatches reveal US foreign strategies
- Diplomats ordered to spy on allies as well as enemies
- Saudi king urged Washington to bomb Iran

[Read the full coverage of the US embassy cables](#)

David Leigh

Sun 28 Nov 2010 19:13 CET

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1,339



The release of more than 250,000 US embassy cables reveals previously secret information on American intelligence gathering, and political and military strategy. Photograph: Rex Features

The United States was catapulted into a worldwide diplomatic crisis today, with the leaking to the Guardian and other international media of more than 250,000 classified cables from its embassies, many sent as recently as February this year.

At the start of a series of daily extracts from the US embassy cables - many designated "secret" - the Guardian can disclose that Arab leaders are privately urging an air strike on Iran and that US officials have been instructed to spy on the UN leadership.

Assange published the leaks in their original form, without censoring any names. This put hundreds of dissidents in Afghanistan and Iraq at "risk of serious harm, torture and even death". Some sources "disappeared" after the publication of unredacted documents.

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Julian Assange 'put lives at risk' by sharing unredacted files

🕒 24 February 2020



'Hundreds put at risk'

Mr Lewis said the dissemination of specific classified documents unredacted put dissidents in Afghanistan and Iraq at "risk of serious harm, torture or even death".

The US identified hundreds of "at risk and potentially at risk people" around the world, he said, and made efforts to warn them.

"The US is aware of sources, whose redacted names and other identifying information was contained in classified documents published by Wikileaks, who subsequently disappeared, although the US can't prove at this point that their disappearance was the result of being outed by Wikileaks."

News | February 24, 2020 | updated 30 Sep 2022 8:58am

Julian Assange extradition: Sources 'disappeared' after names exposed by Wikileaks, court hears

By PA Mediapoint



A report told that the leaks put hundreds of Afghans at risk for fighting against the Taliban. To this, Assange commented that "Well, they're informants," continuing that "So, if they get killed, they've got it coming to them. They deserve it."

WORLD

Report: Afghan leaks dangerously expose informants' identities

The leaking of U.S. intelligence documents have put hundreds of Afghans at risk because the files identify informants working with NATO forces, The Times of London reported.

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July 28, 2010, 6:39 AM EDT / Source: msnbc.com

The leaking of 90,000 U.S. intelligence documents has put hundreds of Afghan lives at risk because the files identify informants working with NATO forces, The Times of London reported on Wednesday.

In just two hours of searching the WikiLeaks archive, reporters found the names, villages, and fathers' names of dozens of Afghans credited with providing intelligence to U.S. forces, the paper said.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has said that all the released reports were checked for named informants and that 15,000 such documents had been held back to protect people.

Despite his claim, The Times of London gave examples of informants named in the released documents.

'[X] said that he would be killed'

The paper, which withheld all details that would identify Afghans, said a Taliban fighter considering defection was named in a 2008 interview. The document reportedly included his village and statements he made about specific commanders and other potential defectors.

"The meeting ended with [X] agreeing to meet with intel personnel from the battalion," the report reads, according to the paper. It was not known whether the man subsequently left the Taliban.

In a case from 2007, a middleman and the Taliban commander he spoke to were both named, according to the paper.

"[X] said that he would be killed if he got caught interacting with any coalition forces, which is why he hides when we go into [Y]," the report read, according to The Times.

David Leigh and Luke Harding's history of WikiLeaks describes how journalists took Assange to Moro's, a classy Spanish restaurant in central London. A reporter worried that Assange would risk killing Afghans who had co-operated with American forces if he put US secrets online without taking the basic precaution of removing their names. "Well, they're informants," Assange replied. "So, if they get killed, they've got it coming to them. They deserve it." A silence fell on the table as the reporters realised that the man the gullible hailed as the pioneer of a new age of transparency was willing to hand death lists to psychopaths. They persuaded Assange to remove names before publishing the State Department Afghanistan cables. But Assange's disillusioned associates suggest that the failure to expose "informants" niggled in his mind.

