

## **PARDON PETITION OF JULIAN ASSANGE**

Julian Assange is presently facing criminal charges in the United States related to the publication by WikiLeaks of information leaked to it Chelsea Manning. The publications exposed misconduct committed in Iraq and Afghanistan during wars initiated by a prior Administration. Mr. Assange is the first publisher ever to have been charged under the Espionage Act, a law passed during World War I. Mr. Assange has already been confined longer than any person ever charged or convicted under the Espionage Act in its more than 100-year history. While the United States seeks his extradition, he is incarcerated at Belmarsh Prison in London, a high security prison experiencing a coronavirus lockdown. Because of Mr. Assange's internationally recognized profile as a journalist, human rights defender, press freedom advocate, and champion of free speech, his prosecution and incarceration undermine the national interest of the United States. Mr. Assange respectfully seeks a presidential pardon, which would preclude any subsequent Administration from seeking to prosecute him relating to the Manning leaks or other publications that have exposed corruption, unethical conduct, and violations of law by governments around the world.

### **Background**

Mr. Assange, an Australian citizen, is the most significant free speech activist in the Western world. He founded WikiLeaks in 2006, an organization dedicated to transparency and democratic accountability. WikiLeaks' mission is to influence governmental action by empowering citizens. WikiLeaks has described itself as a multi-jurisdictional organization,

exposing oppressive regimes in Asia, the former Soviet bloc, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, but we are of assistance to people of all nations who wish to reveal unethical behavior in their governments and corporations. We believe that transparency in government activities leads to reduced corruption, better government and stronger democracies. All governments can benefit from increased scrutiny by the world community, as well as their own people. We believe this scrutiny requires information.

Mr. Assange is a leading proponent of an open society and of freedom of expression. He strongly opposes forever wars, illegal surveillance, and actions that subvert democracy. Mr. Assange is a champion of political transparency as a means of achieving democratic accountability and of the public's right to access information on issues of importance.

Mr. Assange has also advanced the notion of "scientific journalism" as an antidote to biased or fabricated news:

I have been pushing the idea of scientific journalism, that things must be precisely cited with the original source, and as much of the information as possible should be put in the public domain so that people can look at it, just like in science so that you can test to see whether the conclusion follows from

the experimental data. Otherwise, the journalist probably just made it up. In fact, that is what happens all the time: people just make it up. They make it up to such a degree that we are led to war. Most wars in the twentieth century started as a result of lies amplified and spread by the mainstream press. And you may say, "well that is a horrible circumstance; it is terrible that all these wars start with lies." And I say no, this is a tremendous opportunity, because it means that populations basically don't like wars and have to be lied into it. That means we can be "truthed" into peace. That is cause for great hope.

Mr. Assange himself has been targeted with unfounded claims that could not withstand scrutiny. For example, a judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 2019 dismissed a civil suit brought against Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks, finding that WikiLeaks' 2016 publications were "plainly of the type entitled to the strongest protection that the First Amendment offers."

**WikiLeaks has published truthful information that has exposed massive corruption and unlawful conduct.**

WikiLeaks has published many documents over the years that have exposed government abuse and corporate malfeasance. These publications have consisted solely of authentic documents and have provided truthful information to the public on matters of public concern.

For example, WikiLeaks has published documents about censorship in China. As a result, WikiLeaks has long been banned in China. Mr. Assange often contrasts censorship in China with the First Amendment in the United States. Recently, however, Chinese state television have used the prosecution of Mr. Assange as a propaganda tool against the United States. Similarly, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Azerbaijan have used the prosecution of Mr. Assange to score points against the West.

In 2009, WikiLeaks published:

- the Minton Report, exposing a toxic waste dumping incident involving Trafigura, a giant multi-national oil and commodity trader, which affected up to 108,000 people;
- a report disclosing a "serious nuclear accident" at the Iranian Natanz nuclear facility; and
- a report on burn pits, which enabled United States servicemen to sue and obtain compensation for illegal exposure to toxic, deadly fumes at army bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2010, WikiLeaks published:

- "Collateral Murder," a video showing a helicopter gunship slaying eighteen unarmed civilians in the Iraqi suburb of New Baghdad, including two Reuters employees;
- the "Afghan War Logs," a collection of documents revealing information on unreported killings of hundreds of thousands of civilians by coalition forces, increased Taliban attacks, and involvement by Pakistan and Iran in the insurgency;

- the “Iraq War Logs,” exposing numerous cases of torture and abuse of Iraqi prisoners by Iraqi police and soldiers and the deaths and maiming of more than 200,000 people in Iraq; and
- the State Department Cables, a collection of cables from 274 consulates and embassies from 1966 to 2010.

