



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 20, 2017

After War on Whistleblowers, Obama Commutes Manning's Sentence

After eight years of waging relentless war against whistleblowers and transparency at home and abroad, President Obama is suddenly being portrayed as a merciful defender of those who blow the whistle. On January 17, Obama commuted the sentence of Bradley Manning, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst and self-styled “transgender” now going by the name Chelsea, who pleaded guilty under the Espionage Act of leaking hundreds of thousands of U.S. diplomatic and military cables to pro-transparency site WikiLeaks. Reactions to Obama’s decision were mixed.



Long before the decision this week, Manning and his leak of over 700,000 classified documents polarized public opinion. On one side, supporters of the move said the U.S. government is too obsessed with secrecy, and that the cables provided evidence of numerous scandals, crimes, and other schemes. It is true that the documents, released by WikiLeaks, shed light on a wide range of controversies, ranging from alleged war crimes by the feds to a subversive scheme to create a [North American Union merging the United States with Mexico and Canada](#).

However, the actions by Manning also sparked outrage by critics. Among other concerns, opponents of the massive leak — considered perhaps the largest in American history — said Manning indiscriminately released everything, potentially putting lives at risk. No deaths were ever shown to have resulted from the leak. But in a court-martial that received a [great deal of scrutiny and criticism](#), Manning pleaded guilty to extremely serious crimes. He was sentenced to 35 years, the longest sentence ever handed down in a leak conviction. Seven were served, and Manning will be out later this year.

Obama rebuffed critics who spoke out against the commutation. “Manning has served a tough prison sentence, so the notion that the average person who was thinking about disclosing vital classified information would think that it goes unpunished I don’t think would get that impression from the sentence that Chelsea Manning has served,” Obama said on January 18 during what is expected to be his last White House press conference as president.

Despite the fact that taking hormones or removing body organs does not actually change an individual’s biological sex, Obama and much of the establishment press consistently referred to Manning as a “she” and use his new female name. U.S. taxpayers are paying for the so-called “gender-reassignment” process, dismissed as harmful quackery by many medical professionals, after Manning started claiming that he was a woman trapped in a man’s body. Like many gender-confused individuals, Manning has reportedly attempted suicide, with two attempts and a hunger strike last year in military prison.



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Despite waging the most ruthless war on whistleblowers in U.S. history, Obama also argued that the 35-year sentence was unreasonable. “It has been my view that given she went to trial; that due process was carried out; that she took responsibility for her crime; that the sentence that she received was very disproportional — disproportionate relative to what other leakers had received; and that she had served a significant amount of time, that it made sense to commute and not pardon her sentence,” Obama continued.

Over a million signatories had also [asked that Obama pardon National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden](#), variously viewed either as a heroic whistleblower or a treasonous Russian spy. White House spokesman Josh Earnest cited what he described as the “pretty stark difference” between the two appeals. Among other “important differences,” Earnest said Snowden’s disclosures — including widespread revelations of illegal spying on millions of Americans by the NSA — were “far more serious and far more dangerous.”

“Manning is somebody who went through the military criminal justice process, was exposed to due process, was found guilty, was sentenced for her crimes, and she acknowledged wrongdoing,” Earnest continued, playing along with the harmful fiction that Manning is now a woman. “Mr. Snowden fled into the arms of an adversary and has sought refuge in a country that most recently made a concerted effort to undermine confidence in our democracy.” America, of course, is a constitutional Republic, and Manning is a man, regardless of what Earnest or his boss say.

Manning supporters celebrated Obama’s commutation, which will see Manning out in about five months time. “It’s tragic that Chelsea [sic] had to spend seven years imprisoned for releasing documents that should never have been classified in the first place, and were clearly in the public interest,” said Jeff Paterson, co-founder of the Chelsea Manning Support Network. “All of us who worked on Chelsea’s behalf are overjoyed.”