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AFGHANISTAN

Leaked War Files Expose Identities of Afghan Informants

By Times of London

Published July 27, 2010 10:16pm EDT | Updated December 9, 2015 8:07pm EST

f x t v e m



July 26: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange holds up a copy of Britain's Guardian newspaper during a press conference in London. (AFP)

Antisemitism Exposed

Fox News' "Antisemitism Exposed" newsletter brings you stories on the rising anti-Jewish prejudice across the U.S. and the world.

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In 2010, Assange's associate, WikiLeaks' representative in Russia and eastern Europe and raging antisemite, Russian Israel Shamir allegedly gave a list of "organisers, instigators and rioters, including foreign ones" to Belarus' dictator Lukashenko, whom he greatly admired.

10/22

James Ball joined and thought that in his own small way he was making the world a better place. He realised that WikiLeaks was not what it seemed when an associate of Assange - a stocky man with a greying moustache, who called himself "Adam" - asked if he could pull out everything the State Department documents "had on the Jews". Ball discovered that "Adam" was Israel Shamir, a dangerous crank who uses six different names as he agitates among the antisemitic groups of the far right and far left. As well as signing up to the conspiracy theories of fascism, Shamir was happy to collaborate with Belarus's decayed Brezhnevian dictatorship. Leftwing tyranny, rightwing tyranny, as long as it was anti-western and anti-Israel, Shamir did not care.

Nor did Assange. He made Shamir WikiLeaks's representative in Russia and eastern Europe. Shamir praised the Belarusian dictatorship. He compared the pro-democracy protesters beaten and imprisoned by the KGB to football hooligans. On 19 December 2010, the *Belarus-Telegraf*, a state newspaper, said that WikiLeaks had allowed the dictatorship to identify the "organisers, instigators and rioters, including foreign ones" who had protested against rigged elections.

In unrest following the evidently stolen elections of December 2010, strongman Lukashenko (ruling since 1994) had over 600 protesters and dissidents rounded up. Some were tortured, and the campaign to win their release brought courageous "silent protesters" repeatedly to the streets. The affair won Belarus the opprobrium of the UN Human Rights Commissioner, EU, US State Department and global rights groups, but (happily for Lukashenko) few international headlines.

Last year, the free-press advocacy group Index on Censorship cited evidence that WikiLeaks' "accredited" representative in Belarus, Israel Shamir, [may have provided](#) the Lukashenko regime with intelligence from US diplomatic cables to help determine who to round up. Lukashenko boasted in the state-controlled media of receiving WikiLeaks intelligence that revealed who was "working behind the scenes" in the December protests. Shamir was meanwhile [boasting claims](#) on CounterPunch website that WikiLeaks cables provided "proof positive" the protests were "orchestrated" by the State Department. (The "proof positive" consisted of some indications of a US AID contractor's involvement in money smuggling.)

December 19, 2010

I was in Belarus to observe the Presidential election, and to tell the truth I was expecting some sort of staged little event to mar the day. The outcome of the election was in little doubt. The people were happy, fully employed, and satisfied with their government. They were well aware of what had happened when neighboring countries had embraced the IMF, and they felt no ideological need to tread that same dark road. Some people, however, are more motivated by dollars than patriotism, and these are the people I was expecting. The pro-Western 'Gucci' crowd can always be counted on to protest the choices of the majority. They actually overturned the vote in nearby Ukraine in 2005, and the orange gangs succeeded in stealing the presidency for five long years. If they cannot convince the people with Western dollars, then they simply riot and try to take it by force.

In 2012, it was reported that Russia Today (now RT) would give Assange his own talk show. On the show, Julian interviewed many anti-US and pro-Kremlin figures, including Noam Chomsky, Pakistani politician Imran Khan, and the secretary-general of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah.

11/22

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's TV show to be aired on Russian channel

State-run Russia Today buys rights to broadcast 10-part series of interviews with 'political players, thinkers and revolutionaries'

Miriam Elder in Moscow

Wed 25 Jan 2012 16:03 CET

[Copy link](#)



Julian Assange's television chat show is due to begin airing on Russia Today from March. Photograph: David Levenson/Getty Images

It's the television channel that has given voice to a thousand anti-western conspiracy theories, while avoiding criticism of the hand that feeds it. Now state-run Russia Today, the Kremlin's English-language propaganda arm, has forged an unlikely partnership - with the self-proclaimed defender of truth and freedom [Julian Assange](#).

