



Nils Melzer - Int. Symposium of Parliamentarians on the Assange case

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OPENING SCREEN: International Symposium of Parliamentarians on the Julian Assange Case. 17th of April, 2021.

Nils Melzer (NM): In order to understand what would be effective here, we have to understand the bigger mechanics of this and what, as I said, it is about suppressing the truth, if you allow me to simplify it that way. This is what this is about. The United States but also its allies that includes the U.K., it includes Sweden but it also includes Germany and others. None of those governments is interested in having someone like Julian Assange who is promoting transparency, just roaming around and publishing their secrets. And although that's what press freedom is about, because it is the fourth estate and it's actually overseeing correct behaviour of governments. But we have to realise that the Australian government is very deeply embedded, if you allow me to say this, with the secret services in the U.S. and the U.K. and Sweden and all the Western secret services or intelligence services, they're cooperating very closely. Now, that's not a conspiracy. It's just they're operating mode modalities after 9/11. And they I'm sure they're genuinely convinced that they're fighting terrorism and so on. But they have what has evolved in the last 20 years. And I can really say that because I've worked for all those 20 years in that precise area that has developed is kind of a subculture, a parallel universe of intelligence services that keep very important information secret in that suppress evidence for ill treatment and other international crimes, and that that prevents democratic societies from actually exercising their democratic control. This is how the Espionage Act and how the Official Secrets Act are being abused. They're being abused for and this is what this case is trying to establish - a basis to be able to use those pieces of legislation in order to suppress the truth to prevent democratic societies from actually exercising their control and holding authorities accountable.

If you don't believe me, just look at the facts. None of the war crimes that have been proven have been prosecuted. If those states were in good faith, they would never behave like that. So this is what this is about. They don't want to prosecute their misconduct and so they persecute the person that exposes them. If we are to understand that this is the big mechanics', then it is logical that the governments don't support Julian Assange, but it is not in the

interests of their own populations. It's because they're too closely intertwined without any accountability with foreign intelligence services. And so I think it is very important that the public becomes more aware of how things really work in practise and they start demanding accountability from their governments. And I think parliamentarians are absolutely key here because you're the ones that are passing the laws. You are the ones who are in direct contact with your constituents. You can trigger those dialogues. And it's not just about, you know, prosecuting bad guys. It's about changing or ensuring that our system remains transparent. And where it's no longer transparent, it becomes transparent and accountable again. And so this is what this is really about. So I think it's absolutely yes, it's crucial that parliamentarians, you know, have this dialogue and that they also engage the population and show the population of their various constituencies why this is so important in practise, because the governments really are too close to the ball and they are on a daily basis cooperating with other intelligence services and they're basically paralysed. And this is exactly what you see, how they respond to those questions from parliamentarians. How do governments in Germany or in Australia or elsewhere, how do you respond to those questions? It's very evasive. It's some form of platitudes that they tell you, you know, "this is about the rule of law and we can't interfere with an ongoing proceeding" and so on. But when it's about Navalny in Russia, they can very well interfere with an ongoing proceeding. I agree that Navalny's rights are being violated, but he is being detained for a bail violation. And that's why everybody issues, you know, imposes sanctions on Russia. But no one imposes a sanction on the U.K. for detaining Julian Assange because of a bail violation, which is not really a violation because he received official asylum by U.N. member states.

Let me just close on this remark. Judge Baraitser who actually refused Julian Assange's extradition on the 4th of January based on medical grounds, and because she said that U.S. conditions of detention would be oppressive. She confirmed that Julian Assange was right in seeking asylum in Ecuador. She didn't say that, but he thought asylum in Ecuador, the embassy, because he was afraid of being extradited to inhumane detention conditions. So he was right to ask for guarantees from Sweden, to ask for guarantees from the U.K. that they would not extradite him to the U.S. And he was offered that he would come out of the embassy if that were given. But both states refused to do that and now even the magistrate court confirmed that he was right, in essence.

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