

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange denounces Australian Labor government

Richard Phillips
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WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has accused the Australian government of conspiring against him and demanded that it reveal its operations against other Australians involved in the whistle-blowing web site. He made the allegations on SBS television's "Dateline" program on Sunday.

Assange, who is fighting attempts by Sweden to extradite him from Britain on frame-up sex abuse charges, told "Dateline" that while Prime Minister Julia Gillard had dropped claims that WikiLeaks' activities were "illegal", her government was deeply involved in Washington's campaign against him and would "give the United States everything it wants".

The WikiLeaks founder said that although popular support for WikiLeaks was "strong" in Australia, he feared that the Labor government would attempt to extradite him to the US if he returned to Australia.

Labor was "pretending to be hands off," he continued, but "underneath we know that there is assistance being afforded to the United States and that is something that really needs to come out.

"Gillard and [Attorney-General Robert] McClelland need to disclose all the assistance they have afforded foreign countries against Australians involved in WikiLeaks, and the Australian registration of WikiLeaks as an entity," he said.

Assange noted: "We must remember that back in December we had a whole of government investigation into us involving ASIS [Australian Secret Intelligence Service], ASIO [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation], the Australian Federal Police, and parts of cabinet and the Defence Department ... It was extraordinary that [the government] did this simply to demonstrate compliance with the US simply because I'm an Australian and the Australian government might in some way be blamed for my activities."

Assange is the target of an international campaign, led

by the Obama administration, to shut down WikiLeaks and charge its founder with espionage for publishing US diplomatic cables and other secret documents. Sections of the US media and leading political figures have called for Assange to be assassinated and WikiLeaks declared a terrorist organisation because the web site has revealed some of the real workings of US imperialist diplomacy and its ongoing war crimes and attacks on democratic rights.

Gillard's government has fully committed to this campaign. In late November Attorney-General McClelland pledged that Labor would "support any law enforcement action that may be taken" against Assange and hinted that his passport could be cancelled.

Asked by "Dateline" why Gillard and the Labor Party were hostile to WikiLeaks, Assange was unequivocal. "They're co-opted," he said. "The Australian Labor Party has been co-opted in key positions by the United States since 1976 ...

"Since the time of Gough [Whitlam, the former Labor prime minister removed from office in the 1975 US-backed constitutional coup] there was a view in Washington that this should never happen again. You should never have a rogue Australian prime minister going and inspecting secret bases and so on. It was not to happen again, and it hasn't happened again," Assange said.

Asked whether WikiLeaks had revealed that Labor was "compromised," Assange replied: "It has been compromised and the failure to remove [Gillard government minister and former New South Wales Labor Party state secretary] Mark Arbib is an example of that compromise spreading to others in the Labor Party. It is not just this individual."

Diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks in December exposed that Arbib and Senator David Feeney, as well as Australian Workers Union leader Paul Howes, provided

US embassy officials with regular updates on internal government discussions and divisions within the Labor leadership (see: “WikiLeaks cables reveal secret ties between Rudd coup plotters and US embassy”).

In fact, Arbib, who asked the US embassy to treat him as a “protected source”, helped prepare the ground for the anti-democratic coup that removed Kevin Rudd as prime minister last June. He told embassy officials that Gillard was “one of the most pragmatic politicians in the ALP”, praised her support for Israel, and said that he regarded her as an alternative prime minister in October 2009, eight months before Rudd was deposed. US officials were reassured that her origins in the party’s “left” faction had no policy significance whatsoever.

Not a single Labor or union figure has raised a word of criticism of Arbib and his associates, let alone called for their removal from the party over these secret, anti-democratic activities.

One US diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks effusively noted that in 2008 Gillard had “gone out of her way to assist the embassy”. Since her appointment as prime minister last year, Gillard has marched lock-step with Washington, pledging to keep Australian troops in Afghanistan indefinitely while backing the Obama administration’s attempts to counteract rising Chinese economic and political influence in Asia.

In fact, Gillard and her political supporters have a direct stake in the US campaign to shut down WikiLeaks and frame-up Assange. Their activities are aimed at suppressing all efforts to expose the truth about the war crimes being committed by US imperialism and its allies in Afghanistan and Iraq, and their own role in these filthy wars.

Assange told “Dateline” that he was encouraged that large numbers of Australians were “quite protective of WikiLeaks’ endeavours”. He added that the web site would publish more material about the Labor government in the near future. Whilst refusing to elaborate, he said the information covered a “broad spectrum” and would contain revelations about “large companies and international politics”.



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