One day after the [WikiLeaks](#) founder said he was launching a 10-part series of interviews with "key political players, thinkers and revolutionaries", Russia Today announced it had won exclusive first broadcast rights for the show, titled *The World Tomorrow*, and was due to begin airing the show in March.

"Our viewers are open to the discussions that will be presented through Julian's show on our channel," the channel's editor-in-chief, Kremlin loyalist Margarita Simonyan, said in a statement.

The Weekend Interview | 29 April 2023

Noam Chomsky: Russia is fighting more humanely than the US did in Iraq

The US linguist on the war in Ukraine, how the West is provoking China and why the UK is “not an independent country anymore”.

By Ido Vock



Ido Vock

@idvck

Ido Vock is Europe correspondent at the *New Statesman*. His work includes analysis of political issues from various countries, including the war in Ukraine and the EU's energy crisis.



Haaretz | Israel News

Hezbollah's Nasrallah Praises 'Heroic' Oct 7 Hamas Attack, Says It Was '100% Palestinian'

The leader of Hezbollah lauded how the Hamas attack led to an 'earthquake', in Israel, and warned that 'those who want to prevent a regional war must quickly stop the aggression in Gaza'



Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's speech being broadcast live via video in Beirut, in November. Credit: Mohamed Azakir / Reuters

During the US 2016 presidential election, WikiLeaks released hacked emails and documents from the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. Cybersecurity experts stated that the attack on the DNC server was conducted by GRU,...

NATIONAL SECURITY

How the Russians hacked the DNC and passed its emails to WikiLeaks

By [Ellen Nakashima](#) and [Shane Harris](#)

July 13, 2018 at 7:26 p.m. EDT



Here's what we know about the Kremlin's playbook for creating division in the U.S. (Video: Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post, Photo: MICHAEL KLIMENTYEV/SPUTNIK/KREMLIN POOL/POOL/EPA-EFE/REX/Shutterstock/The Washington Post)

...a Russian military intelligence agency. The Mueller report concluded that GRU used an alias "Guccifer 2.0" to share the content with WikiLeaks and others. The e-mails also gave birth to various conspiracy theories, including Pizzagate and Frazzledrip.

13/22

Insults, fighting, shouting:
Strzok hearing boils over

The then worked to distribute the documents starting in June 2016. The Russian intelligence agents had registered the website DCLeaks.com and started a Facebook page and Twitter feed claiming they were "American hacktivists." Once the DNC announced publicly it had been hacked, the Russians used the online moniker Guccifer 2.0, claiming they were a lone Romanian. They did this "to undermine the allegations of Russian responsibility for the intrusion," the indictment said. They also took steps to cover their tracks, deleting files and logs on computers.

In June 2016, Guccifer 2.0 began posting stolen documents through a Wordpress site they ran. To spread the material further, they shared stolen documents with people including a US congressional candidate, a state lobbyist, journalists, an entity known as Organization 1, which appears to be Wikileaks, and a person in touch with the Trump campaign.

TECHNOLOGY

Two years after #Pizzagate showed the dangers of hateful conspiracies, they're still rampant on YouTube

By [Craig Timberg](#), [Elizabeth Dwoskin](#), [Tony Romm](#) and [Andrew Ba Tran](#)
December 10, 2018 at 9:15 p.m. EST



In an effort to counter conspiracy theory content, YouTube works to direct users to more reliable sources. (Dado Ruvic/Reuters)

