

# Wikileaks, Anonymous: “Media Instruments” Supportive of US-NATO Sponsored Regime Change?

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*Throughout early 2011, the European liberal left were in a frenzy over the ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings that were sweeping across the region. The Mainstream Media supplied around the clock coverage of the mass demonstrations in Tahrir Square as we were told that the people of the Arab world were standing up to tyranny and demanding the democratic freedoms and human rights that are held in such high esteem in the west.*

However, this hysteria took a dark turn in February and March of that year when armed gangs managed to take control of Benghazi in Libya and everyone from FOX News to far left political organizations immediately began to hail these events as part of some progressive revolution. In London, demonstrations began to break out in support of these rebel groups and members of the Socialist Workers Party even scaled the walls of the Libyan Embassy and replaced the Libyan flag with that of the King Idris flag which represented the Benghazi rebels.[i]

It’s incredibly problematic when organisations in the West feel they not only have a right to attach themselves to developments and struggles throughout the third world but that they can instinctively and egotistically act on them. This type of behavior rarely considers the importance of contextualization and takes sides in such conflicts depending on which narrative fits their romantic notions of ‘global revolution’ and which version their newly assumed role would sit more comfortable with. Wikileaks and Anonymous for instance, despite being relatively new organisations, are merely a new form of such behavior.

The problem is that most of these groups in the west are based on the liberal ideas of individualism and human rights formed in more privileged societies that exist in comfort at the expense of oppressed nations. Whilst following a neo-colonial agenda, countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom are able to portray themselves as progressive, philanthropic nations delivering democracy, aid and human rights to poorer nations and their apparent protection and tolerance of such free and democratic values amongst their own populations only serve to support such claims.

The type of dissent that these organisations represent and attempt to address are always with regards to ‘authoritarianism’, ‘libertarianism’, ‘freedom of expression’ and ‘democratic rights’ that merely frame the issue to the extent that the rights and injustices that are at the center of third world struggles go largely ignored. Whistleblowing in this sense serves the same purpose as the publishing of political memoirs, or the occasional negative self reflection of the press on past events that are always too little, too late. They do not hold any real clout to make a difference politically yet serve the notions that “dissent” is tolerated, and published in the west.

In 2012, Wikileaks released 2.4 million emails that showed correspondence between political figures, ministries and associated companies in Syria from between 2006 and 2012. Sarah Harrison of the Associated Press claimed that the

*“material is embarrassing to Syria”* but claims that Syria’s opponents will equally be ashamed. “It helps us not merely to criticize one group or another, but to understand their interests, actions and thoughts. It is only through understanding this conflict that we can hope to resolve it.”[ii]

The problem with such action from Wikileaks is how it completely failed to take into account the already established campaign by western governments and media outlets to slander Bashar Al Assad’s government in Syria and how this could, and would be used to give support and legitimacy to their claims. When the most powerful country in the world with the most powerful media agencies at its disposal are targeting Syria, slandering its government and constantly pushing for “Humanitarian Intervention”, this irresponsible lack of contextualization can only serve Syria’s enemies.

For instance, the emails revealed arms trading between Russia and Syria despite the UN (under pressure from the US) imposing sanctions on the country. These leaked documents were then used by the Mainstream Media to support Hilary Clinton’s claims that Russia were blocking their resolutions at the UN Security Council based on a desire to continue to sell weapons to Syria. However, no mention was obviously made of the high tech weapons and support given to the Free Syria Army by western nations or the Saudi and Qatari mercenaries at the heart of their struggle, nor did it mention Russia’s reservations that the same scenario had led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Libyans less than a year earlier.

Wikileaks and Julian Assange, as a figure who is no stranger to the power of media propaganda certainly know how dangerously convenient these actions are to those conducting war against Syria and this irresponsible conduct as if Syrians are struggling on a level playing field and that Wikileaks have a right, or even a responsibility to act in such a way is incredibly damaging.

In a similar fashion this week, Anonymous claimed that it was conducting a Cyber War against the Syrian government in response to an ‘internet blackout’ in the country. Despite the Syrian Minister of Information making a statement that they had nothing to do with the blackout, Anonymous took to twitter and claimed that *“Government of Syria cuts country’s internet access - anonymous goes on warpath.”* They started removing all the Syrian government’s internet properties that remained online and also targeted domains ran by pro-government sympathizers. Some of the Syrian organizations and companies that have been hacked by Anonymous include Syrian Railways, the Syrian parliament, Syrian TV and the Syrian Embassy in China. Anonymous took to Twitter again to naively state that *“Anonymous is attacking Assad due to the internet outage. Anonymous is not attacking Assad in support of the Free Syrian Army. #OpSyria.”*[iii]

Now, this idea that they can attack Assad in response to an ‘internet outage’ without supporting Assad’s enemies is almost laughable and typical of the age old liberal idea that their universal values and liberal ideas of human rights take precedence over the struggle itself which real people are fighting, and dying for. This idea of freedom of expression and that an issue of cutting Internet Access (even though the Syrian government have denied they have done this) is of more importance than contextualizing the struggle into a government and its people responding to terrorist organizations and foreign mercenaries,

funded, supported and armed from abroad shows how privileged and removed from the situation the organization are and for this reason, have no right to assume a role in the conflict.

The problem with Wikileaks, Anonymous and the actions of a large portion of the liberal left is that their Eurocentric idealism leads them into assuming a deeply colonial role in the struggles of the oppressed. Their idea of dissent always revolves around a struggle for freedoms that are important to those who already have the means to eat, the right to self determination and a safe environment to raise their children.

The idea that freedom of expression or democratic values may not be as important to oppressed nations as dealing with starvation, poverty and aerial assault is enough to confuse the champions of human rights in the west. It doesn't fit the narrative that they are an important part of "global struggle" based on universal values rather than the beneficiaries of a neo colonial agenda that invades, occupies, props up puppet regimes and extracts resources from the majority of the world, creating their comfortable conditions where they can afford to prioritise these abstract values over human rights on the most basic levels that they take for granted.

It is time that these groups began to see themselves as beneficiaries and functionaries of empire rather than part of a romanticized movement with its roots in an age old 'White man's burden'. The people of oppressed nations will decide their own future and the priority of western organisations should be tackling and limiting the oppression of their own governments rather than getting carried away with colonial notions of a global struggle for human rights. The people of the oppressed nations deserve nothing less than the conditions for self determination, free from foreign interference, and until those conditions are in place, groups such as Wikileaks and Anonymous have no right to assume they can offer them more.

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#### Notes

[i] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12519676> Gaddafi protests outside Libyan embassy in London

[ii]

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-nato-intel-op-release-of-wikileaks-syrian-files-intended-to-set-up-assad/31814>

[iii] <http://rt.com/news/syria-hacking-internet-web-001/> Hacking network Anonymous declares cyber war on Syrian govt

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