Many, including Amnesty International, have cited the publication of the State Department cables as having been a trigger for democratic protests known as the Arab Spring. Crediting WikiLeaks as a catalyst for the Arab Spring, Amnesty International stated:

The year 2010 may well be remembered as a watershed year when activists and journalists used new technology to speak truth to power, and in so doing pushed for greater respect for human rights. It is also the year when repressive governments faced the real possibility that their days were numbered.

In 2011, Wikileaks published:

- “the Guantanamo Detainee Assessment Files,” exposing systematic and routine violations of the Geneva Conventions and abuse of 800 prisoners as young as 14 and as old as 89 at Guantanamo Bay. The publications fueled a domestic debate about the use of the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

In 2016, WikiLeaks published:

- 19,252 e-mails and 8,034 attachments from the Democratic National Party leadership, which resulted in the resignation of five top officials who had taken actions during the primaries in favor of Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders.

In 2017, WikiLeaks:

- exposed lax security in the CIA unit dedicated to malware development, a fact acknowledged by an internal CIA report into the publication, which was subsequently revealed by Senator Ron Wyden; and
- published the “the Russia Spy files,” documents relating to Russia under Vladimir Putin, including releases about surveillance contractors in Russia.

**Mr. Assange has received many awards for his journalism and integrity.**

Mr. Assange has transformed journalism through the pioneering use of an encrypted drop-box, which use has been adopted by all major newspapers and media organizations. It is now considered the gold standard among journalists.

A panel of judges awarding the annual Martha Gellhorn prize described Mr. Assange as a journalist

whose work has penetrated the established version of events and told an unpalatable truth that exposes establishment propaganda . . . WikiLeaks has been portrayed as a phenomenon of a high-tech age, which it is. But it's much more. Its goal of justice through transparency is in the oldest and finest traditions of journalism. WikiLeaks has given the world more scoops than most journalists can imagine: a truth-telling that has empowered people all over the world. As a publisher and editor, Julian Assange represents that which journalists once prided themselves in – he's brave, determined, independent: a true agent of people, not power.

The Walkley Foundation, Australia's Pulitzer Prize, awarded Mr. Assange for "outstanding contributions in journalism" by showing

a courageous and controversial commitment to the finest traditions of journalism: truth through transparency. . . . WikiLeaks applied new technology to penetrate the inner workings of government to reveal an avalanche of inconvenient truths in a global publishing coup. . . . Its revelations, from the way the war on terror was being waged, to diplomatic bastardly, high-level horse-trading and the interference in the domestic affairs of nations, have had an undeniable impact.

The Sydney Peace Foundation, in awarding its Gold Medal to Mr. Assange in 2011, said:

Assange's work is the Tom Paine Rights of Man and Daniel Ellsberg Pentagon Papers tradition—challenging the old order of power in politics and journalism. Assange has championed people's right to know and has challenged the centuries old tradition that governments are entitled to keep the public in a state of ignorance. In the Paine, Ellsberg, and Assange cases, those in power moved quickly to silence their critics even by perverting the course of justice.

The Foundation paid tribute to Mr. Assange's "leadership, courage, and tenacity in journalism and publishing."

Mr. Assange has received numerous awards for his work. He has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize every year since 2010, including this year. He has received the Amnesty International UK Media Award (New Media); was awarded for his integrity and excellence from the Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence, a group of retired CIA and intelligence officers; received the Galizia Prize for Journalists and Defenders of the Right to Information; *Le Monde's* readers' choice award for person of the year; the Time readers' choice award for person of the year; "rockstar of the year" by Rolling Stone; the Sydney Peace Foundation Gold Medal for Peace with Justice, previously awarded to only three people—Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama , and Buddhist spiritual leader Daisaku Ikeda; the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism; Voltaire Award for Free Speech; the Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award for the Arts; and the 2020 Stuttgart Peace

Prize award for someone who has worked "in a special way for peace, justice and world solidarity." He has also been a U.N. Mandela Prize nominee.