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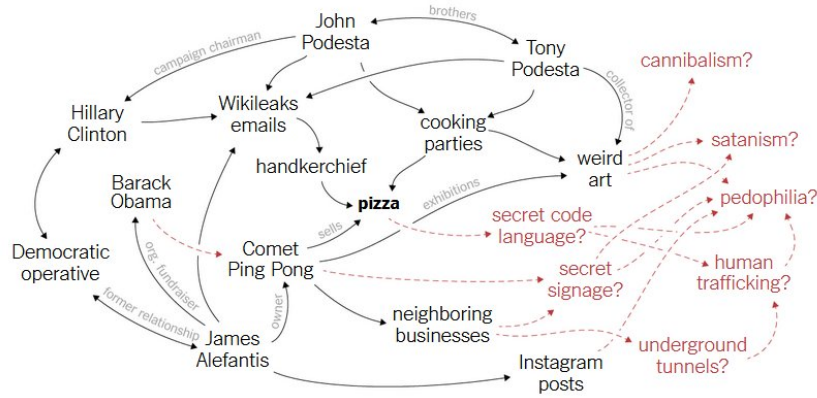


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Dissecting the #PizzaGate Conspiracy Theories

By GREGOR AISCH, JON HUANG and CECILIA KANG DEC. 10, 2016

In the span of a few weeks, a false rumor that Hillary Clinton and her top aides were involved in various crimes snowballed into a wild conspiracy theory that they were running a child-trafficking ring out of a Washington pizza parlor. The fast evolution of the false theory revealed how a powerful mix of fake news and social media led an armed North Carolina man to investigate the rumors about the pizza place, Comet Ping Pong, last Sunday.

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Assange has also been in contact with several figures close to Trump - in 2016 he communicated with Don Jr., and in 2017 with Roger Stone. He also suggested that a DNC staffer Seth Rich could've been the source of the DNC e-mails and that he was killed for this.

AMERICA

Donald Trump Jr. Had Direct Contact With WikiLeaks During Campaign

NOVEMBER 14, 2017 · 4:48 AM ET

By Scott Neuman



FBI documents reveal communication between Stone, Assange



Roger Stone, center, departs federal court in Washington, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. President Donald Trump loyalist and ally, Roger Stone was sentenced to over three years in federal prison, following an extraordinary move by Attorney General William Barr to back off his Justice Department's original sentencing recommendation. The sentence came amid President Donald Trump's unrelenting defense of his longtime confidant that led to a mini-revolt inside the Justice Department and allegations the president interfered in the case. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

BY ERIC TUCKER, COLLEEN LONG AND MICHAEL BALSAMO

Published 3:41 AM GMT+2, April 29, 2020

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Mr. Stone's explanations of his relationship with Mr. Assange have varied widely. Before the 2016 election, he first said he was in direct touch with Mr. Assange, then said he was communicating with him through an intermediary. Later, when those claims became a political liability for Mr. Trump, he said he was only bluffing.

"I have never met with, nor spoken to Julian Assange, either in person, by telephone or email or any other means," he [said on his website in April 2018](#). "Assange himself has repeatedly and publicly said the same thing."

The June 2017 exchange of messages shows that Mr. Stone tried to reassure Mr. Assange that he would escape criminal prosecution.

"With the trumped-up sexual assault charges dropped, I don't know of any crime you need to be pardoned for," he wrote. He was apparently referring to a decision by Swedish authorities to drop a sexual assault investigation that focused on Mr. Assange.

Seth Rich Was Not Source of Leaked D.N.C. Emails, Mueller Report Confirms

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Mary Rich, the mother of the Democratic operative Seth Rich, at a news conference in Washington in 2016. His family has spent years fighting misinformation about his death. Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post, via Getty Images

By Sarah Mervosh

April 20, 2019

In 2016, WikiLeaks also received a massive cache of documents about the Russian government. The total size of the data package was 68 gigabytes, more than 50% of which hadn't been published before. But "Assange gave excuse after excuse" to not publish them.

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CYBERSECURITY

WikiLeaks rejected documents on Russia during 2016 election: report

BY JOE UCHILL - 08/17/17 4:10 PM ET



WikiLeaks reportedly refused a massive cache of documents concerning the Russian government during the 2016 election season.

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"Many WikiLeaks staff and volunteers or their families suffered at the hands of Russian corruption and cruelty, we were sure Wikileaks would release it," the source told Foreign Policy. "Assange gave excuse after excuse."

The documents allegedly totaled 68 gigabytes of data, more than half of which had never been previously released. The remainder had been released by news outlets in 2014 and concerned military operations in the Ukraine.

