

# WIKILEAKS AND THE WORLDWIDE INFORMATION WAR

*The recent release of the first batch of 250,000 US diplomatic cables leaked to WikiLeaks has provoked unparalleled global interest, both positive and negative and everywhere in between.*

*One thing is certain: WikiLeaks is changing the status quo.*

by Andrew Gavin Marshall

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There are those who accept what the WikiLeaks releases say at face value, largely due to the misrepresentation of the documents by the corporate-controlled news media. There are those who see the documents as authentic and simply in need of proper interpretation and analysis. Then there are those, many of whom are in the alternative media, who approach the leaks with caution and suspicion. There are those who simply cast the leaks aside as a "psy-op" designed to target specific nations that fit into US foreign policy objectives. Finally, then, there are those who deplore the leaks as "treason" or threatening "security". Of all the claims and notions, the last is, without a doubt, the most ridiculous.

This essay aims to examine the nature of the WikiLeaks releases and how they should be approached and understood. If WikiLeaks is changing things, let's hope people will make sure that it changes things in the right direction.

## Media Propaganda against Iran: Taking the Cables at Face Value

This perspective—taking the cables regarding Iran at face value—is perhaps the most propagated one, as it is largely influenced and undertaken by the mainstream corporate media which present the leaked diplomatic cables as "proof" of the media's take on major world issues—most notable among them, Iran's nuclear program. As per usual, the *New York Times* steps centre stage in its unbridled contempt for truth and relentless use of propaganda to serve US imperial interests, headlining articles with titles like "Around the World, Distress over Iran", which explained how Israel and the Arab leaders agree on Iran as a nuclear threat to the world, with the commentary in the article stating that "running beneath the cables is a belief among many leaders that unless the current government in Tehran falls, Iran will have a bomb sooner or later".<sup>1</sup> Fox News ran an article proclaiming that "Leaked Documents Show Middle East Consensus on Threat Posed by Iran", and commented that "the seismic document spill by WikiLeaks showed one area of profound agreement—that Iran is viewed in the Middle East as the region's No. 1 troublemaker".<sup>2</sup> This, it should be understood, is propaganda.

Yet, we need to refine properly our understanding of propaganda in order to assess what is specifically propagandistic about these stories. While one should remain sceptical of sources and disinformation campaigns (as those who critically analyse the media have known take place time and time again), one must also consider the personal perspective of the source and decipher between authenticity and analysis. These documents, I truly believe, are authentic. In this sense, I do not adhere to the notion that these are a part of a psychological operation (psy-op) or propaganda effort in terms of the actual release of the documents. We must keep in mind that the sources for these cables are US diplomatic channels, and thus the statements within them reflect the perspectives and beliefs of US diplomatic personnel. The documents are an authentic representation of their

statements and beliefs, but that does not imply that they are an accurate representation of reality.

This is where the media come in to propagandise the information within the leaks. The above two examples claim that the leaks show there is a "consensus" on Iran, and thus the American and indeed Israeli positions on Iran for the past several years have been "vindicated" in that they fear Iran is making nuclear weapons. This is nonsense. The media have essentially read and propagated the documents at face value—meaning that because US diplomats and Middle Eastern and Arab leaders all agree that Iran is a "threat" and is trying to make a "nuclear weapon", it therefore must be true. This is a *non sequitur*. Just because Middle Eastern and Arab leaders see Iran as a threat does not make it so.

Again, consider the sources. What makes the Arab leaders trustworthy sources for "unbiased" information? For example, one "revelation" that made its way around the world was the insistence of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah that America "cut off the head of the snake" of Iran and launch military strikes.<sup>3</sup> This has largely been interpreted in the media as "proof" that there is a "consensus" on the "threat" posed by Iran to the Middle East and the world. This has been the propaganda line toed by the *New York Times*, Fox News and the Israeli government, among many others. Yet, we need to contextualise this information properly—something which the *New York Times* has a long record of failing to do (intentionally, I might add). I do not doubt the authenticity of these statements or the belief of the Arab leaders that Iran is a "threat". Iran, on the other hand, has claimed that the leaks are "mischievous", that they serve US interests, and that Iran is "friends" with its neighbours.<sup>4</sup> This, too, is propaganda. Again, we need to contextualise.

