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WikiLeaks Vault 7 Reveals CIA Cyberwar and the Real Battleground of Democracy

By Nozomi Hayase
March 16, 2017

WikiLeaks dropped a bombshell on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Code-named "Vault 7", the whistleblowing site began releasing the largest publication of confidential documents, that have come from the top secret security network at the Cyber Intelligence Center. Long before the Edward Snowden revelations, Julian Assange noted how "The Internet, our greatest tool of emancipation, has been transformed into the most dangerous facilitator of totalitarianism we have ever seen." He decried the militarization of the Internet with the penetration by the intelligence agencies like NSA and GCHQ, which created "a military occupation of civilian space". Now, WikiLeaks' latest disclosures shed further light on this cyber-warfare, exposing the role of the CIA.

At a recent press conference from the Ecuadorian embassy in London, Assange explained how the CIA developed its own cyber-weapons arsenal and lost it after storing it all in one place. What is alarming is that the CIA became aware of this loss and didn't warn the public about it. As a result, this pervasive technology that was designed to hide all traces, can now be used by cyber-mafias, foreign agents, hackers and by anyone for malicious purposes.

Part one of this WikiLeaks publication dubbed "Year Zero", revealed the CIA's global hacking force from 2013 to 2016. The thousands of documents released contain visceral revelations of the CIA's own version of an NSA. With an ability to hack any Android or iPhone, as well as Samsung TVs and even cars, they spy on citizens, bypassing encrypted messaging apps like

Signal and Telegram. The Vault 7 leaks that exposed the CIA's excessive power is of great importance from a point of view of security for individual privacy. But it has larger significance tied to the mission of WikiLeaks.

Opening Government into the Deep State

Describing itself on its site as "a multi-national media organization and associated library", WikiLeaks aims to open governments in order to bring justice. In the speech at the SWSX conference in Texas, delivered via Skype in 2014, Assange described the particular environment that spawned the culture of disclosure this organization helped to create. He noted how "we were living in some fictitious representation of what we thought was the world" and that the "true history of the world" is "all obscured by some kind of fog". This founder and editor in chief of innovative journalism explained how disclosures made through their publications break this fog. The magnitude of this Vault 7 cache, which some say may be bigger than the Snowden revelations, perhaps lies in its effect of clearing the fog to let people around the world see the ground upon which the narratives of true history are written.

Since coming online in 2007, WikiLeaks has published more than 10 million documents. Each groundbreaking disclosure got us closer to where the real power of the world resides. In 2010, WikiLeaks rose to prominence with the publication of the Collateral Murder video. With the release of documents concerning US Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they hit on the nerves of the Pentagon – the central nervous system of the Military Industrial Complex. With the release of the US Diplomatic Cables, they angered the State Department and came head to head with this global superpower.

Last year, this unprecedented publisher with its perfect record of document authentication, began to blow the cover off American democracy a step further to clear the fog. WikiLeaks played an important role in the 2016 US Presidential election. The DNC leaks disrupted the prescribed script of corporate sponsored lesser of two evils charade politics. The publication of the Podesta emails that revealed internal workings of the Clinton campaign, gave the American people an opportunity to learn in real time about the function of the electoral arena as a mechanism of control.

With the demise of the Democratic Party, led by its own internal corruption, the cracks in this façade widened, unveiling the existence of a government within a government. People are beginning to glimpse those who seek to control behind the scenes – anonymous unelected actors who exercise enduring power in Washington by manipulating public perception. This unraveling that has been slowly unfolding, appeared to have reached a peak last month when Trump's former National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn resigned. He was forced to do this on the grounds that leaked classified information revealed he was lying about his phone conversation discussing sanctions with the Russian Ambassador.

WikiLeaks now entered its 10th year. The momentum continues, bringing us to a new pinnacle of disclosure. At the end of last year, in anticipation of this new release, WikiLeaks tweeted, "If you thought 2016 was a big WikiLeaks year, 2017 will blow you away." During the dramatic takedown of General Flynn, the media created a frenzy around unconfirmed claims that Russia

was meddling with the US election and Putin's alleged ties with Trump, creating another fog of obfuscation. It was in this climate that WikiLeaks published documents showing CIA espionage in the last French presidential election.

History Awakening

The idea of a shadow government has been the focus of political activists, while it has also been a subject of ridicule as conspiracy theories. Now, WikiLeaks' pristine documents provide irrefutable evidence about this hidden sector of society. The term 'deep state' that is referenced in the mainstream media, first hit the major airwaves in 2014, in Bill Moyers' interview with Mike Lofgren. This former congressional staff member discussed his essay titled "Anatomy of the Deep State" and explained it as the congruence of power emerging as a "hybrid of corporate America and national security state".

We are now watching a deep state sword-fight against the elected Caesar of American plutocracy in this gladiator ring, surrounded by the cheers of liberal intelligentsia, who are maddened with McCarthy era hysteria. As the Republic is falling with its crumbling infrastructure and anemic debt economy, far away from the coliseum, crazed with the out-of-tune national anthem, the silent pulse of hope begins to whisper. WikiLeaks unlocked the vaults that had swallowed the stolen past. As the doors open into this hidden America, history awakens with dripping blood that runs deep inside the castle. As part of the release of this encrypted treasure-trove of documents, WikiLeaks posted on Twitter the following passphrase; "SplinterItIntoAThousandPiecesAndScatterItIntoTheWinds." These were actually words spoken by President John F. Kennedy, a month before his assassination. His exact words were "I will splinter the CIA into a thousands pieces and scatter it into the wind" – which shows his attitude toward the CIA as an arm of the deep state and what many believe to be the real reason for his assassination.