During the same year, Assange dumped a cache of files on Saudi Arabia. These documents exposed a Saudi man arrested for being homosexual, names of several Saudi citizens suffering from HIV & virginity status of many Saudi women.

He called it "not even worth a headline."

CAIRO (AP) — WikiLeaks' giant data dumps have rattled the National Security Agency, the U.S. Democratic Party, and the Saudi foreign ministry. But its spectacular mass-disclosures have also included the personal information of hundreds of people — including sick children, rape victims and mental health patients, The Associated Press has found.

In the past year alone, the radical transparency group has published medical files belonging to scores of ordinary citizens while many hundreds more have had sensitive family, financial or identity records posted to the web. In two particularly egregious cases, WikiLeaks named teenage rape victims. In a third case, the site published the name of a Saudi citizen arrested for being gay, an extraordinary move given that homosexuality can lead to social ostracism, a prison sentence or even death in the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom.

“They published everything: my phone, address, name, details,” said a Saudi man who told AP he was bewildered that WikiLeaks had revealed the details of a paternity dispute with a former partner. “If the family of my wife saw this ... Publishing personal stuff like that could destroy people.”

WikiLeaks is famous for unsettling the lives of powerful people — diplomats, military leaders, politicians — with its disclosures of emails and cables and otherwise private communications. Little people can also be unsettled by these radical-transparency data dumps, according to an Aug. 23 Associated Press story by Raphael Satter and Maggie Michael, [“Private lives are exposed as WikiLeaks spills its secrets.”](#)

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The reporters caught up with 23 people — mostly from Saudi Arabia — who were affected by the disclosures. They included two teenage rape victims and a Saudi woman who took on debt to support a sick relative and was outed. She called the episode a “disaster.” WikiLeaks, reported the AP, even published the “name of a Saudi citizen arrested for being gay, an extraordinary move given that homosexuality can lead to social ostracism, a prison sentence or even death in the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom.”

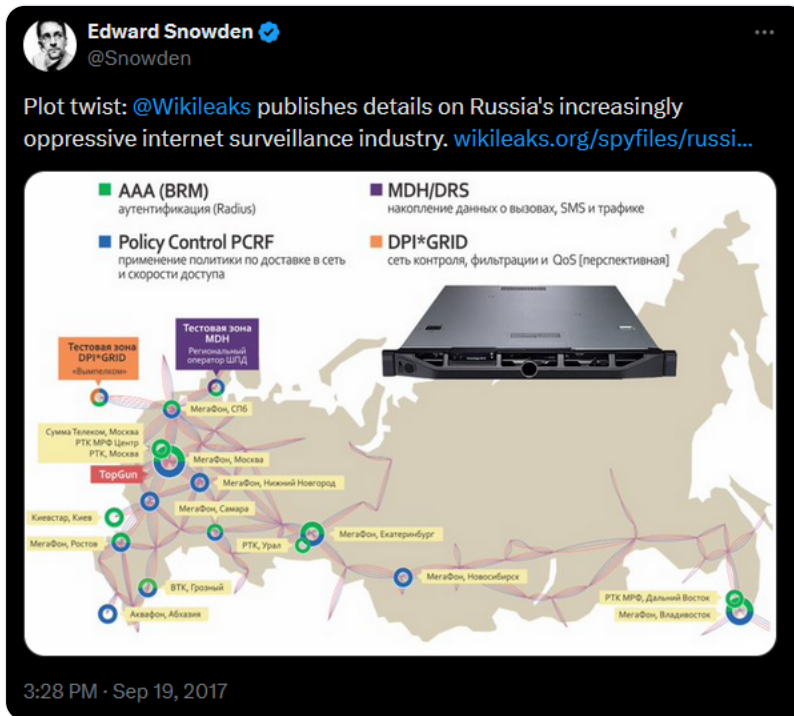
The AP independently found three dozen records pertaining to family issues in the cables — including messages about marriages, divorces, missing children, elopements and custody battles. Many are very personal, like the marital certificates that reveal whether the bride was a virgin. Others deal with Saudis who are deeply in debt, including one man who says his wife stole his money. One divorce document details a male partner's infertility. Others identify the partners of women suffering from sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and Hepatitis C.