Iran is a Shi'a nation, while the Arab nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, are predominantly Sunni. This presents a means of division among these nations in the region, at least on a superficial basis. The reality, however, is that Saudi Arabia and Iran are far from "friendly" and have not been on good terms since 1979 when the Shah was deposed. Iran is Saudi Arabia's primary contender and competitor for power and influence in the region, and thus Iran is inherently a threat to Saudi Arabia politically.

Further, the Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, whose claims against Iran have been widely publicised, must be understood in terms of their relationship to the United States. The Arab states are American proxies in the region. Their armies are subsidised by the American

military-industrial complex; their political regimes (all of which are dictatorships and dynasties) are propped up and supported by America.

The same goes for Israel, although at least it has the outward appearance of a democracy, much like the United States. Further, Israel itself is left subdued to American interests as an American proxy. If Israel's military financing and hardware come from America (which they do), then Israel is dependent upon America for its own military power and is in no position to tell the US not to arm its other regional proxies. If indeed a regional war against Iran is in the making, and it has appeared for some time that there is, it is certainly in Israel's interest to have allies against Iran in the region.

### Is WikiLeaks a Propaganda Effort?

The leaders of Israel have been very adamant that the WikiLeaks documents do not embarrass Israel to any extent. Prior to the release, the US government briefed

Israeli officials on the type of documents that would be released by WikiLeaks regarding Israel.<sup>5</sup> Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated: "There is no disparity between the public discourse between us and Washington, and the mutual understanding of each other's positions."<sup>6</sup> The Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, claimed that the documents "show a more accurate view of reality".<sup>7</sup> One top Turkish

politician stated that looking at which countries are pleased with the releases says a lot, and speculated that Israel "engineered the release" of documents in an attempt to advance its interests and to "pressure Turkey".<sup>8</sup>

Further, the Internet and various alternative news organisations are abuzz with speculation that WikiLeaks itself may be a propaganda front, perhaps even a CIA front organisation, a method of "controlling the opposition" (which we know that, historically, the CIA is not unfamiliar with). Yet, this speculation is based upon the use of the information that is released in the cables, and it strikes me as showing a lack of contextualising the documents.

So, how should one contextualise this? Let's begin with Israel. When the Israeli Prime Minister states that the WikiLeaks releases are not embarrassing to Israel, he is mostly correct. This is not because Israel has nothing to hide (remember, the WikiLeaks documents are not "top secret" documents but merely *diplomatic* cables), but because the diplomatic exchanges that Israel makes largely reflect the reality of the public statements that Israel makes. Israel and its political elite are no strangers to making absurd public

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statements, to constantly threatening war with Iran and other neighbours, or to propagandising their belief that Iran is making nuclear weapons (something which has never been proven). Thus, the leaks do not "hurt" Israel's image, because Israel's image internationally is already so abysmal and despicable and because Israeli diplomats and politicians are generally as brazen in what they say publicly as in what they say to each other, so Israel's image has largely remained the same. Of course, Israeli leaders—political and military—are using the leaks to suggest that they "vindicate" their perspective on Iran as a threat, which of course is an absurd propaganda ploy, the exact same technique taken on by the corporate media in taking the cables at face value.

While Iran has slammed these WikiLeaks releases as western propaganda aimed at Iran, this statement itself should be taken as a form of propaganda. After all, Iran claimed that it is "friends" with all its neighbours—a claim which is an historical and present falsity. Iran, like all states, uses propaganda to advance its own interests. Those who attempt to battle the spread of misinformation and propaganda, myself included, must remain highly critical of media representations and campaigns against Iran, of which there are many. Iran is firmly in the targets of America's imperial ambitions; this is no secret. Yet, there is nothing in the current batch of WikiLeaks releases that strikes me as inauthentic in relation to Iran, especially those documents pertaining to the perspectives of western diplomats and Arab leaders. No doubt they have these perspectives simply because they reflect the policy priorities of America and the West itself, not because they are factual in their substance. In this, we must decipher between authenticity and accuracy.

