

WikiLeaks' release of classified information has generated a lot of attention world-wide in the past few weeks.

The hysterical reaction makes one wonder if this is not an example of killing the messenger for the bad news.

Despite what is claimed, information so far released, though classified, has caused no known harm to any individual, but it has caused plenty of embarrassment to our government. Losing a grip on our empire is not welcomed by the neo-conservatives in charge.

There is now more information confirming that Saudi Arabia is a principle supporter and financier of Al Qaeda and this should set off alarm bells since we guarantee its Sharia-run government.

This emphasizes even more the fact that no Al Qaeda existed in Iraq before 9/11, and yet we went to war against Iraq based on the lie that it did.

It has been charged, by self-proclaimed experts, that Julian Assange, the internet publisher of this information, has committed a heinous crime deserving prosecution for treason and execution or even assassination.

But should we not at least ask how the U.S. government can charge an Australian citizen with treason for publishing U.S. secret information, that he did not steal?

And if Wikileaks is to be prosecuted for publishing classified documents, why shouldn't the Washington Post, New York Times, and others that have also published these documents be prosecuted? Actually, some in Congress are threatening this as well.

The New York Times, as a result of a Supreme Court ruling, was not found guilty in 1971 for the publication of the Pentagon Papers. Daniel Ellsberg never served a day in prison for his role in obtaining these secret documents.

The Pentagon Papers were also inserted into the Congressional Record by Senator Mike Gravel with no charges being made of breaking any National Security laws.

Yet the release of this classified information was considered illegal by many, and those who lied us into the Vietnam War and argued for its prolongation were outraged. But the truth gained from the Pentagon Papers revealed that lies were told about the Gulf of Tonkin attack which perpetuated a sad and tragic episode in our history.

Just as with the Vietnam War, the Iraq War was based on lies. We were never threatened by Weapons of Mass Destruction or Al Qaeda in Iraq, though the attack on Iraq was based on this false information.

Any information that challenges the official propaganda for the war in the Middle East is unwelcome by the administration and supporters of these unnecessary wars. Few are interested in understanding the relationship of our foreign policy and our presence in the Middle East to the threat of terrorism.

Revealing the real nature and goal for our presence in so many Muslim countries is a threat to our empire and any revelation of this truth is highly resented by those in charge.

Questions to consider:

1. Do the American people deserve to know the truth regarding the ongoing war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen?
2. Could a larger question be: how can an Army Private gain access to so much secret material?

3. Why is the hostility mostly directed at Assange, the publisher, and not our government's failure to protect classified information?

4. Are we getting our money's worth from the \$80 billion per year we spend on our intelligence agencies?

5. Which has resulted in the greatest number of deaths; lying us into war, or WikiLeaks' revelations or the release of the Pentagon Papers?

6. If Assange can be convicted of a crime for publishing information, that he did not steal, what does this say about the future of the First Amendment and the independence of the internet?

7. Could it be that the real reason for the near universal attacks on WikiLeaks is more about secretly maintaining a seriously flawed foreign policy of empire than it is about national security?

8. Is there not a huge difference between releasing secret information to help the enemy in the time of a declared war—which is treason—and the releasing of information to expose our government lies that promote secret wars, death, and corruption?

9. Was it not once considered patriotic to stand up to our government when it's wrong?

Thomas Jefferson had it right when he advised: "Let the eyes of vigilance never be closed."