

CIA Director Mike Pompeo, Power and WikiLeaks

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Theme: [Intelligence](#)

“Vested interests deflect from the facts that WikiLeaks publishes by demonizing its brave staff and me.”

Julian Assange, *The Washington Post*, Apr 11, 2017

The Central Intelligence Agency’s current director, **Mike Pompeo**, has a view of history much like that of any bureaucrat as understood by the great sociologist **Max Weber**. The essential, fundamental purpose of bureaucracy is a rationale to manufacture and keep secrets. Transparency and accountability are its enemies. Those who challenge that particular order are, by definition, defilers and dangerous contrarians.

On Thursday, April 13, Pompeo was entertained by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, an opportunity of sorts to sound off on a range of points.[1] Pompeo’s theme is unmistakable, opening up with a discussion about **Philip Agee’s** “advocacy” as a founding member of *CounterSpy*, which called in 1973 for the outing of CIA undercover operatives.

Richard Welch, a CIA station chief working in Athens and identified in a September 1974 issue of *CounterSpy*, was duly deemed a victim of Agee’s stance.

“When he got out of his car to open the gate in front of his house, Richard Welch was assassinated by a Greek terrorist cell.”

Agee is then the mint and mould for the current WikiLeaks agenda, deemed by Pompeo to be compromised in “the harm they inflict on the US institutions and personnel”. What bothers Pompeo is their zeal, their determination, even romance, those self-touted “heroes above the law, saviours of our free and open society.”

Pompeo’s methods are blunt, and shower generous disdain on the notion that free speech protections should extend to such an organisation as WikiLeaks.

“It’s time to call out WikiLeaks for what it really is, a non-state hostile intelligence service, often abetted by state actors like Russia.”

This is the language of fear about the fifth columnist, that WikiLeaks is mimicking the CIA, even surpassing it. (Such flattery!) The organisation “encouraged its followers to find jobs at the CIA in order to obtain intelligence.” Gravely, claims the CIA director,

“It directed Chelsea Manning in her theft of specific secret information.”



CIA Director Mike Pompeo

Never mind what that information actually revealed.

For the director's myopic appraisal of the world, only the select should be in a position to steal.

"We steal secrets from our foreign adversaries, hostile entities and terrorist organizations. And we're damn proud of it."

These words are hardly going to fluster Assange, though they have provided the main front man of WikiLeaks food for thought about what individuals like Pompeo really think about democratic virtue, given the continuous insistence by US officials that they keep the sacred flame of liberty alive the world over. The very defender of the US Republic is willing to ignore a fundamental feature of that Republic's existence: the need for public debate about the limits of power.

Assange is aware of this, noting how the "American idea", or the United States as "idea" throbs within his mind and body.[2] It is precisely that idea that needs conservation, even purification. What Pompeo is really bothered about is how similar the intelligence goal is for an organisation charged with the task of dealing in secrets, be it their theft and exposure, or their protection.



WikiLeaks' Founder Julian Assange

What matters in such information environments, and notably the one so currently crowded by a noisy battle between digital rabblers and orthodox followers of the closed society, is where they fit in holding the powerful accountable. All positions ultimately turn on matters of power and how information is best wielded.

Assange uses his piece in the *Washington Post* not merely to rubb the CIA's position, but to reference the words of **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** in his farewell address:

"Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military of defence with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."

The motives, then, are "identical to that claimed by the *New York Times* and *The Post* - to publish newsworthy content. Consistent with the US Constitution, we publish material that we can confirm to be true irrespective of whether sources came by that truth legally or have the right to release it to the media." [3]

Assange also reminds readers of an old, proposed taxonomy on the issue of how the fourth estate might function in terms of accuracy and content with **President Thomas Jefferson**'s own proposal. An editor might wish to "divide his paper into 4 chapters, heading the 1st, 'Truths.' 2nd, 'Probabilities.' 3rd, 'Possibilities.' 4th, 'Lies.' The first chapter would be very short, as it would contain little more than authentic papers, and information."

The modus operandi is significant here: the exposure of truths deemed inconvenient, complicating, disrupting. Reduced to that dimension, Pompeo's supposedly patriotic bile seems one of simple objection, an age old struggle between those who wish to know, and those who prefer to keep ignorance central to the argument. The ever tantalizingly relevant point remains: Who is so entitled?

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Notes

[1] <https://www.csis.org/analysis/discussion-national-security-cia-director-mike-pompeo>

[2]

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/julian-assange-wikileaks-has-the-same-mission-as-the-post-and-the-times/2017/04/11/23f03dd8-1d4d-11e7-a0a7-8b2a45e3dc84_story.html?utm_term=.179da836a4b9

[3]

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/julian-assange-wikileaks-has-the-same-mission-as-the-post-and-the-times/2017/04/11/23f03dd8-1d4d-11e7-a0a7-8b2a45e3dc84_story.html?utm_term=.179da836a4b9

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