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## Who's afraid of Julian Assange of WikiLeaks? Everyone

I don't know if [Liu Xiaobo](#) has met [Julian Assange](#). But if the two do bump into each other sometime in life- unlikely as that may be - they'll have a lot to crib about. There were no high-fives for Liu from most world leaders as China slammed the Nobel peace prize winner for talking freedom and liberty. They have gone quiet on Assange, too, as the US and its friends come together to hunt a man already labeled a terrorist by Sarah Palin.

Just as everyone, including India, held back their congratulatory messages to Liu, serving an 11-year-sentence for drafting and circulating an online petition that called for the recognition of human rights and democracy in China, the other countries- Brazil, Russia, most of the Asian nations, the Arabs and Africans - will in all probability follow the pattern of silence on Assange.

Because if they talk for Assange, they'll have to answer unpleasant questions on whistleblowers and activists in their own backyards. Then there is the risk of alienating America, still a superpower with large business interests in most major countries around the globe.

Two very good reasons to ignore what's happening to the light-haired Australian as he looks at a plug-down of his website, bereft of funds- after Bank of America, Visa, MasterCard, PayPal and Western Union stopped processing financial transactions for Assange's ops, donations have almost jammed - and pushing hard a money-raising campaign that started on October 24 christened 'WikiLeaks Needs You'.

An Indian official had, rather incredibly, justified New Delhi's response to Liu's Nobel and said the "decolonized world has learnt not to interfere in the internal affairs of each other." The signal, obviously, is to keep pretending no one is persecuting Assange for his cable exposes.

The UK court that ordered the extradition of the [WikiLeaks](#) founder to Sweden to face charges of rape had the bench of John Thomas and Duncan Ousely declare - with the solemn faces judges reserve when they give their observations on matters concerning not individuals but nations - that Assange should stand trial for having consensual sex without using a condom. London, then, doesn't want to interfere in Stockholm's affairs (or is it the US's ?) either. Very touching.

Assange's lawyers had earlier argued that the UK should not throw him out as he faces the possibility of being held in solitary confinement in Sweden despite not having been charged, and is likely to spend up to a year in custody.

There is apparently no time limit to detention in Sweden. They added that as there is no bail system in that country, he could remain in indefinite detention. Most importantly, "he will not be judged by an independent and impartial tribunal as three out of the four judges are lay judges, appointed by political parties and having no formal legal training".

The merits of the case apart - there are voices growing louder that at least one of the two women who quite gladly slept with Assange had links with the CIA, and that it was a meticulously laid honey-trap for the Australian who might have been ignorant of Sweden's peculiar sex crime laws - there was not a whisper from world leaders when South Africa failed to give the Dalai Lama a visa to attend Desmond Tutu's 80th birthday celebrations in October. There's little hope of support from anyone of significance for Assange.

The concerns of new nations in a new world are different and not always noble. Fellow nations - like South Africa and China - will give each other best business deals, not diplomatic black eyes. And if the current drift is any indication, it looks like the Liu and Assange types will be left to their misery in isolation wards at remote labour camps.

His peccadilloes notwithstanding, the world today needs more men like Assange and more revelations like WikiLeaks' - because democracies thrive on information and we are just not getting enough of it. Cocooned in the belief that no nation will meddle in your affairs, governments across the globe are getting less transparent as they try to impose their own agendas, overpowering dissent, muzzling truth and dismissing human rights.

In India, too, we have been waiting for some real answers - on the mass graves of Kashmir, the riots in Gujarat, black money, cash for votes, and the endless trickeries the nation has been subjected to by successive regimes. And if a whistleblower does that, through means fair or foul, well, give us more. WikiLeaks, then, needs you less. You need WikiLeaks more.