Analysts must not only critically assess the authenticity of documents (and the sources from which they come), but also, and perhaps even more importantly, they must critically analyse the interpretation of those documents. So while I do not doubt the authenticity of documents pertaining to western and Middle Eastern perceptions of Iran (as they fit in with the wider geopolitical realities of the region), it is the interpretations of the documents that I view as active propaganda efforts on the part of western governments and media. The method of this

propaganda effort, however, is in depicting the documents as "factual assessments" of the on-the-ground reality, which they are not. The documents are factual in how they represent the views of those who wrote them, which does not mean that they are factual in their substance. There is a difference, and acknowledging this difference is incredibly important in both the exposure of propaganda and the assessment of truth.

### The Truth about Diplomacy

Craig Murray is one voice that should be heard on this issue. Murray is a former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, who made a name for himself in exposing intelligence from Uzbekistan related to Al-Qaeda as entirely unreliable, due to the methods of torture (such as boiling people alive) which were used to get the information. This intelligence was passed to the CIA and MI6—intelligence which Murray said was "factually incorrect". When Murray expressed his concerns with the higher-ups in the British Diplomatic Service, he was reprimanded for talking about "human rights".<sup>9</sup> Murray was told by the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office that he had one week in which to resign, and he was threatened with possible prosecution or prison time for revealing "state secrets".<sup>10</sup> He was subsequently removed from his ambassadorial position, and has since become something of a political activist. In short, Murray is exactly the type of diplomat a person should want: honest. But he was also exactly the type of diplomat that western imperial powers don't want: honest.

In the midst of the latest WikiLeaks releases of diplomatic documents, Craig Murray was asked to write an article for the *Guardian* regarding his interpretation of the issue. As Murray later noted, the paper placed his article, largely reduced, hidden in the middle of a long compendium of various commentaries on WikiLeaks. Murray, however, posted the full version on his website. In the article, he begins by assessing the claims of government officials around the world, particularly in the United States, that WikiLeaks exposes the US to "harm", that it puts lives at risk, and that the leaks will "encourage Islamic extremism". Most especially, he assesses the notion that "government secrecy is essential to keep us all safe". Murray explains that, having been a diplomat for over 20 years, he is very

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familiar with these arguments, particularly the argument that, as a result of the WikiLeaks releases, diplomats will no longer be candid in giving advice "if that advice might become public". Murray elaborates:

*Put it another way. The best advice is advice you would not be prepared to defend in public. Really? Why? In today's globalised world, the Embassy is not a unique source of expertise. Often expatriate, academic and commercial organisations are a lot better informed. The best policy advice is not advice which is shielded from peer review.*

*What of course the establishment mean[s] is that Ambassadors should be free to recommend things which the general public would view with deep opprobrium, without any danger of being found out. But should they really be allowed to do that, in a democracy?"<sup>11</sup>*

Murray pointedly asks why a type of behaviour, such as lying, that is considered reprehensible for most people, "should be considered acceptable, or even praiseworthy, in diplomacy". He explains that for British diplomats "this belief that their profession exempts them from the normal constraints of decent behaviour amounts to a cult of Machiavellianism, a pride in their own amorality". He explains that diplomats come from a very narrow upper social stratum and "view themselves as ultra-intelligent Nietzschean supermen, above normal morality", who are socially connected to the political elite.

In criticising the claims made by many commentators that the release of the leaks endangers lives, Murray writes that this perspective needs to "set against any such risk the hundreds of thousands of actual dead from the foreign policies of the US and its co-conspirators in the past decade". Further, for those who posit that WikiLeaks is a psy-op or propaganda operation or a "CIA front", Murray has this to say:

*Of course the documents reflect the US view—they are official US government communications. What they show is something I witnessed personally, that diplomats as a class very seldom tell unpalatable truths to politicians, but rather report and reinforce what their masters want to hear, in the hope of receiving preferment.*

