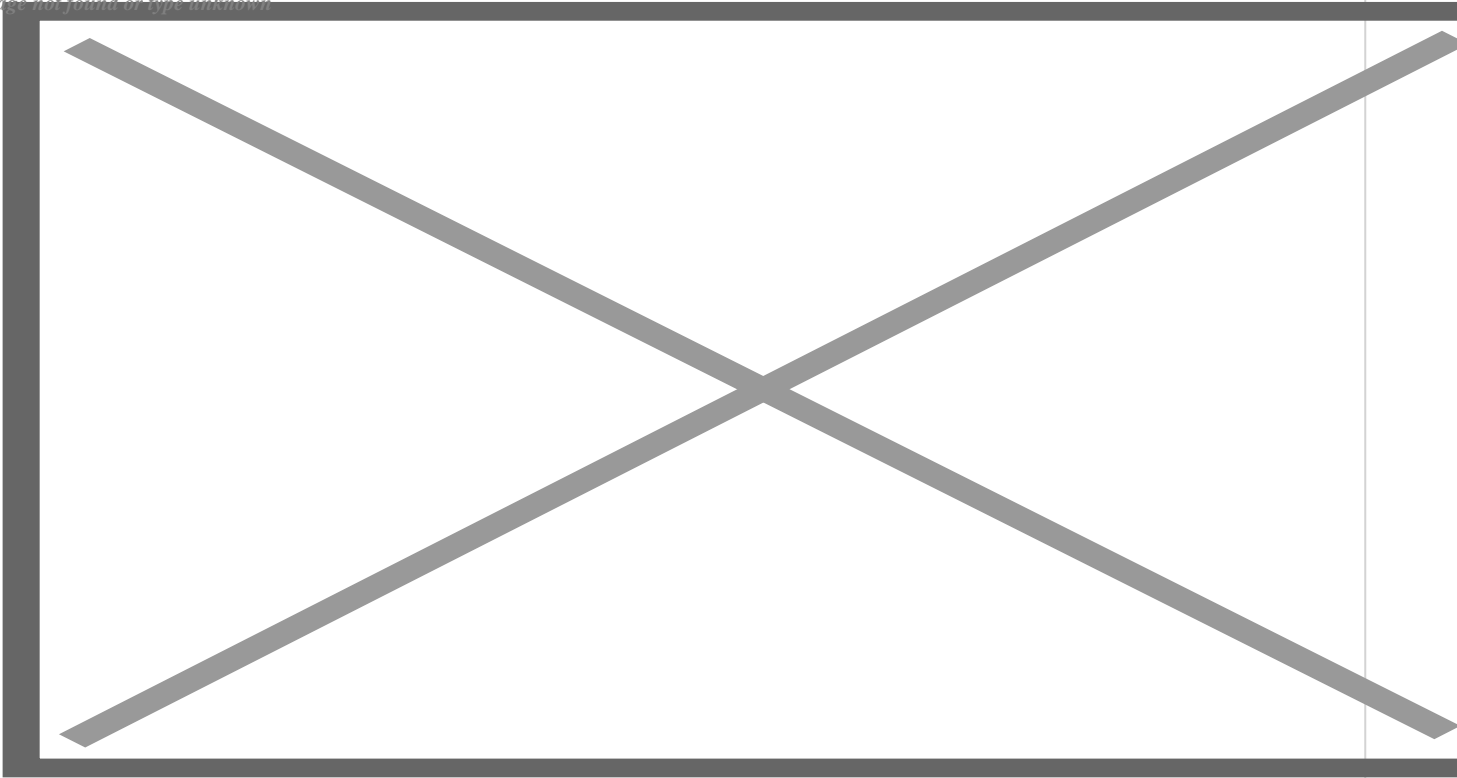


For Thanksgiving, instead of pardoning a turkey, Biden should free Julian Assange

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Julian Assange remains in Belmarsh prison in London as he fights a US attempt to extradite him to face charges – including under the Espionage Act. The charges are in connection with the publication of hundreds of thousands of leaked documents about the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, as well as diplomatic cables, in 2010 and 2011.

Assange is a hero in my book. He disclosed blatant actions of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan and also U.S. spying on German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Trump should have pardoned Assange but didn't.

Pardon is not even the correct word. Assange did nothing wrong in the first place.

And to show you how perverted justice is CIA officials under Trump discussed assassinating Julian Assange.

Senior CIA officials during the Trump administration discussed abducting and even assassinating WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, according to a U.S. report citing former officials.

The discussions on kidnapping or killing Assange took place in 2017, Yahoo News reported, when the fugitive Australian activist was entering his fifth year sheltering in the Ecuadorian embassy. The then CIA director, Mike Pompeo, and his top officials were furious about WikiLeaks' publication of "Vault 7", a set of CIA hacking tools, a breach which the agency deemed to be the biggest data loss in its history.

Pompeo and the CIA leadership "were completely detached from reality because they were so embarrassed about Vault 7", Yahoo cites a former Trump national security official as saying. "They were seeing blood."

Some senior officials inside the CIA and the Trump administration went as far as to request "sketches" or "options" for killing Assange. "There seemed to be no boundaries," a former senior counterterrorist official was quoted as saying.

Please note that Trump commuted the sentence of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich who tried to sell a U.S. Senate seat. Blagojevich was released from federal prison after being sentenced to 14 years on corruption charges related to his solicitation of bribes in an attempt to "sell" Barack Obama's open Senate seat.

Trump pardoned or reversed the sentences of three American soldiers convicted or accused of war crimes in Afghanistan or Iraq.

In November and December 2020, Trump pardoned four Blackwater guards convicted of killing Iraqi civilians in the 2007 Nisour Square massacre; white-collar criminals Michael Milken and Bernard Kerik and daughter Ivanka's father-in-law Charles Kushner. He also pardoned five people convicted as a result of investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections: Michael Flynn, George Papadopoulos, Alex van der Zwaan, Roger Stone, whose 40-month sentence for lying to Congress, witness tampering, and obstruction he had already commuted in July, and Paul Manafort.

Wikipedia notes that in his last full day in office, Trump granted 143 pardons and commutations, including to his former chief strategist Steve Bannon, Trump fundraiser Elliott Broidy, and former Republican congressmen Rick Renzi, Robert Hayes, and Randall "Duke" Cunningham. He also commuted the sentences of dozens of people, including former Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and sports gambler Billy Walters; the latter had paid tens of thousands of dollars to former Trump attorney John M. Dowd to plead his case with Trump.

It's not Assange who should be incarcerated. It's Pompeo, the CIA and nearly everyone Trump did pardon. In comparison, the "crime" of Assange was telling the truth.

By Mike “Mish” Shedlock / Mish is a highly acclaimed macro-economic writer who typically posts several articles a day on his MishTalk website.

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