Lisa Lynch, who teaches media and communications at Drew University and has followed WikiLeaks for years, said Assange may not have had the staff or the resources to properly vet what he published. Or maybe he felt that the urgency of his mission trumped privacy concerns.

“For him the ends justify the means,” she said.

WikiLeaks attempted to silence the critics in 2017 by publishing a "Spy Files Russia" dump which contained information on a Russian online investigation system SORM. The system had been exposed before, and the leak didn't contain much of new information on how it works.

17/22



WikiLeaks releases files that appear to offer details of Russian surveillance system



By Adam Taylor

September 19, 2017 at 12:43 p.m. EDT



MOS

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3

However, other experts are less impressed. “I don't think it's a real expose,” said Andrei Soldatov, a Russian investigative journalist and co-author of the “The Red Web: The Struggle Between Russia's Digital Dictators and the New Online Revolutionaries.” “It actually adds a few details to the picture, [but] it's not that much.”

The documents released by WikiLeaks on Tuesday appear to show how a St. Petersburg-based technology company called Peter-Service helped state entities gather detailed data on Russian cellphone users, part of a national system of online surveillance called System for Operative Investigative Activities (SORM).

“This system [SORM] has been known for some time, though the documents seem to provide additional technical specifications,” said Ben Buchanan, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center and author of the book “The Cybersecurity Dilemma.”

Assange was heavily involved in the Catalonia independence movement, and he was seen as the movement's international spokesman. Russia was heavily involved in the project, and many Russian officials and former intelligence officers were involved in planning the movement.

POLITICS

Julian Assange is rallying behind Catalan separatists ahead of a historic referendum — and Russia has taken notice

Natasha Bertrand Sep 30, 2017, 9:10 PM GMT+3

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- Wikileaks' founder Julian Assange has been actively supporting Catalonia's push for independence
- The Kremlin has seized on Assange's support for Catalonia in an effort to destabilize the EU
- Edward Snowden, along with other anti-globalization groups, also support Catalonia's independence



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is seen on the balcony of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Britain Thomson Reuters



INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS > ARTICLE > EUROPE'S EDGE

Catalonia: Where There's Trouble There's Russia

By Olga Lautman

September 27, 2021



The October 2017 Catalonia referendum gives a good insight into the Kremlin's ability to identify and exploit weaknesses in democratic states.



It is now known that this was only the beginning of a story that could form the outline of a spy novel. Trying to revive an essentially crushed movement that garnered no support from the European Union or the United States, Josep Lluís Alay, an adviser to Puigdemont, made multiple discreet trips to Moscow in the spring of 2019 seeking secret help in severing Catalonia from Spain.

Earlier this month, the New York Times revealed that during his visits, Alay and his group met “several Russian officials, former intelligence officers, and the well-connected grandson of a KGB spymaster,” Yevgeny Primakov, according to a European intelligence report that paper had reviewed. The report said that Alay, with the help of Russian businessman Alexander Dmitrenko, met active and former intelligence officers, including Andrei Bezrukov, whom the TV series *The Americans* was based on, Sergei Sumin, a colonel in Russia’s FSB spy agency, and Artyom Lukoyanov, known for his heavy involvement and support of Russian separatists in occupied eastern Ukraine.

Shortly afterwards, in 2019, Tsunami Democratic, a protest group seeking independence was created with Alay’s involvement. In one of their first acts, they led protests at Barcelona airport that resulted in rioting, disruption and the cancellation of more than 150 flights. It is not clear, as always, when it comes to Russian operations, what exactly was arranged at the meetings in Moscow, and what was Russia’s direct involvement. But suspicions of Russian interference can be seen as early as 2017.



September 29, 2017 5:53 PM
By Martin Arostegui

Analysts: Russia May Be Helping Catalonia Secessionists

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People cheer and wave esteledas, or Catalonia independence flags, during the "Yes" vote closing campaign in Barcelona, Spain, Sept. 29, 2017.

In 2017, Russian diplomats held secret talks in London to assess whether they could help Assange flee London and travel to Russia. Four different sources claimed that the plan was supported by the Kremlin, and that it would allow Assange to travel to Russia and live there.

