



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange speaks to the media outside the Ecuadorean Embassy in west London, Aug. 19, 2012. REUTERS/OLIVIA HARRIS

ASSANGE, from page 10

Google declined to comment on the book. Assange has of course fallen out with others too, notably his one-time collaborators in the media, who were incensed when Assange decided to release the unedited cache of diplomatic cables after they had worked to redact them so as to protect the names of people mentioned.

In 2011 five media companies that had been working with Wikileaks on publishing redacted material – the Guardian, New York Times, El Pais, Der Spiegel and Le Monde – put out a statement saying: “We deplore the decision of WikiLeaks to publish the unredacted State Department cables, which may put sources at risk.”

Writing at the time, James Ball, a former Wikileaks staffer who joined the Guardian, said the unredacted cables contained details of activists, opposition politicians and bloggers in autocratic regimes and “others driven by conscience to speak to the U.S. government. They should never have had to fear being exposed by a self-proclaimed human rights organization.”

Assange says he has changed his hardline views on not redacting documents since then.

“My view on redaction has changed over time and become what I hope is more principled.”

He adds: “Redaction should only be done when there is a real credible risk of human rights violations – and that is almost never. It does happen in rare situations, and then redaction should happen for only a limited amount of time and it must be explained.”

But he remains anti-censorship, accusing his one-time allies of having redacted documents for “political reasons,” and says of Wikileaks: “The public put trust in us that we’re not going to hold anything back other than what is strictly necessary – and then only for a limited time and we’ll explain it when we do.”

More recently, former NSA deputy chief Chris Inglis has accused whistleblower Edward Snowden of helping extremist groups because of his disclosure of the vast extent of NSA surveillance. Inglis told the Washington Times that the Islamic State group – or ISIS – had “clearly” capitalized on the Snowden revelations to help its members evade detection by US intelligence.

That criticism is “absurd,” says Assange, who claims there is no evidence ISIS has been able to profit from Snowden’s leaks. If

he’s reflective about redaction, he remains scathing about U.S. foreign policy. ISIS, he says, grew out of al-Qaeda in Iraq, which was caused by the “U.S.-led invasion of Iraq conducted under false pretense,” giving it a haven and a supply of weapons, some acquired indirectly from the U.S. As a result of a series of “lamentable geopolitical intervention decisions” by the U.S., not only has ISIS grown but Libya is a failed state and Iraq a “semi-failed state.”

Assange has not been charged in Sweden with alleged sexual offenses. Under the Swedish legal system the warrant is for preliminary investigations. Swedish authorities insist he should travel to Stockholm to do so, and many others feel he should face the music that way too. Assange and his legal team have said they are willing to meet Swedish representatives in the embassy, but that he will not step outside, because British police – currently maintaining a costly guard outside – will arrest him the moment he does.

That, believes Assange, could set in motion a process of events whereby the U.S. decided to press espionage charges against him, asks Sweden to extradite him, and tries him. If found guilty, he could face the death penalty.

Assange remains confident. He is challenging the Swedish warrant, with a new hearings on whether prosecutors have acted in a “timely manner.” He says: “The law is clear – if the court follows the law the warrant will be rescinded.” With a new center-left Swedish government about to be formed after last week’s election, it’s also unclear whether it would ever extradite a man to a country where the death penalty is in place.

Assange also takes heart from proposed changes to extradition law in the U.K. and “an important recognition by Conservative politicians that extradition without arrest would be fundamentally unjust.”

The U.K.’s Home Office has since said any changes to the law will not be retrospective and therefore not apply to Assange’s case, but he has no doubts about leaving the embassy.

“It is clear that I will be victorious in the diplomatic standoff. There is an inevitability. It’s just a question of time.”

“When Google Met Wikileaks” by Julian Assange is published by OR Books (www.orbooks.com). Street Newspaper Service.

Dawg Days

by J. McCurdy

Even the shade has run away
From the waves of heat and white hot light
Pouring down on our shoulders
Like a tired, past-his-prime boxer
At showtime
Sweat slides slowly
In desultory rivulets
Not caring the path it takes
As we drink in
Great gulps
Of air
Sulking oxygen
Yesterday’s grief
Dances with the beginnings
Of today’s stench
Yet we sit here
Semi-content
In the knowledge
That we cannot do much about it
Here in the land of
Cannot pay the rent

Lifelong Friend

by Kenneth Nickell

“I’ve done this many times.”
I’m explaining to a young man I only just met.
I was nearing what I believed to be the end of my travels.
A long walk from L.A. to Eugene, Ore. had left me tired
and at a loss for any sort of restful claim to have.
Chris was a resident of Portland; a place I had not yet been.
“Wanna see something cool?” he asked.
“Of course,” I accepted.
We walked across the park to a park bench way out
in the middle and sat.
I didn’t see it right away; he pointed it out.
A small placard: “In memory of our homeless brothers and
sisters who have died in their poverty.”
I didn’t know it at the time, but this was the beginning
of a lifelong bond.
Sometime later I had made my way to Portland
and Chris appeared.
We have since travelled all of Oregon together, Washington
and Idaho as well.
With no money or food, the man cannot be broken.
Every day he finds a way to keep on.
Success in the smallest is a wonderful thing to him,
And gratitude is equal to abundance.

*Thank you for giving a hand up in
Portland and supporting your
neighborhood vendor!*



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