

Julian Assange; hero or villain?

People



Julian Assange Hero or Villain? The question of whether WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, whose organization can be credited with releasing thousands of classified documents from various countries, is a hero or a villain depends entirely on one's political opinions. Those who believe in transparent government and freedom of speech/publishing would call Assange a hero. Those who believe governments must have some secrecy from citizens would call him a villain. As a believer in the ideals America was founded on it is clear that Assange's actions are heroic.

He is fighting to keep the average citizen informed of any corruption within their government, fighting for the mainstream press to stop supporting the government's views on everything, fighting to introduce the power of technology into a political system that has become outdated and corrupt. The United States is looked on as the ideal example of democracy. People have freedom of speech, elect the officials who represent them and the government works to benefit the everyday person. Right? Wrong.

How can we try and set up a new government where the people are actively involved in countries such as Iraq when the average American doesn't know anything about what's going on in our own government. Julian Assange's organization revealed 1, 500 civilian deaths in Iraq previously unreported to the American public. (4) Our relatives are fighting for their country and we're told that civilian casualties are going down when in fact there are 1, 500 previously unreported deaths, there's something wrong with that picture. Outside of the U. S.

WikiLeaks has made an impact in Tunisia when they published remarks made by Ambassador Robert Godec stating that the government's inner circles were corrupt. The leaks added with the already tumultuous anger at the government pushed Tunisians over the edge, and they overthrew the corrupt government. (1) Those who believe Assange to be a villain site his "vendetta" against the U. S. as the primary reason for distrust and hatred, but the publication of Robert Godec's statements helped the U. S. gain power in the Middle East and succeed in their, "efforts to work with other countries to solve shared problems". (Hillary Clinton) The leaks posted on WikiLeaks aided the U. S. more so than it harmed them, making Julian Assange a hero, not a villain. If Julian Assange's crusade isn't against the United States, then what is he fighting for? How about for the mainstream press to report more than one side of the story? The mainstream press refuses to even acknowledge Assange as a legitimate journalist and publisher; in fact the freedom of the press committee of the Overseas Press Club of America in New York City declared Assange "not one of us". (2) This seems odd when the duty of the press has always been to inform the people, which Assange is doing, albeit in an unconventional way. Take for example the war in Afghanistan, without WikiLeaks the public is subjected to claims that the Taliban is losing -- and that al Qaeda has been severely weakened and yet we're told that our country will have to stick it out until 2015, rather contradictory!

Organizations such as WikiLeaks force the traditional press to acknowledge inconsistencies in Washington's story.

Although they do continue to try and control the narrative so that it does not radically digress from the official Washington storyline. Without the pressure

put on by Julian Assange freedom of press would be declining, making him a hero, At least once a century governments encounter radical change. In the 1700's it was the American Revolution, in the 1800's it was the French Revolution, in the 1900's it was the Russian (Bolshevik) Revolution.

What will the revolution of the 2000's be? Governments have already been de-stabilized in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Who says that the protests won't continue over to the United States? Protests in other countries happened because the systems were outdated and corruption was suspected. This is certainly true in the U. S. , where the government's inefficiency is being blamed on outdated technology.

Peter Orszag, the director of the Office of Management and Budget admitted that the gap between the public and private sectors results in “ billions of dollars in waste, slow and inadequate customer service and a lack of transparency about how dollars are spent,” this “ lack of transparency” is exactly what Assange is fighting against. (3) WikiLeaks forces the United States government to think about the extreme secrecy it operates under and whether this is the best for its citizens. Without Assange the “ lack of transparency” would only grow, making him a hero.

Julian Assange has been called many names; traitor, anarchist and even a high-tech terrorist, but the proper name for him is hero. WikiLeaks is an organization that truly works for the people. Keeping people informed with the inner workings of government, putting pressure on the press to acknowledge the truth and forcing change within government. WikiLeaks is driving journalism into the future and Assange is the driver. Sources: 1)

Jackson, William E. , Jr. “ A Liberated Press and WikiLeaks: Bulwarks Against Claims of ‘ Victory’ in Afghanistan . ” The Huffington Post.

N. p. , 2 Feb. 2011. Web. 2 Mar. 2011. . 2) Zapata, Xavier. “ Is Julian Assange a hero or a villain? ” World Have Your Say Blog. BBC, 7 Dec. 2010. Web. 2 Mar. 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldhaveyoursay/2010/12/is_julian_assange_a_hero_or_vi.html

3) Swanson, Ian. “ Budget director blames old computers for ineffective government. ” The Hill. Capital Hill Publishing Co. , 14 Jan. 2010. Web. 6 Mar. 2011. . 4) Assange, Julian. “ Julian Assange; The Man Behind WikiLeaks. ” Interview by Steve Kroft. 60 Minutes. CBS News. 30 Jan. 2011. CBS News. Web. 6 Mar. 2011. .