*There is therefore a huge amount about Iran's putative nuclear arsenal and an exaggeration of Iran's warhead delivery capability. But there is nothing about Israel's massive nuclear arsenal. That is not because wikileaks have censored criticism of Israel.*

*It is because any US diplomat who made an honest and open assessment of Israeli crimes would very quickly be an unemployed ex-diplomat.<sup>12</sup>*

Murray concludes his article with the statement that all would do well to keep in mind: "Truth helps the people against rapacious elites—everywhere."<sup>13</sup>

## World Order and Global Awakening

In attempting to understand WikiLeaks and its potential effects (that is, if the alternative media and citizen activists use this opportunity), we must place WikiLeaks within a wider geopolitical context.

Our human world exists as a complex system of social interactions. As powerful and dominating as elites are and have always been, we must understand that they are not omnipotent: they are human and flawed, as are their methods and ideas. But there are other forces at work in the human social world. There is a new and unique development in human history that is taking place around the world. It is unprecedented in reach and volume, and it is also the greatest threat to all global power structures: the "global political awakening". The term was coined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who wrote in the *New York Times* (16 December 2008):

*For the first time in history almost all of humanity is politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive. Global activism is generating a surge in the quest for cultural respect and economic opportunity in a world scarred by memories of colonial or imperial domination.*

It is, in essence, this massive "global political awakening" which presents the gravest and greatest challenge to the organised powers of globalisation and the global political economy: nation-states, multinational corporations and banks, central banks, international organisations, and military, intelligence, media and academic institutions. Members of the transnational capitalist class, or "Superclass" as David Rothkopf refers to them, are globalised like never before. For the first time in history, we have a truly global and heavily integrated elite. As elites have globalised their power, seeking to construct a "new world order" of global governance and ultimately global government (decades down the line), they have simultaneously globalised populations.

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The "Technological Revolution" involves two major geopolitical developments. The first is that as technology advances, systems of mass communication rapidly accelerate and the world's people are able to engage in instant communication with one another and gain access to information from around the world. In it lies the potential—and ultimately a central source—of a massive global political awakening. Simultaneously, the Technological Revolution has allowed elites to redirect and control society in ways never before imagined, potentially culminating in a global scientific dictatorship, as many have warned of since the early decades of the 20th century. The potential for controlling the masses has never been so great, as science unleashes the power of genetics, biometrics, surveillance and new forms of modern eugenics, implemented by a scientific elite equipped with systems of psycho-social control.

Brzezinski's analysis of the "global political awakening" is useful because of his representation of it as the primary global threat to elite interests everywhere. Thus, people should view the concept of the global political awakening as the greatest potential *hope* for humanity and that it should be advanced and aided—as opposed to Brzezinski's perspective that it should be controlled and suppressed.

Brzezinski posits that to address this new global "challenge" to entrenched powers, particularly nation-states that cannot sufficiently address the increasingly non-pliant populations and populist demands, what is required is "increasingly supranational cooperation, actively promoted by the United States". In other words, Brzezinski favours an increased and expanded "internationalisation", not surprising considering that he laid the intellectual foundations of the Trilateral Commission.

### Conceptualising WikiLeaks

I feel that WikiLeaks must be conceptualised within our understanding of this geopolitical reality which we find ourselves in today. There is, of course, logic behind the automatic scepticism and suspicion about WikiLeaks from the alternative media; however, they also risk losing an incredible opportunity presented by WikiLeaks, not only to reach more people with important information but to better inform that information itself.

For those who view WikiLeaks as a conspiracy or plot, as a psy-op of some kind, while indeed these things have taken place in the past, there is simply no evidence for it thus far. Every examination of this concept is

based upon speculation. Many nations around the world, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia, are pointing to the western nations as engaging in a covert propaganda campaign aimed at creating disunity between states and allies. Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan have made such claims. It is no surprise that most of these nations, particularly Iran, are targets of US imperial policy. However, since the WikiLeaks releases speak heavily and negatively about Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, China, Venezuela, etc., one must remember that these are diplomatic cables and represent the opinions and beliefs of the diplomatic establishment, a social group which is historically and presently deeply enmeshed in and submissive to elite ideology and methodology. If all the information they come up with are rumours, conjectures and repeated talking points, that is what will be seen in the diplomatic cables. Indeed, that is exactly the case.