### **Mr. Assange faces criminal charges in the United States.**

On May 27, 2010, Chelsea Manning (then known as Bradley Manning) was arrested. Manning was charged with leaking the Afghan and Iraq War Logs, the State Department Cables, and the Guantanamo Bay Detainee Assessments Files to WikiLeaks. Many of these documents were unclassified and none of these documents were classified as Top Secret. Manning was court martialed. She pled guilty to certain charges and ultimately was convicted on July 30, 2013 of other charges. Manning accepted full responsibility, informing the Court: "The decisions I made to send documents and information to [the WikiLeaks] website were my own decisions and I take full responsibility for my own actions." Manning was sentenced to a term of 35 years of imprisonment. The government also launched a civilian grand jury investigation related to the Manning leaks, but by late 2013, it was widely reported that a decision had been made not to charge Mr. Assange. On January 17, 2017, immediately prior to leaving office, President Obama commuted Manning's sentence. Ultimately, Manning served about seven years.

On December 21, 2017, Mr. Assange was secretly charged in a criminal complaint alleging that he conspired with Manning to commit computer intrusion, an allegation based on circumstantial evidence according to an FBI affidavit. On March 6, 2018, Mr. Assange was charged in a one-count indictment with the same offense. On May 23, 2019, Mr. Assange was charged in an eighteen-count superseding indictment, charging the same conspiracy to commit a computer intrusion offense, but adding seventeen counts under the Espionage Act. On June 24, 2020, Mr. Assange was charged in a second superseding indictment. The charges remained the same, but the scope of the alleged conspiracy to commit computer intrusion was expanded.

### **The facts underlying the criminal charges against Mr. Assange as demonstrated by evidence at the Manning court martial and Mr. Assange's extradition hearings**

#### *The alleged conspiracy to commit computer intrusion*

The conspiracy to commit computer intrusion charge stems from an allegation that Manning asked Mr. Assange in March 2010 if he could assist Manning in cracking a password hash as part of an effort by Manning to gain administrator privileges. The charges do not contend that Mr. Assange provided any assistance or that Manning was successful in her efforts to obtain administrator privileges. Rather, the indictment alleges: "Had ASSANGE and Manning successfully cracked the encrypted password hash, Manning may have been able to log onto computers under a username that did not belong to Manning." Had Mr. Assange assisted and had Manning been able to log on as an administrator, the indictment alleges: "Such a measure would have made it more difficult for investigators to identify Manning as the source of unauthorized disclosures of classified information." Thus, what is alleged is that a publisher agreed to attempt to assist a source of truthful and newsworthy information in an unsuccessful effort by the source to provide information to the publisher in a manner in which the identity of

the source would be protected. It is not alleged that Mr. Assange was attempting to assist Manning in Manning gaining access to any information that Manning was not already authorized to access.

Yet, as demonstrated at Manning's court martial and more recently again demonstrated through evidence adduced at Mr. Assange's extradition hearing in London, the allegation is not true and, indeed, makes no sense. First, the information Manning provided would not have allowed the password to have been cracked. Accordingly, even if the events are as the charges suggest, there was no possibility the alleged endeavor could have succeeded. Second, even if Manning had had administrator privileges, it would not have allowed Manning anonymously to access the databases from which the leaked materials were downloaded. One does not log into those databases with a username. Rather, access to the database is tracked by the IP address of the computer being used to access the database. Thus, regardless of how Manning logged onto her computer, whether under her own credentials or an administrator's, there would be an audit trail that it was Manning's computer that had accessed and downloaded the material. There was, therefore, no way to access the data and download it anonymously, with or without administrator privileges. Third, had Manning wanted to access the databases and download them so that they were not traced to her computer, she could have done so by using another soldier's computer to which she had access. She would not have needed administrator credentials to do so; yet she did not do so. Fourth, while administrator credentials would be of no value in anonymously leaking document to WikiLeaks (and indeed most of those documents had already been leaked by Manning to WikiLeaks before she asked for assistance in cracking the password hash and the rest were leaked afterwards without cracking the password hash), there was a reason wholly independent of the documents Manning leaked to WikiLeaks why Manning would have wanted administrator credentials. She and her fellow soldiers did not have the ability to download movies or games onto their computers. Only an administrator had credentials that would allow such items to be downloaded. Thus, if soldiers wanted to watch movies or play video games, they needed administrator credentials to do so.