Attorneys who worked on the case also expressed joy. “Manning is the longest-serving whistle-blower in the history of the United States,” said a joint statement by Manning attorneys Nancy Hollander and Vince Ward, one of whom also blasted the “brutal treatment” Manning was subjected to while awaiting trial. “Her 35-year sentence for disclosing information that served the public interest and never caused harm to the United States was always excessive, and we’re delighted that justice is being served in the form of this commutation.”

Others, though, expressed outrage at Obama’s action. “President Obama has upended the entire military justice system,” said a statement by Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) National Commander Brian Duffy, also criticizing other military-related Obama commutations. “To release from prison former Army Pvt. Bradley Manning ... is offensive to everyone who has ever honorably served in uniform.” Duffy also said that “no one is above the law and those who break the law must pay the price, regardless of who they are.”

Also speaking out were a number of establishment-minded Republican politicians, including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and globalist neocon Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.). They argued that Manning had jeopardized national security by releasing the information. And in comments sections across the web, particularly on military-oriented websites, critics slammed Obama for the decision. Pro-Manning voices emphasized, though, that there was nothing President-elect Trump could do about it.

Obama also granted 330 commutations to drug dealers, the latest in a string of almost 2,000 clemencies — more than the last 12 presidents combined and more than any other president in U.S. history. Also



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set to be freed by Obama, on the same date as Manning, is Marxist-Leninist terrorist Oscar Lopez Rivera. As *The New American* reported, [the clemency for the convicted terrorist conspirator is part of a long pattern of the Obama administration aiding and abetting terrorists](#), and it drew swift outrage.

But Obama officials tried to portray it all as evidence of Obama's mercy. "These 273 individuals learned that our nation is a forgiving nation, where hard work and a commitment to rehabilitation can lead to a second chance, and where wrongs from the past will not deprive an individual of the opportunity to move forward," [wrote](#) Neil Eggleston, counsel to the president, on the White House website after announcing 209 commutations and 64 pardons. "Today, 273 individuals — like President Obama's 1,324 clemency recipients before them — learned that our President has found them deserving of a second chance."

Eggleston then seized the opportunity to promote Obama's vision of criminal-justice reform. "While the mercy the President has shown his 1,597 clemency recipients is remarkable, we must remember that clemency is an extraordinary remedy, granted only after the President has concluded that a particular individual has demonstrated a readiness to make use of his or her second chance," the outgoing president's attorney continued. "Only Congress can achieve the broader reforms needed to ensure over the long run that our criminal justice system operates more fairly and effectively in the service of public safety."

However, virtually every journalist working in America during the Obama years knows that the outgoing administration was [ruthless in terms of going after leakers and journalists](#). From attempting to [block transparency at every turn, to terrorizing whistleblowers, to throwing the book at people with absurd prosecutions for providing information to journalists, to spying on reporters](#), the administration is widely considered to be the most hostile to press freedom in U.S. history.

Obama's Justice Department even [obtained personal e-mails and phone records](#) for journalists at the Associated Press, Fox News, and more. As part of the war on whistleblowers, the administration also prosecuted at least 10 "leaks" of government secrets, more than all other previous presidential administrations combined. Snowden [said Obama's NSA was targeting journalists critical of government](#).

At the international level, [Obama also aided and abetted the United Nations' war against whistleblowers](#). In fact, he even defied Congress and federal law in a bid to protect his globalist comrades at the UN involved in persecuting insiders trying to shine the light on corruption, criminality, tech transfers to tyrants, the rape of children, and other horrors. The law requires that a portion of U.S. funding be withheld if UN agencies do not adequately protect whistleblowers. But the Obama State Department pretended not to see the vicious persecution of whistleblowers, continuing to send all the money as if everything at the UN was just fine.

With Obama on his way out the door, more than a few voices are also calling on the outgoing president to preemptively pardon his scandal-plagued former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who lost the presidential election amid allegations of serious criminal activity. There are a number of other senior officials who could potentially be prosecuted for crimes ranging from [providing material support for designated terror organizations](#) and [illegal gun-running](#) to [perjury](#) and [theft of tax money](#) — including, potentially, Obama himself. Whether Obama will seek to protect himself and his minions from the law remains to be seen.

Photo of Bradley Manning in 2013: AP Images



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