

WikiLeaks, WikiDrama and WikiGossip

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

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What should we make of the Wikileaks story?

Obviously, the Swedish “sex crime” charges are ridiculous, as are the death threats against Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

Some leading first amendment advocates support Wikileaks as a vital resource. For example, John Perry Barlow – founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (a great organization with a long and proven track record in fighting censorship) [says](#):

The first serious infowar is now engaged. The field of battle is WikiLeaks. You are the troops.

Likewise, the [ACLU](#) has been fighting for Wikileaks for years.

And [Daniel Ellsberg](#) and [Noam Chomsky](#) think Wikileaks is the real deal.

However, many savvy observers argue that that Wikileaks is not what it seems.

For example, former U.S. National Security Adviser under President Carter (and top foreign policy advisor) Zbigniew Brzezinski doesn't think all the leaked information coming out of Wikileaks is a result of Army PFC Bradley Manning, and suspects a foreign intelligence service may be providing the more embarrassing leaks for their own political reasons.

As Brzezinski [told](#) PBS:

The real issue is, who is feeding Wikipedia on this issue — Wiki — Wiki — Wikileaks on this issue? They're getting a lot of information which seems trivial, inconsequential, but some of it seems surprisingly pointed.

For example, there are references to a report by our officials that some Chinese leaders favor a reunified Korea under South Korea.

This is clearly designed to embarrass the Chinese and our relationship with them. The very pointed references to Arab leaders could have as their objective undermining their political credibility at home, because this kind of public identification of their hostility towards Iran could actually play against them at home...

It's, rather, a question of whether WikiLeaks are being manipulated by interested parties that want to either complicate our relationship with other governments or want to undermine some governments, because some of these items that are being emphasized and have surfaced are very pointed.

And I wonder whether, in fact, there aren't some operations internationally, intelligence services, that are feeding stuff to WikiLeaks, because it is a unique opportunity to embarrass us, to embarrass our position, but also to undermine our relations with particular governments.

For example, leaving aside the personal gossip about Sarkozy or Berlusconi or Putin, the business about the Turks is clearly calculated in terms of its potential impact on disrupting the American-Turkish relationship.

Seeding — seeding it is very easy.

I have no doubt that WikiLeaks is getting a lot of the stuff from sort of relatively unimportant sources, like the one that perhaps is identified on the air. But it may be getting stuff at the same time from interested intelligence parties who want to manipulate the process and achieve certain very specific objectives.

Other smart people point out that - while there is pointed information challenging the actions of other countries - the information coming from Wikileaks about the U.S. is more of the nature of gossip, and doesn't actually challenge U.S. foreign or domestic policy in a direct manner. For example, the information disclosed to date doesn't challenge the narrative of the "War on Terror" itself, the government's handling of the economic crisis, or any other central American policy.

So whether Wikileaks is a first amendment champion or an intelligence service psychological operation aiming to persuade and embarrass, so far it has mainly been a bunch of gossip in terms of leaks about America.

If you don't believe me, read some of the actual cables which have been released. While there have been some stunners about foreign countries, the ones regarding U.S. actions have been nothing but idle chatter about well-known people or events, providing interesting but wholly irrelevant details about what people were wearing or who they slept with. No breakthrough revelations which actually challenge core U.S. policy.

(Many people are saying that the disclosure that the U.S. has spied on the United Nations shows the value of Wikileaks. But it has been known for years that the U.S. spies on the U.N. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).)

As the very mainstream, Murdoch-owned Herald Sun [notes](#):

We're told the leaks are "explosive" and "sensational", revealing America's "dark face".

Rubbish. In fact, the WikiLeaks dump of more than 250,000 classified cables from US diplomats reveals little more than gossip on the embassy circuit.

These leaks expose no crime and nail no US lie.

Yet Assange may also have done the US an inadvertent favour, just as he did with his earlier dump of documents on Iraq, which showed there was actually no conspiracy and no war crimes being hushed up.

[It] all confirms the world is as menacing as the US grimly says.

Overall, then, there is more in these leaks to confirm the US view of this world than there is to comfort its critics.

As the head of long-time whistleblower Cryptome (and former Wikileaks supporter – John Young – [argues](#), Wikileaks has been more hype than substance:

Cryptome does not seek publicity or media coverage. Wikileaks does by issuing press releases, taunting the media, orchestrating bombshell releases, glamourizing Julian Assange, behaving mysteriously, ... exaggerating the value of what it publishes, editorializes about its publications excessively — all the methods used by those who believe excessive valuation is a good thing.

So far – despite the media frenzy – it’s more like WikiGossip than WikiLeaks.

Don’t get distracted by the WikiDrama ... Unless WikiLeaks releases something which discloses [criminal behavior by a large American bank](#), more damning information about the government’s actions than the Fed’s [own data release](#), or facts which undermine the false war on terror narrative – Brzezinski himself told the Senate that [the war on terror is “a mythical historical narrative”](#) – such as [previously unknown false flags](#), then it’s mainly a publicity-seeking melodrama more than an authentic challenge to American power.

Remember that the corporate press [tends to be pro-war](#). The more cynical might argue that the fact that the corporate press is publishing all of the cables released by Wikileaks could imply that the material is not fundamentally of an anti-war nature.

The more cynical also point out that many credible whistleblowers – including former high-level government officials – have been ignored over the last 10 years by the corporate media when they have disclosed facts which challenged core U.S. policy. But Wikileaks is getting 24/7 coverage. I’m strongly for whistleblowers ... I’m just not convinced that WikiLeaks is as hard-hitting as other whistleblower groups out there.

All people of good faith agree that freedom of information and freedom of speech are vital in a free society. The real question is whether this particular organization is made up of WikiHeroes, WikiPublicityHounds, WikiDupes, or WikiDisinfoAgents.

Only time will tell.

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