

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2011 1:35 PM
To: 'hanleymr@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: food for thought

Pls print.

----- Original Message -----

From: Lissa Muscatine <[REDACTED]>
To: H
Sent: Wed Jan 19 12:44:56 2011
Subject: food for thought

B6

Hi there and happy new year. I've been thinking about you because I know you are working on an Internet Freedom speech, and also are under pressure to say something (in that speech or elsewhere) about Wikileaks. You probably have already thought about this, but it seems to me that the problem with the debate right now is that it centers on absolutes (secrecy is always bad, full disclosure is always good) instead of on the inherent and irreconcilable tension in a democracy between secrecy and the free flow of information. On the one hand, the government must be able to conduct some of its business in secret. On the other, citizens need as much information as possible to make informed decisions and hold their government accountable. Over time, as government secrecy increases, leaking becomes inevitable -- a citizen or whistle-blower response to situations in which the government is perceived as abusing its authority covertly (Pentagon Papers). At the same time, just as we (taxpayers and citizens) have a right to know when our government exceeds reasonable bounds of secrecy, we have the same right to expect leakers to be responsible in the way they disclose information that is sensitive. Obviously you can't and shouldn't condone leaking, but it might help to frame this whole debate as one that is really about the inherent and irreconcilable tensions -- and strengths -- of a democratic system such as ours. (I wrote a blog not long ago, based on an interview with Ben Bagdikian (former national editor at the Wash Post and eminence grise of journalism who fought to publish the Pentagon Papers) that talks about the differences between The Pentagon Papers and Wikileaks.

I can send it if your interested, though it may not tell you anything you don't already know). Hope all is well. xoxo