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The cables are full of rumours and unsupported allegations. So naturally, they would target these specific nations—deemed geopolitically significant by American imperial interests—and this would explain why there would be far less information on Israel and other allied nations. This is why it seems to me that these cables are authentic. They seem to represent the reality of the "diplomatic social

group", and thus they are a vivid exploration in the study of imperialism. We have been given the opportunity to see the "communications" of imperial diplomacy. It is in this that we are presented with an incredible opportunity.

Further, in regards to many Middle Eastern and Asian nations framing WikiLeaks as a "western plot", as critical thinkers we must take note of the geopolitical reality of the global political awakening. All states are self-interested: that is the nature of a state. Elites all over the world are aware of the reality and potential political power of the global political awakening and thus seek to suppress it or co-opt its potential. States (such as Iran) which are often viewed by the critical press as "targets" of western imperial powers may seek to use this power to their own advantage. They may attempt to steer the global awakening and the alternative media to their favour, which gives them political power. But the alternative media must not pick sides in terms of global elites and power structures: we must remain critical of all sides and all actors.

WikiLeaks is receiving an incredible readership and is reaching out to new audiences, globally and in the American homeland itself, and to the youth of the world. People's perceptions are beginning to change on

a variety of issues. The question is: will the alternative media ignore WikiLeaks and isolate themselves, or will they engage with WikiLeaks and prevent the mainstream corporate media from having a "monopoly of interpretation", which becomes inherently propagandistic. If we do not reach out to this new and growing audience, we are left talking to each other, further isolating ourselves and ultimately becoming subverted and ineffective for change. We need to reach out to new audiences, and this is an incredible opportunity to do so. People are interested, people are curious, people are hungry for more.

### WikiLeaks and the Media

Instead of deriding WikiLeaks as "not telling us anything we didn't know before", perhaps the alternative media should use the popularity and momentum of WikiLeaks to take from it the documentation and analysis that further strengthen our arguments and beliefs. This will allow for others, especially new audiences of interested people worldwide, to place the WikiLeaks releases within a wider context and understanding.

The reports from WikiLeaks are "revelations" only to those who largely adhere to the "illusions" of the world: that we live in "democracies" promoting "freedom" around the world and at home, etc. The "revelations", however, are not simply challenging American perceptions of America but the perceptions of all nations and their populations. The fact that these people are reading and discovering new things for which they are developing an interest is an incredible change.

This is likely why the corporate media are so heavily involved in the dissemination of this information (which itself is a major source of suspicion for the alternative media): to control the interpretation of the message. It is the job of the alternative media, intellectuals and other thinking individuals to challenge that interpretation with factual analysis. The WikiLeaks releases actually give us more facts to place within and support our interpretations than they do for the corporate media.

We must ask why the WikiLeaks releases are "revelations" for most people. Well, they are surprising simply for the fact that the media themselves have such a strong hold on the access to, dissemination and interpretation of information. They are revelations because people are indoctrinated with myths. They are not revelations to the alternative media because we have been talking about these things for years.

However, while they may not necessarily be revelations, they are in fact confirmations and vindications and they bring more information to the analysis. It is in this that a great opportunity lies. For since the leaks support and better inform our perspectives, we can build on this concept and examine how WikiLeaks adds to and supports critical analysis.

For those who are newly interested and looking for information, or for those who are having their previous perceptions challenged, it is the alternative media and critical voices alone that can place that information in a wider context for everyone else. In this, more people will see how it is the alternative media with their critical perspectives which are more reflective of reality than, say, the mainstream media (for which WikiLeaks is a "revelation"). Thus, more people may soon start turning to alternative media and ideas; after all, *our* perspectives have been vindicated, not those of the mainstream

media (though they attempt to spin it as such).

However, no other organised apparatus is as capable of disseminating as much material as quickly and with such global reach as the mainstream media. If the leaks initially only made it into alternative media, then the information would only have reached those who are already reading the alternative press.

