

FBI, UK police carry out raids against WikiLeaks supporters

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The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) carried out 40 raids January 27 as part of the ongoing campaign to suppress WikiLeaks and its supporters. No arrests were made, but the raids were directed against online activists who allegedly carried out attacks on corporations and institutions that attempted in December 2010 to shut down WikiLeaks at the behest of US authorities.

British police arrested five young men between the ages of 15 and 26 on Thursday, in connection with the same episode. The five have been released on bail. The *Guardian* reports that 20-year-old Chris Wood, who spoke extensively to the newspaper under his online alias Coldblood, was one of those grabbed by police. “Police are said to have seized Wood’s computers, mobile phones, hard drives and other storage devices in the arrest, and did not disclose when they would be returned.”

An account claimed to be by one of the US activists reported that FBI agents broke down his door at 6 a.m. and pointed guns at him. The FBI and police allegedly remained for three and a half hours, took all the individual’s electronic devices and left.

A spokeswoman for the FBI told the media that while no arrests had been made, “Evidence is being gathered and the investigation is ongoing. These things do take time.”

Police in the Netherlands, Germany and France are also apparently involved in the investigation. Dutch police arrested two teenagers in December in regard to the pro-WikiLeaks attacks.

US authorities began a crackdown in earnest on WikiLeaks after the organization and various media outlets in late November began publishing secret diplomatic cables, which revealed the scope of American imperialist intrigue and criminality

worldwide. Amazon, MasterCard, Visa and PayPal, among other companies, fell into line at the first sign of government intimidation, joining in the campaign to silence the Internet organization and cut off its funding.

Following the arrest of WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange in London December 7 on bogus sexual assault charges, organized efforts by WikiLeaks supporters were made to harass some of those firms. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks were launched, in which web sites were overloaded temporarily by being bombarded with requests.

The FBI and the various police agencies are now attempting to victimize those who came to the defense of WikiLeaks. They are not only intervening on behalf of the US government, determined to keep its operations out of the light of day, but large private corporations. The FBI, in its statement, noted that “The victims included major US companies across several industries.”

Facilitating or conducting a DDoS attack is punishable by up to 10 years in prison in both the US and UK. Three of those arrested in Britain are under the age of 20.

“Anonymous,” the loosely organized group that claims responsibility for the December online campaign in defense of WikiLeaks, issued an open letter to the British government January 27 following the five arrests.

The group claims that the DDoS attack is a contemporary means of political protest, not hacking. The open letter argues that “traditional means of protest (peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, the blocking of a crossroads or the picketing of a factory fence) have slowly turned into nothing but an empty, ritualised gesture of discontent over the course of the last century” and that “people have been anxiously

searching for new ways to pressure politicians and give voice to public demands in a manner that might actually be able to change things for the better.”

“Anonymous” contends that “arresting somebody for taking part in a DDoS attack is exactly like arresting somebody for attending a peaceful demonstration in their hometown. Anonymous believes this right to peacefully protest is one of the fundamental pillars of any democracy and should not be restricted in any way. Moreover, we have noted that similar attacks have also been carried out against WikiLeaks itself, yet so far, nobody has been arrested in connection with these attacks, nor are there even any signs of an investigation into this issue at all.”

In its concluding paragraph, the open letter declares, “You can easily arrest individuals, but you cannot arrest an ideology. We are united by a common objective and we can and WILL cross any borders to achieve that.”

The international series of police raids and arrests is intended to intimidate and terrorize opponents of the policies of the various governments, including their launching of neo-colonial wars.



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