

We may never know the whole story behind the recent publication of sensitive U.S. government documents by the Wikileaks organization, but we certainly can draw some important conclusions from the reaction of so many in government and media.

At its core, the Wikileaks controversy serves as a diversion from the real issue of what our foreign policy should be. But the mainstream media, along with neoconservatives from both political parties, insist on asking the wrong question. When presented with embarrassing disclosures about U.S. spying and meddling, the policy that requires so much spying and meddling is not questioned. Instead, the media focus on how so much sensitive information could have been leaked, or how authorities might prosecute the publishers of such information.

No one questions the status quo or suggests a wholesale rethinking of our foreign policy. No one suggests that the White House or the State Department should be embarrassed that the U.S. engages in spying and meddling. The only embarrassment is that it was made public. This allows ordinary people to actually know and talk about what the government does. But state secrecy is anathema to a free society. Why exactly should Americans be prevented from knowing what their government is doing in their name?

In a free society, we are supposed to know the truth. In a society where truth becomes treason, however, we are in big trouble. The truth is that our foreign spying, meddling, and outright military intervention in the post-World War II era has made us less secure, not more. And we have lost countless lives and spent trillions of dollars for our trouble. Too often "official" government lies have provided justification for endless, illegal wars and hundreds of thousands of resulting deaths and casualties.

Take the recent hostilities in Korea as only one example. More than fifty years after the end of the Korean War, American taxpayers continue to spend billions for the U.S. military to defend a modern and wealthy South Korea. The continued presence of the U.S. military places American lives between the two factions. The U.S. presence only serves to prolong the conflict, further drain our empty treasury, and place our military at risk.

The neoconservative ethos, steeped in the teaching of Leo Strauss, cannot abide an America where individuals simply pursue their own happy, peaceful, prosperous lives. It cannot abide an America where society centers around family, religion, or civic and social institutions rather than

an all powerful central state. There is always an enemy to slay, whether communist or terrorist. In the neoconservative vision, a constant state of alarm must be fostered among the people to keep them focused on something greater than themselves-- namely their great protector, the state. This is why the neoconservative reaction to the Wikileaks revelations is so predictable: "See, we told you the world was a dangerous place," goes the story. They claim we must prosecute- or even assassinate- those responsible for publishing the leaks. And we must redouble our efforts to police the world by spying and meddling better, with no more leaks.

We should view the Wikileaks controversy in the larger context of American foreign policy. Rather than worry about the disclosure of embarrassing secrets, we should focus on our delusional foreign policy. We are kidding ourselves when we believe spying, intrigue, and outright military intervention can maintain our international status as a superpower while our domestic economy crumbles in an orgy of debt and monetary debasement.