

London. Multiple defence witnesses, some world famous such as Noam Chomsky and Daniel Ellsberg, tore the US case to shreds. Unfortunately the public will have little idea of what happened in court because as Craig Murray who attended the whole trial notes:

*'This entire hearing has been conducted in effective secrecy, a comprehensive secrecy that gives sharp insight into the politico-economic structures of current western society. Physical access to the courtroom has been extremely limited, with the public gallery cut to five people. Video link access has similarly been extremely limited, with 40 NGOs having their access cut by the judge from day 1 at the Old Bailey, including Amnesty International, PEN, Reporters without Borders and observers from the European Parliament, among many others. The state and corporate media have virtually blacked out this hearing, with a truly worrying unanimity, and despite the implications of the case for media freedom. Finally, the corporations that act as internet gatekeepers have heavily suppressed social media posts about Assange, and traffic to those few websites which are reporting.'*

### Assange's Legal Rights 'Severely and Consistently Violated'

The last decade's treatment of Julian Assange was symbolised at the Old Bailey where, having daily been strip searched naked and X-rayed, he sat silent, guarded behind a glass screen at the back of the court, unable to speak to his lawyers except by kneeling down and speaking or passing notes through a slit in the glass. UN Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer has assessed his treatment by the UK courts thus:

*'Assange's procedural rights have been so severely and consistently violated that, by now, this extradition proceeding has become irreparably arbitrary. He has not had adequate access to his lawyers, he has not been granted a single meeting since the lockdown in March, he has had extremely restricted access to his case documents, he only received a computer after a year in prison, he*

*doesn't have internet access, and on top of that, they have glued down the keys of the keyboard so he can't write ... all of these restrictions are clearly unlawful ...'*

### A Political Trial

*'If the case in London were decided solely on justice, as it should in a state based on law, this battle would have been won by Assange. However, this 'trial of the century' is, above all, a political trial, and there remains the feeling that the ruling was made beforehand, regardless of the law.'* (Fidel Narváez served as Ecuador's consul in the UK from 2010 until July 2018.)

The Extradition hearings give a veneer of legal process to what is in effect an attempted judicial rendition of Julian Assange to the USA.

*'Courtroom evidence exposed illegality on an unprecedented scale by America's and Britain's intelligence, military, police, and judicial agencies to eliminate Assange.'* (Award winning journalist Charles Glass)



Illegal surveillance film in Embassy – Assange meets lawyer Geoffrey Robertson

The US government's relentless campaign to bury Assange in the darkest cell of the most torturous US prison for the rest of his life has never ceased since 2010 when a Secret Grand Jury was convened. The CIA, the FBI and other agencies set up task forces to 'Get Assange'. US operations were conducted in Europe, informers were recruited and intense collaborations took place with UK, Australian and Swedish governments. The Pentagon alone set up a special task force, deploying 120 counter-intelligence officers, to find at least one death that could be blamed on the published materials. They failed. Smears on an industrial scale were fed to tame media outlets and recycled endlessly with the Guardian taking the lead in this.

### Illegal US Surveillance in the Embassy

Operations were stepped up when Trump was elected with CIA Director, Mike Pompeo in 2017 making an open declaration of war on Wikileaks saying Assange runs a 'Non-state hostile intelligence agency ... It ends now.' The Ecuadorian Embassy, always heavily surveilled, was in 2017 fitted internally with hidden 24-hour cameras and microphones (including the meeting room used by Assange and his lawyers) by

the security company UC Global. That material was handed over to US 'intelligence agencies' as two employees statements to the court showed. One of them reported that the Americans became so desperate they suggested 'extreme measures' such as kidnapping or poisoning Assange.

The gross illegality of the surveillance alone should have stopped the case going forward as it has breached major laws concerning legal confidentiality and thus compromised the ability of the Defence case. But this is, of course, a political extradition – something that expressly is not allowed under the Extradition Treaty between the US and UK. But that has never stopped the case either.

The US Prosecution cannot of course say what the case is really about – truthful journalism – so they have cast round for various false pretexts: hacking, causing harm to people named in the leaks, saying Assange is not a journalist. Witnesses at the Old Bailey showed that none of these were accurate or true. Finally, they were left only with this:

