

By WikiLeaks Staff Editorial

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In October 2010 Julian Assange won the Sam Adams Award for Integrity. He has also been awarded the 2009 Amnesty International Media Award and the Economist Index on Censorship Award in 2008. It is important to remember that accolades such as these do not come without tremendous hard work.

The expose of the Afghan War Diaries was a moment of media history, orchestrated by Julian Assange. He brought together The New York Times, The Guardian and Der Spiegel, three of the world's most reputable newspapers to collaborate with WikiLeaks on exposing more than 90 000 secret significant action reports by the United States relating to the war in Afghanistan. This involved a huge amount of administration in order to co-ordinate all four media partners' publishing schedules and a lot of time to carefully construct the levels of trust needed to bring together three major newspapers who were also competitors.

Since 2007 Julian, WikiLeaks and the Sunshine Press have been behind international front page stories that have changed the world. However, every story exposing abuses by powerful organizations, whether they be from New York or Nairobi results in a counter attack. Such the importance and veracity of revelations must be defended. Immediately after the Afghan War Diaries he conducted seventy-six interviews in three days maximizing the impact of the disclosures. It is very important for WikiLeaks to create a global platform with which to reach all corners of the earth. This demonstrates to those who wish to expose wrongdoing and misconduct that there is a way to do so without putting themselves at risk. He remains a messenger who big governments and their agencies can, and constantly do, attack while all the time keeping the source of the information published safe.

Because of the nature of the work performed by WikiLeaks both the organization and Julian Assange are constantly under attack. Their servers are under attack. Their security is under attack and their work resources and finances are under attack. This results in a lot of time-consuming administration and means working through a lot of bureaucratic steps to re-establish the efficient running of an organisation. When finances are frozen, as was the case with Money Brokers Limited in August this year (the WikiLeaks account was closed because of

"watchlisting" by the US after publication of the Afghanistan documents) it resulted in many letters back and forth, instructing a legal team to administer the situation and still to date there has been no resolution. In just the last 14 days he has met with more than 9 lawyers (excluding Swedish lawyers) in in defense of WikiLeaks' publishing activities, agreements and sources. Similarly, Julian Assange is subject to these sorts of attacks on a personal level.

He and WikiLeaks both have been attacked in the media by Leon Panetta, Director of the CIA, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and highest ranking officer in the US and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates not to mention the well recognized media personalities such as Marc A. Thiessen, a former bush administration chief speech writer and currently a Washington Post columnist who wrote "Assange is a non-U.S. citizen operating outside the territory of the United States. This means the government has a wide range of options for dealing with him." Christian Whiton, a Fox News contributor, said "WikiLeaks should be declared 'enemy combatants'," indicating they should be dealt with outside the law and Jonah Goldberg, a conservative syndicated columnist asked "why wasn't Julian Assange garroted in his hotel room years ago?"

Attacks such as these create an extreme need for security and he must always be conscious and personally vigilant - a task that is both time consuming and mentally exhausting. The major government players such as the CIA and the Pentagon do not stop at just Julian but also target many WikiLeaks volunteers or associates. Two volunteers and an American WikiLeaks spokesperson have been detained and questioned in the United States along with other individuals alleged to be participant to his publishing activities such as Bradley Manning, an alleged source who is being held as a political prisoner in the United States. Mr Manning's mother's house in Wales was raided by the FBI together with local police earlier this year.

The result is a constant need for legal and political support and managing this from afar and throughout many continents is no small task. Furthermore Julian Assange does not take these matters lightly having been privy to bad experiences in the past - while working on the extra judicial assassinations taking place in Kenya, two WikiLeaks' affiliates being assassinated.

Since the false allegations made about him in Sweden this August Julian has also needed to work extremely hard at ensuring the smear campaign launched against him has not affected the WikiLeaks brand. Making many public appearances and conducting interviews is absolutely necessary not to mention maintaining relationships with media partners who are so easily affected by such events.

In spite of the attacks against him, Wikileaks successfully released the Iraq War Logs in late October - a cache of over 400 000 US military intelligence reports relating to the war in Iraq. Due to the false allegations mentioned above the management of this leak was extremely difficult. However, he successfully made new lasting relationships and expanded the media partners to include Al Jazeera, Le Monde, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, SVT and also brought in Public Interest Lawyers and NGOs such as Iraq Body Count. The documents' release was increased to television as well as print media with two full-length documentaries being commissioned.

Julian Assange also readily offers to speak at many public events; especially those he feels will have a resonating effect on people's rights and liberties, ideals he holds close to his heart. Recently he presented at the United Nations Universal Periodic Review against the United States in Geneva where he offered up evidence from the Iraq War logs of the human right abuses such as the 109 000 deaths, 185 000 casualties, 66 000 civilian deaths and countless cases of torture conducted by America. The speech he gave lasted over two hours alone and the preparation for such an event is mammoth. During his stay in Geneva the Swiss government was so fearful for his personal security that they offered two International Police and two Swiss Police as his bodyguards for the duration, yet another indication of the severity of the danger he encounters on a daily basis. In late September he spoke in London for Index on Censorship regarding Security and censorship in the age of WikiLeaks.

In the coming months Julian Assange aims to carry on the invaluable work and service that WikiLeaks offers the public. In due course he intends on providing information, as yet publically unknown. He has stifled many illegal attacks and remains victorious on all legal attacks against WikiLeaks.