In that, they would not have been such grand "revelations" and would have had a muted effect. In their global exposure of WikiLeaks material (never mind their slanted and propagandistic interpretations), the mainstream media have changed the dynamic and significance of the information. By reaching wider and new audiences, the alternative and critical voices can co-opt these new audiences and lead them away from the realm of information "control" into the realm of information "access". This is potentially one of the greatest opportunities presented for the alternative and critical voices of the world.

The WikiLeaks releases are a globally transformative event, not simply in terms of awakening new people to "new" information but also in terms of the effect it is having upon global power structures themselves. With ambassadors resigning, diplomats being exposed as liars and tools, political rifts developing between western imperial allies, and many careers and reputations of elites around the world at great risk, WikiLeaks is creating the potential for an enormous deterioration in the effectiveness of imperialism and domination. This, in itself, is an admirable and worthy goal. That this is already a reality is representative of how truly transformative WikiLeaks is and could be.

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People, globally, are starting to see their leaders through a lens not filtered by "public relations". Through mainstream media, information gets filtered through propaganda, which is why it is an essential duty of the alternative media and critical thinkers to place this information in a wider, comprehensive context. This would further erode the effectiveness of empire.

With the reaction of several states and policing organisations in issuing arrest warrants for WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange or in calling for his assassination (as one Canadian adviser to the Prime Minister suggested on television), these organisations and individuals are exposing their own hatred of democracy, transparency and freedom of information. Their reactions can be used to discredit their legitimacy to "rule". If policing agencies are supposed to "protect and serve", why are they seeking instead to punish and subvert those who expose the truth? Again, this comes as no surprise to those who closely study the nature of the state and especially the modern phenomenon of the militarisation of domestic society and the dismantling of rights and freedoms. However, it is happening before the eyes of the whole world, and people are paying attention. This is new.

This is an incredible opportunity to criticise foreign policy (read "imperial strategy") and to disembowel many global power structures. More people now, than ever before, will be willing to listen, learn and investigate for themselves. WikiLeaks should be regarded as a gift, not a distraction. Instead of focusing on the parts of the WikiLeaks cables (such as on Iran) which do not reflect the perspectives of the alternative media, we must use WikiLeaks to better inform our own understanding not simply of the "policy" itself but of the complex social interactions and ideas that create the basis for the policy to be carried out.

In regards to the diplomatic cables themselves, WikiLeaks helps to unsheathe and strip away the rhetoric behind imperial policy and expose diplomats not as "informed observers" but as "agents of power". The reaction by nations, organisations and institutions around the world adds further fuel to this approach, as we are seeing the utter distaste that political leaders have for "democracy" and "freedom of information", despite their rhetoric. Several institutions of power can be more widely exposed in this manner.

## WikiLeaks as an Opportunity

If WikiLeaks is a psy-op, it is either the stupidest or the most intelligent psychological operation ever undertaken. But one thing is for sure: systems and structures of power are in the process of being exposed to a much wider audience than ever before. The question for the alternative media and critical researchers alike is what will they do with this information and this opportunity.

Julian Assange was recently interviewed by *Time* magazine about WikiLeaks, and explained to its inadequately informed editor that organisations which are secretive need to be exposed:

*If their behavior is revealed to the public, they have one of two choices: one is to reform in such a way that they can be proud of their endeavors, and proud to display them to the public. Or the other is to lock down internally and to balkanize, and as a result, of course, cease to be as efficient as they were. To me, that is a very good outcome, because organizations can either be efficient, open and honest, or they can be closed, conspiratorial and inefficient.<sup>15</sup>*

Assange further explained some of his perspectives regarding the influence of and reactions to WikiLeaks, stating:

*Aspects of the Chinese government, Chinese Public Security Service, appear to be terrified of free speech, and while one might say that means something awful is happening in the country, I actually think that is a very optimistic sign, because it means that speech can still cause reform and that the power structure is still inherently political, as opposed to fiscal. So journalism and writing are capable of achieving change, and that is why Chinese authorities are so scared of it. Whereas in the United States to a large degree, and in other Western countries, the basic elements of society have been so heavily fiscalized through contractual obligations that political change doesn't seem to result in economic change, which in other words means that political change doesn't result in change.<sup>16</sup>*