#### *Claims that WikiLeaks published recklessly and put lives at risk*

The charges against Mr. Assange claim: "By disseminating and publishing these documents without redacting the human sources' names or other identifying information, ASSANGE created a grave and imminent risk that the innocent people he named would suffer serious physical harm and/or arbitrary detention." But, again, an examination of the underlying facts demonstrates that this allegation is hyperbole. At Manning's court martial, General Carr gave evidence that "after long research, his team of 120 counter-intelligence officers hadn't been able to find a single person, among the thousands of American agents and secret sources in Afghanistan and Iraq, who could be shown to have died because of the disclosures." In June 2011, the Department of Defense issued the final report of its Information Review Task Force, which concluded, "with high confidence that disclosure of the Iraq data set will have no direct personal impact on current and former U.S. leadership in Iraq."

Similarly, the Guantanamo Bay assessment briefs were old and unclassified. The State Department cables were "SIPDIS" (suitable for release to a wide number of individuals). Only half of them were classified and only 6% of them were classified as Secret. None were classified at the Top Secret level.

It is not coincidence or luck that the leaks did not cause the type of harm that the indictment against Mr. Assange now suggests could have occurred (but offers no examples of it actually occurring). As evidence adduced at Mr. Assange's extradition hearing demonstrated, "WikiLeaks held back information while it formed media partnerships with organizations around the world, each one selected with care...because of its reputation for high levels of editorial independence and ethical standards,' and where possible partnering with 'local outfits' holding the 'specific knowledge' needed to 'redact information that had a reasonable probability of identifying an individual at risk of either persecution or prosecution.'" For example, WikiLeaks worked with the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, *Der Spiegel* and the *Telegraph*. The Iraq and Afghan War Logs were materials assessed by Manning to be historical non-sensitive data. The evidence officers provided at Manning's court martial was that these materials did not disclose key human intelligence sources.

WikiLeaks nonetheless took the issue of redaction seriously. The media partners' work on the Afghan War Logs to ensure they were vetted to prevent harm even included approaching the White House in advance of releasing them, and in July 2010 Wikileaks entered into a dialogue with the White House about the redaction of names. WikiLeaks delayed the publication of 15,000 documents identified by the White House, even after media partners had published their respective stories. Redaction of the Iraq War Logs was likewise "painstakingly approached" and involved the development of specially devised redaction software. Publication was delayed in August 2010, while the documents were reviewed and carefully redacted to minimize any risk of harm from their publication. WikiLeaks "stood firm by the principle...to ensure that the released information could not cause danger to any persons...showed consistent understanding of and commitment to the...principles of rigor and adherence to responsible publication." Indeed, WikiLeaks was criticized at the time for "over redaction" of materials. WikiLeaks ultimately published after the media partners (both *Der Spiegel* and the *Guardian*) had published. Of course, the United States has not undertaken any efforts to prosecute those publishers.

As with the other documents, the State Department Cables were reviewed by a consortium of journalism partners. The consortium consulted with the State Department, which "participated in the redaction process" prior to the publication of the State Department Cables and WikiLeaks implemented redactions required by the State Department "exactly as requested." Beginning in November 2010, the cables were published in redacted form.

After publication, the original unredacted cables were kept only in encrypted form and were not published. In February 2011, David Leigh of the *Guardian*, one of the media partners, published a book that included the encryption passcode in its entirety. Leigh told the German weekly *Der Freitag* that he had assumed that the password was a temporary one. According to his book, however, it was the website, not the passcode, that was temporary. Encryption codes do not

change. Leigh had published the encryption code for the State Department Cables, a code that would unlock that material wherever it was located. The encrypted file was subsequently mirrored by third parties onto the Internet. In August 2011, *Der Freitag* published a story that it discovered one of the encrypted copies of the cables on-line and had been able to decrypt it, hinting that the passcode was in the public domain.

Mr. Assange recognized that a technologically sophisticated reader of *Der Freitag* would be able to figure out how to locate and decrypt the files and therefore could publish them in unredacted form. The same day as the *Der Freitag* story was published, Mr. Assange contacted the United States Ambassador in the U.K. and then the United States State Department to warn the Secretary of State personally of the potential ability of the public to access the un-redacted cables, stating that “in case there are any individuals who haven’t been warned, that they should be warned. In so far as the State Department can impress upon people within Germany to encourage them to desist from that behavior, that would be helpful.” Mr. Assange’s attempts to warn the United States government continued over the following days, including a 75-minute call with a State Department lawyer, but apparently the State Department took no action.