The secret stream of history continues, taking control over every aspect of civil life and infecting the heart of democracy. The US has long since lost its way. We have been living in a fictitious representation of the flag and the White House. It is not judicial boundaries drawn by the Constitution or even the enlightenment ideals that once inspired the founders of this country that now guide the course of our lives. Tyranny of the old world casts its shadow, binding Congress, the Supreme Court and the President into a rule of oligarchy. CIA documents revealed that the US Consulate in Frankfurt was used as a covert hacking base, while CIA officers work under the cover of the State Department to penetrate with these intelligence operations. The Wall Street Journal now reports that President Trump has given the CIA expanded authority to carry out drone attacks, which was power that prior to that had only been given to the Pentagon.

Decisions that radically alter the direction of our society are not made in a fair democratic election, a public hearing or the senate floor. They are made in the FISA Court and secret grand juries, bypassing judicial warrants and democratic accountability. This hidden network of power that exists above the law entangles legislators, judges and the press into a web of deception through dirty money and corrupt influence. It controls perception of the past, present and future.

The Internet Generation

As the deep state comes to the surface, we are able to see the real battle on the horizon. What is revealed here is a clash of values and two radically different visions of a future civilization. In his response to the Vault 7 publication, Michael Hayden, the former CIA director was quick to lay blame on the millennials. He said, "This group of millennials and related groups simply have different understandings of the words loyalty, secrecy and transparency than certainly my generation did". To him, these young people are the problem, as if their different cultural approach and instincts must be tempered and indoctrinated into this hierarchical system, so they know who their masters are.

Who are these people that are treated as a plague on society? This is the Internet generation, immersed with the culture of the free-net, freedom of speech and association. They believe in privacy for individuals, while demanding transparency for those in power. Peter Ludlow, a philosopher who writes under the pseudonym Urizenus Sklar, shared his observation of a cultural shift that happened in 2011. He noted that WikiLeaks had become a catalyst for an underground subculture of hackers that burst into the mainstream as a vital political force. Assange recognized this development in recent years as a "politicization of the youth connected to Internet" and acknowledged it as "the most significant thing that happened in the world since the 1960s".

This new generation ran into the deep state and those who confront it are met with intense hostility. Despite his promise of becoming the most transparent government, Obama engaged in unprecedented persecution of whistleblowers. Now this dark legacy seems to be continuing with the present administration. Vice president Mike Pence vowed to "use the full force of the law" to hunt down those who released the Intelligence Agency's secret material.

As these conflicts heat up, resistance continues in the Internet that has now become a battleground. Despite crackdowns on truth-tellers, these whistleblowers won't go away. From Manning to Snowden, people inside institutions who have come to see subversion of government toward insidious control and want change, have shown extraordinary courage. According to a statement given to WikiLeaks, the source behind the CIA documents is following the steps of these predecessors. They want this information to be publicly debated and for people to understand the fact that the CIA created its own NSA without any oversight. The CIA claims its mission is to "aggressively collect foreign intelligence overseas to protect America from terrorists, hostile nation states and other adversaries". With these documents that have now been brought back to the historical archive, the public can examine whether this agency has itself lost control and whose interests they truly serve.

The Future of Civilization

As the world's first stateless 4th estate, WikiLeaks has opened up new territory where people can touch the ground of uncensored reality and claim creative power to participate in the history that is happening. In a press conference on Periscope, Assange made reference to a statement by the President of Microsoft, who called for the creation of a digital Geneva Convention to provide protection against nation-states and cyber-attacks. He then affirmed WikiLeaks's role as a neutral digital Switzerland for people all over the world.

WikiLeaks is taking the first step toward this vision. After they carefully redacted the actual codes of CIA hacking tools, anonymized names and email addresses that were targeted, they announced that they will work with tech companies by giving them some exclusive access to the material. Assange explained that this could help them understand vulnerabilities and produce security fixes, to create a possible antidote to the CIA's breach of security and offer countermeasures. WikiLeaks tweeted notifying the public that they now have contacted Apple, Microsoft, Google, Mozilla, and MicroTik to help protect users against CIA malware.

The Internet unleashed the beast that grows its force in the dark. Unaccounted power is dragging global society down into an Orwellian dystopia. Yet, from this same Internet, a new force is arising. Courage of the common people is breaking through the firewall of secrecy, creating a fortress that becomes ever more resilient, as the network of people around the world fighting for freedom expands. When democracy dies in darkness, it can be reborn in the light of transparency. The deep state stretches across borders, sucking people into an abyss of totalitarian control. At the same time, the epic publication of Vault 7 that has just begun, reminds us that the greatness in each of us can awaken to take back the power of emancipation and participate in this battle for democracy, the outcome of which could not only determine the future of the Internet, but of our civilization.