Revealed: The secret Christmas plan to transfer Assange from the UK to Russia

Tentative plan to whisk fugitive from London embassy on Christmas Eve was considered too risky

Stephanie Kirchgaessner,
Dan Collyns and Luke
Harding

Fri 21 Sep 2018 13.00 CEST

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Julian Assange would have been whisked away from Ecuador's London embassy in a diplomatic vehicle, under outline plans discussed by diplomats. Photograph: Sang Tan/AP

Sources said the plan involved giving Assange diplomatic documents so that Ecuador would be able to claim he enjoyed diplomatic immunity. As part of the operation, Assange was to be collected from the embassy in a diplomatic vehicle.

Four separate sources said the Kremlin was willing to offer support for the plan - including the possibility of allowing Assange to travel to Russia and live there. One of them said that an unidentified Russian businessman served as an intermediary in these discussions.

The possibility that Assange could travel to Ecuador by boat was also considered.

Currently, there's a debate whether Assange is a journalist or activist. In my view, Assange's actions have been highly unethical and he's put thousands of innocent lives in danger. He's also been extremely selective about which leaks to publish and which to withhold.

Julian Assange is an activist, not a journalist

By Frida Ghitis
5 minute read · Updated 4:52 AM EDT, Fri April 12, 2019



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Ahead of Julian Assange's hearing at the High Court on 20 and 21 February, ARTICLE 19 urges the UK authorities to stop his extradition to the USA, and calls for his immediate release.

There's also strong evidence that, like his father, he's extremely anti-US and biased towards the Kremlin. His associates had strong connections with Russia, he planned to flee to Russia and even made a propaganda show on Russia Today back in 2012.

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Russia backs Julian Assange, says charges 'ostentatiously absurd'

New Delhi • Edited By: Manas Joshi • Updated: Apr 25, 2022, 01:36 PM IST



When asked about Wikileaks role as a whistleblower in Russia, Julian stated that Russia already has Kremlin critics such as Navalny and newspapers like Novaya Gazeta.

Assange, who briefly hosted his own talkshow on the state-owned television network Russia Today, has long had a close relationship with the Putin regime. In his interview with *la Repubblica*, he said there was no need for WikiLeaks to undertake a whistleblowing role in Russia because of the open and competitive debate he claimed exists there.

“In Russia, there are many vibrant publications, online blogs and Kremlin critics, such as [Alexey] Navalny, are part of that spectrum,” he said. “There are also newspapers like *Novaya Gazeta*, in which different parts of society in Moscow are permitted to critique each other and it is tolerated, generally, because it isn’t a big TV channel that might have a mass popular effect, its audience is educated people in Moscow. So my interpretation is that in Russia there are competitors to WikiLeaks.”

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Novaya Gazeta, one of Russia's last independent media, banned by court

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Sep 5, 2022



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File photo. A woman reads a copy of Novaya Gazeta's European version newspaper, at a flat in Riga, Latvia, 6 May 2022. Anti-Kremlin newspaper Novaya Gazeta had suspended publication in Russia under pressure from the authorities. On 6 May, the first print edition of Novaya Gazeta Europa appeared in Latvia. [EPA-EFE/TOMS KALNINS]



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WORLD NEWS

Western officials and Kremlin critics blame Putin and his government for Navalny's death in prison



October 08, 2021 10:34
GMT
By RFE/RL

Working For Novaya Gazeta Puts Its Journalists In The Crosshairs

Russia's Novaya gazeta is best known for its investigative reports on corruption and rights abuses. In a country ranked as one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists, its reporting has earned international accolades but has also put its reporters in considerable danger.

Six of the publication's journalists and contributors have been killed since 2000 and others attacked.

Dmitry Muratov, who helped found the newspaper in 1993 and has long served as its editor in chief, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 8, 2021, along with Filipino-American journalist Maria Ressa.

Despite the killings and threats, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said Muratov "has refused to abandon the newspaper's independent policy" and has "consistently defended the right of journalists to write anything they want about whatever they want, as long as they comply with the professional and ethical standards of journalism."

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