By August 31, 2011, the “cat was forever out of the bag.” Spurred by the *Der Freitag* article, websites, including the well-known United States-based Cryptome.org, published the “specific passphrase and which file it decrypts” and another website (mrkva.eu) published “the first searchable copy of the cables.” By the following day, the decrypted cables were being shared on the Internet, for example, on the Pirate Bay website, to hundreds of other websites. They were now available to anyone able to operate a computer. The United States Government even obtained a copy from Pirate Bay. On September 2, 2011, WikiLeaks published the now-public database, which had “already been published by others.”

Thus, while Mr. Assange stands charged based on the premise that he recklessly put lives at risk by publishing the State Department cables in unredacted form, the truth is the precise opposite. WikiLeaks received the unredacted State Department cables in April 2010. It did not publish them. Rather it shared them with a consortium of journalists to go through a thorough redaction process. That process involved consulting with the State Department and making every redaction it requested. The unredacted cables were not published and were kept safe from publication through powerful encryption. Events completely beyond Mr. Assange’s control led to the unredacted cables being published a year-and-a-half after they first came into WikiLeaks’ possession, despite Mr. Assange’s extraordinary efforts to prevent publication of unredacted material. Once he learned that publication by others was inevitable, he sought to prevent or minimize any resulting harm. None of the actors involved in the series of events that led to the unredacted cables being published, including United States-based Cryptome, has received even a demand that the material be taken down, much less been charged with any criminal offense. Yet, Mr. Assange, who is alleged to have published the unredacted cables only after, despite his best efforts, they had become widely available and were now public, has been charged with seventeen counts of violating the Espionage Act.



**The criminal prosecution of a publisher, as opposed to the leaker, of truthful information is unprecedented and has been widely condemned.**

The Espionage Act is a World War I era statute. In the more than 100 years it has been on the books, it has been used a handful of times to prosecute those who have leaked classified information, government employees or government contractors who have an obligation not to disclose classified information. It has never been used to prosecute a journalist or publisher of the information. Not only, as noted above, is Mr. Assange the recipient of numerous journalistic awards, he has also been recognized as journalist by the U.K. courts. The prosecution of Mr. Assange and request for his extradition has been widely condemned by virtually all free speech organizations and major newspapers and has been criticized across the political spectrum. Reporters Without Borders, PEN International, ARTICLE19, the International Federation of Journalists, and the National Union of Journalists are among the 40 rights groups who have signed a recent open letter asking for an end to the efforts to extradite and prosecute Mr. Assange.

The following presents a small illustrative list of the many people from across the political spectrum who have voiced disagreement with the pursuit of criminal charges against Mr. Assange:

President Jimmy Carter: “I did not deplore the WikiLeaks revelations. They just made public what was actually the truth. Most often, the revelation of the truth, even if it is unpleasant, is beneficial.”

Washington Post Executive Editor Marty Baron: “With the new indictment of Julian Assange, the government is advancing a legal argument that places such important work in jeopardy and undermines the very purpose of the First Amendment.”

The New York Times editorial board: The effort to prosecute Julian Assange “could have a chilling effect on American journalism as it has been practiced for generations. It is aimed straight at the heart of the First Amendment.”

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Maguire: “Julian Assange and his colleagues in WikiLeaks have shown on numerous occasions that they are one of the last outlets of true democracy.”

Jameel Jaffer, Executive Director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University: The charges against Mr. Assange “treat everyday journalistic practices as part of a criminal conspiracy. . . .” [I]t’s very troubling that the indictment sweeps in activities that are not just lawful but essential to press freedom—activities like cultivating sources, protecting sources’ identities, and communicating with sources securely.”

Reporters Without Borders: “Targeting Assange after nearly nine years because of Wikileaks’ provision of information to journalists that was in the public interest (such as the leaked US diplomatic cables) would be a purely punitive measure and would set a dangerous precedent for

journalists, whistleblowers, and other journalistic sources that the US may wish to pursue in the future.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists: “The potential implications for press freedom of this allegation of conspiracy between publisher and source are deeply troubling.”

