Twitter Thread by Glenn Greenwald

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The rejection by the UK court of the US Govt's request to extradite Julian Assange to stand trial on espionage charges is obviously great news. But the judge endorsed most of the USG's theories, but ultimately found the US prison system too inhumane to permit extradition.

The US DOJ has already said it intends to appeal. The question -- and I'm hearing different things on this -- is whether the courts will keep Assange imprisoned while that appeal is pending. The court ordered him released, but it's unclear if the DOJ appeal will keep him in jail.

This wasn't a victory for press freedom. Quite the contrary: the judge made clear she believed there are grounds to prosecute Assange in connection with the 2010 publication.

It was, instead, an indictment of the insanely oppressive US prison system for security "threats."

Ultimately, though, from a humanitarian *and* a political perspective, what matters most is that Assange be freed as soon as possible. The US Govt doesn't care what prison he's in, or why: they just want him silenced and in a cage.

He should be freed immediately.

The full ruling is at the link. Savor the last, sweet paragraph.

https://t.co/edZcOywXUE

410. I order the discharge of Julian Paul Assange, pursuant to section 91(3) of the EA 2003.

VANESSA BARAITSER
DISTRICT JUDGE (MAGISTRATES' COURTS)
4 January 2021

The next step is that Assange's lawyers will apply for bail -- while the US Govt appeals -- based on the judge's ruling. The judge will then decide if he remains in prison while the appeal is resolved.

Trump could still end this travesty with a pardon, or the DOJ to stop.

Just confirmed: Assange's lawyers will request he be released on bail pending US Govt's appeal. The judge will decide that today. Ordinarily, defendants in these cases remain in jail pending appeal, and this judge emphasized how "humane" his conditions are in the UK. We'll see.

To contrast UK prisons with the dystopian hellhole of the US, here's what the judge said about how relatively good Assange has it in Belmarsh. She may use this to keep him in.

Either way, Americans should reflect on how barbaric US "super-max" prison system is. It's repulsive.

358. Thirdly, many of the protective factors currently in place at HMP Belmarsh would be removed by these conditions. Mr. Assange's health improved on being removed from relative isolation in healthcare. He has been able to access the support of family and friends. He has had access to a Samaritans phoneline. He has benefited from a trusting relationship with the prison In-Reach psychologist. By contrast, a SAMs regime would severely restrict his contact with all other human beings, including other prisoners, staff and his family. In detention subject to SAMs, he would have absolutely no

communication with other prisoners, even through the walls of his cell, and time out of his cell would be spent alone. Ms. Baird, from her experiences as an SES warden at the MCC, described the only form of human interaction coming from correctional officers who open the viewing slot during their inspection rounds of the unit, from institution staff walking through the unit during their required weekly rounds, or when meals are delivered

This is one thing Americans should really reflect on. The British are as authoritarian as it gets in W. Europe, deeply subservient to the US. Yet this is the third time they're refused to extradite on the grounds that the US prison system is barbaric:



By the way, the two people most responsible for the Trump DOJ's efforts to try to extradite and prosecute Assange -- after even the press-freedom-hating Obama DOJ considered but then refused to do so -- are Jeff Sessions and Mike Pompeo. Both are vile:

https://t.co/QPRYKhP8dt

At the request of Assange's lawyers - who want to build their best case for why his current prison conditions are oppressive and why they can offer guarantees that he won't abscond - the judge set the bail hearing for Wednesday to determine if Assange will be free pending appeal.

The amazing thing is that when you mention Assange, the only people who pop up to demand he be imprisoned and prosecuted are US liberals.

They don't realize how isolated in the world they are: the only ones on the side of Pompeo, CIA & the DOJ. But that's 100% who they are.

Given the gravity of this case and the importance to press freedom, it is scandalous - yet revealing - how little attention US media paid to it, barely covering the proceedings.

Please follow & support the independent journalists who did: @richimedhurst, @kgosztola and others.

Statement of @FreedomofPress on Assange ruling:

"Today's ruling is a huge sigh of relief for anyone who cares about press freedom...[It] means US Govt likely won't be able to obtain any precedent that would criminalize common newsgathering practices."

https://t.co/nrlbr2AdN6

The @FreedomofPress statement also notes:

"Virtually all major press freedom and human rights groups have condemned the US government’s attempt to prosecute Assange as an existential threat to journalists’ rights."

It's Pompeo/CIA/neocons/US-liberals v. the world.