In the interview, Assange turned to the issue of the Internet and community media:

*For the rise of social media, it's quite interesting. When we first started [in 2006], we thought we would have the analytical work done by bloggers and people who wrote Wikipedia articles and so on. And we thought that was a natural, given that we had lots of quality, important content...*

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*The bulk of the heavy lifting – heavy analytical lifting – that is done with our materials is done by us, and is done by professional journalists we work with and by professional human-rights activists. It is not done by the broader community. However, once the initial lifting is done, once a story becomes a story, becomes a news article, then we start to see community involvement, which digs deeper and provides more perspective. So the social networks tend to be, for us, an amplifier of what we are doing. And also a supply of sources for us.*<sup>17</sup>

As researchers, media and critics, we must realise that our perspectives and beliefs must be open to change and evolution. Simply because something like this has never happened before does not mean that it isn't happening now. We live in the era of the Technological Revolution, and the Internet has changed economics, politics and society itself on a global scale. This is where the true hope in furthering and better informing the "global political awakening" will need to take speed and establish itself. True change in our world is not going to come from already established or newly created institutions of power, which is where all issues are currently being addressed, especially those of global significance. True change, instead, can only come not from global power structures but from the global "community" of people, interacting with one another via the power unleashed by the Technological Revolution. Change must be globally understood and community organised.

We are on the verge of a period of global social transformation. The question is: will we do anything about it? Will we seek to inform and partake in this transition, or will we sit and watch it be misled, criticising it as it falters and falls?

As "globalisation" has facilitated the emergence of a global elite and several global institutions and ideologies of global power, so too has this process facilitated the "globalisation of opposition". So while elites, globally, actively work to integrate and expand global power structures, they are inadvertently integrating and expanding global opposition to those very same power structures. This is the great paradox of our time, and one which we must recognise, for it is not simply a factual observation but a hopeful situation.

Hope should not be underestimated, and it is something that I have personally struggled with in my views of the world. It is hard to see hope when you

study so much horror in the world and see how little is being done about it. But activism and change need hope. This is very evident from the Obama campaign, which was splashed with rhetoric of "hope" and "change", something that all people rightfully want and need. However, Obama's "hope" and "change" were Wall Street brands and patents; it was a glorious practice in the art of propaganda and an horrific blow to true notions of hope and change. There is a reason why the Obama campaign took the top prizes in public relations industry awards.<sup>18</sup>

While indeed, on most fronts in the world, things are getting progressively worse, the alternative media have focused almost exclusively on these issues such that they have blinded themselves to the positive geopolitical developments in the world—namely, the global political awakening and the role of the Internet in reshaping global society. While these issues are acknowledged, they are not fully understood or explained within the wider context: that these are, in fact, hopeful developments; that there is hope. WikiLeaks strengthens this notion, if it is to be taken as an opportunity.

The list of examples surfacing from the WikiLeaks cables is endless in the amount of additional information that can be added to the alternative media's dissemination of information and analysis. Make no mistake: this is an opportunity for the spread of truth, not a distraction from it. Treat it accordingly. ∞

#### About the Author:

Andrew Gavin Marshall is a research associate with the Centre for Research on Globalization in Montreal, Canada. He is co-editor, with Professor Michel Chossudovsky, of the recent book *The Global Economic Crisis: The Great Depression of the XXI Century* (available at <http://www.globalresearch.ca>). He is currently writing a book on global government, due to be released in 2011 by Global Research Publishers. His previous articles in NEXUS are "The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda" (17/06), "The Rise of the Global Scientific Dictatorship" (17/05), "A New World War for a New World Order" (17/02) and "The Financial New World Order" (16/04–05).

#### Editor's Note:

Due to space constraints, we cannot publish the complete version of Andrew G. Marshall's article. To view this and the accompanying endnotes, go to the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/67hmpqp>.

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