Jesse Ventura: “What did @wikileaks reveal? The truth about our war crimes. Julian Assange is a hero. Our government doesn’t want you to know the truth. Get ready because when he’s prosecuted, journalism/news as we know it & the 1st amendment will never be the same again.”

Oliver Stone: “#JulianAssange is a publisher for truth. He’s done great work on behalf of mankind despite his inhumane treatment. This case is crucial to the survival of our right to know and our essential freedom against #USA and #UK oppression -- and now tyranny!”

Lula da Silva, former president of Brazil: “Assange is a hero of our time.”

Ron Paul, former United States Congressman and presidential candidate: “The arrest of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange by the British government on a U.S. extradition order is an attack on all of us. It is an attack on the U.S. Constitution. It is an attack on the free press. It is an attack on free speech. It is an attack on our right to know what our government is doing with our money in our name. Julian Assange is every bit as much of a political prisoner as was Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary or Nelson Mandela in South Africa.”

### **Mr. Assange has already suffered as a result of WikiLeaks’ publications.**

In June 2012, Mr. Assange entered the Ecuadoran embassy in London and applied for political asylum. He was granted political asylum by Ecuador in August 2012, which noted that Mr. Assange was recognized “internationally for his struggle for freedom of expression, press freedom and human rights in general” and cited “strong evidence” that Assange faced possible “retaliation by the country or countries that produced the information,” the State Department cables, noting that such retaliation “may endanger [his] safety, integrity, and even his life.”

The U.K., however, refused to allow Mr. Assange to leave the embassy in London to travel to Ecuador, threatening to arrest him if he did so. As a result, Mr. Assange was confined to the embassy. The United Nations experts on arbitrary detention announced in February 2016 that its Working Group on Arbitrary Detention “considers that the various forms of deprivation of liberty to which Julian Assange has been subjected constitute a form of arbitrary detention” and called for him to be allowed to leave the embassy for Ecuador. The U.K., however, immediately rejected the findings of this internationally recognized body. In April 2019, after a change in Administration in Ecuador, Ecuador revoked Mr. Assange’s asylum and permitted U.K. authorities to enter the embassy to arrest Mr. Assange. After his arrest, the United States revealed that Mr. Assange had been charged with conspiracy to commit computer intrusion and would seek his extradition.

Since April 2019, Mr. Assange, who has been convicted of no crime, has been incarcerated on behalf of the United States at HMP Belmarsh Prison, a high security facility that has been called "Britain's Guantanamo Bay." Belmarsh has experienced an outbreak of coronavirus. A recent annual report by the independent board monitoring Belmarsh noted that to try to control the outbreak, the prison has imposed a lockdown that has "dominated life" at the jail, with the prisoners "confined to cells for a majority of the time, typically 23 hours a day." The report said: "The Covid-19 pandemic had seriously detrimental effects in a number of areas: it brought an abrupt and total halt to purposeful activity; it deprived prisoners of the opportunity to see family and friends, in person on visits; and it confined prisoners to their cells for up to 23 hours a day."

As the United States prosecutors have noted repeatedly in Mr. Assange's extradition hearing, the longest sentence meted out to date in civilian courts under the Espionage Act is three-and-a-half years. Chelsea Manning served about seven years. Mr. Assange, however, has now been confined for more than eight-and-a-half years, the past twenty months of which has been at a high security prison, now under lockdown as a result of COVID-19.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Assange should be granted a pardon to cover the conduct at issue in the pending criminal case against him and any other conduct prior to the pardon grant that could be the basis for criminal charges against him in the United States. Mr. Assange is being prosecuted for his newsgathering and publication of truthful information that exposed war crimes committed by a prior Administration. Love or hate WikiLeaks, Julian Assange has performed a valuable public service by exposing political corruption, government misconduct, and corporate malfeasance all over the globe. The prospect of criminally prosecuting Mr. Assange has been divisive and controversial through successive Administrations. His indictment has already had a chilling effect on press freedom in the United States. His prosecution is inconsistent with First Amendment values and harms the political and moral standing of the United States abroad. He has suffered tremendously for fighting the establishment. His life is now at serious risk as he suffers in lockdown in a high security prison in the midst of a coronavirus outbreak. He has already been confined far longer than any other person charged or convicted under the Espionage Act. He should receive a pardon.