

US Democratic senators demand eviction of Julian Assange from Ecuador's London embassy

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Ten Democratic Party senators have issued a reprehensible call for the Trump administration to demand that the Ecuadorian government renege on the political asylum it provided WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange six years ago and evict him from its London embassy. He would then be detained by British police, while US agencies filed extradition warrants.

The letter of the senators was addressed to Vice President Mike Pence, ahead of his visit to Ecuador today and top-level talks with the small country's president, Lenín Moreno. The signatories are a roll-call of leading congressional Democrats: Robert Menendez, Dick Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Edward J. Markey, Michael Bennet, Christopher Coons, Joe Manchin, Jeanne Shaheen, Diane Feinstein and Mark Warner.

The document exudes deceit, and the hatred of the American ruling class for Assange, a journalist who has exposed the criminality of US imperialism and the real goings-on within its corridors of power, including within the Democratic Party.

The letter declares that the Democratic senators are "extremely concerned" that Ecuador still provides asylum to Assange. It states they are "alarmed" that the read-out of Pence's visit to Ecuador did not mention the WikiLeaks editor.

The letter declares: "[I]t is imperative that you raise US concerns with President Moreno about Ecuador's continued support for Mr. Assange at a time when WikiLeaks continues its efforts to undermine democratic processes globally."

By "democratic processes," the Democratic senators mean the ability of US imperialism to wage illegal wars of aggression, to use the most criminal and predatory means to shore up the fortunes of a tiny layer of

billionaire oligarchs, to intrigue and manipulate the political affairs of other countries, and to treat the American and international working class as nothing more than fodder for exploitation.

The Democrats repeat the slanderous accusation that has been levelled against Assange to pave the way for his extradition to the United States and trial on charges of espionage: that WikiLeaks was a partner in purported Russian intelligence "interference" in the 2016 US presidential election.

The Russian "interference" allegation has been exploited since late 2016, by the combined forces of the US intelligence agencies, the Democratic Party and publications such as the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, to push American politics even further toward dictatorial forms of rule. It has been used to pressure Internet companies such as Google and Facebook to impose sweeping censorship of independent media organisations.

Unsubstantiated and even absurd allegations of ties between the Trump campaign and Russia have been at the centre of a concerted political civil war to pressure the White House into maintaining a bellicose American foreign policy against Moscow—with all the danger it poses of triggering a war between nuclear-armed states.

The letter of the Democratic senators relies exclusively on a report issued by the US intelligence agencies to vilify Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. A declassified version of the report was published on January 6, 2017.

In a sweeping conspiracy theory, the CIA, FBI and NSA portrayed the 2016 publication by WikiLeaks of emails and documents from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and then emails sent by top

Democratic Party figure John Podesta, as the product of a nefarious Russian plot to undermine Hillary Clinton and assist the victory of Donald Trump.

WikiLeaks does not divulge the source of the leaks it publishes. That is why whistleblowers around the world have trusted it to make available some of the most historically explosive exposures of government and corporate criminality.

Julian Assange has nevertheless publicly stated, in response to the immense anti-democratic implications of the frenzy over “Russian interference,” that the source of the DNC and Podesta leaks was not Russian intelligence.

On December 14, 2016, Craig Murray, a former British diplomat, whistleblower, independent media blogger and associate of WikiLeaks, told the *Daily Mail* that he knew the source of the DNC and Podesta leaks. He revealed that he had met with an “intermediary” for disgruntled members of the Democratic Party in Washington in September 2016.

Murray stated: “Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians. The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.” The leakers, he stated, wanted to expose “the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders.”

Murray told the *Daily Mail*: “I don’t understand why the CIA would say the information came from Russian hackers when they must know that isn’t true. Regardless of whether the Russians hacked into the DNC, the documents WikiLeaks published did not come from that.”

The American state, however, along with its political and media servants, does not allow the truth to stand in the way of pursuing its strategic and economic interests.

The letter of the Democratic senators invokes the characterisation of WikiLeaks made in April 2017 by Mike Pompeo, then CIA director and now US secretary of state. Pompeo declared that the media organisation was “a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia.”

The Democratic National Committee has taken the vilification of Assange even further in the civil lawsuit it filed on April 20, 2018. Without a shred of supporting evidence, the DNC made the sweeping

assertion:

“WikiLeaks and Assange directed, induced, urged, and/or encouraged Russia and the GRU to engage in this conduct and/or to provide WikiLeaks and Assange with DNC’s trade secrets, with the expectation that WikiLeaks and Assange would disseminate those secrets and increase the Trump campaign’s chance of winning the election.”

The claims of Pompeo and the DNC have only one motive. They are intended to establish a political atmosphere in which Julian Assange can be forced from the embassy in London and detained on allegations of being essentially a foreign spy or a form of a non-state “unlawful enemy combatant”—the charge laid against alleged members of the Al Qaeda terrorist organisation. Such charges are designed to block any defence based on constitutional and legal rights and protections of freedom of speech.

A large number of self-styled “left” and “liberal” media publications, political organisations and individuals have seized upon the claims of the US intelligence agencies and the Democratic Party to justify abandoning any defence of Assange, WikiLeaks and freedom of speech.

They have joined with the US state and now label Julian Assange as a “Russian agent,” “a known Kremlin asset” or, as one particularly foul individual stated, “Putin’s bitch.”

All those who repeat this slander of Assange, or who remain silent as it is ramped up, are assisting the US state apparatus in a far-reaching and ominous assault on fundamental democratic rights.



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