

CRAIG MURRAY'S DESCRIPTION OF WIKILEAKS' SOURCES

One of the weaknesses of my post on the evidence needed to prove the Russian DNC hack (one I'll fix when I move it into a page) is that I didn't include a step where the intelligence community had to dismiss alternative theories. It is not enough to prove that tools associated with Russian intelligence hacked the DNC (whether or not you're convinced they necessarily are used exclusively by GRU), but you also have to prove that no one else either hacked the known sources of leaked documents or otherwise obtained them. That was particularly important given early reports that FBI wasn't sure that the documents stolen by hackers presumed to be GRU were the same documents dealt to WikiLeaks.

One alternative theory I know some researchers tested, for example, is whether hackers could have gotten into the accounts of DNC staffers by testing passwords made available by past hacks (of LinkedIn and MySpace, in particular) for reuse. For a while, that definitely seemed like a plausible alternative theory, but ultimately I don't think it could explain the known evidence.

The most important alternative theory, however, comes from Julian Assange, who has been first intimating and more recently asserting directly that Russians were not his source (even while showing immediate concern that Obama's hacking review targeted Wikileaks directly). Former UK Ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray has also made such a claim, first in a series of posts on his blog, and at more length in an interview with Scott Horton.

Murray's interview is well worth the listen, as he has nowhere near the same personal stakes in this story as Assange and – as he makes clear in the interview – because he seems to have had a role in handing over the second batch of emails.

Ultimately, his description is unconvincing. But it is an important indication of what he claims to believe (which must reflect what Assange has told him, whether Assange believes it or not). Importantly, Murray admits that “It’s perfectly possible that WikiLeaks themselves don’t know what is going on,” which admits one possibility I’ve always suspected: that whoever dealt the documents did so in a way that credibly obscured their source.

Murray explained that the two sets of documents handed over to Wikileaks came via two different American sources, both of whom had legal access to them.

He describes a lot more about the Podesta emails, of which he said he had “first hand knowledge,” because of something he did or learned on a trip to DC in September. In this interview, he says “The material was already, I think, safely with WikiLeaks before I got there in September,” though other outlets have suggested (with maps included!) that’s when the hand-off happened. In that account, Murray admits he did not meet with the person with legal access; he instead met with an intermediary. That means the intermediary may have made false claims about the provenance.

And even the claims about the provenance don’t make sense. Murray claimed the documents came from someone in the national security establishment, and implied they had come from legal monitoring of *John* Podesta because he (meaning John) is a lobbyist for Saudi Arabia.

Again, the key point to remember, in answering that question, is that the DNC leak and the Podesta leak are two different things and the answer is very probably not going to be the same in both cases. I also want you to consider that John Podesta was a paid lobbyist for the Saudi government – that’s open and declared, it’s not secret or a leak in a sense. John Podesta was paid a very substantial sum every month by the Saudi

government to lobby for their interests in Washington. And if the American security services were not watching the communications of the Saudi government paid lobbyist then the American intelligence services would not be doing their job. Of course it's also true that the Saudis' man, the Saudis' lobbyist in Washington, his communications are going to be of interest to a great many other intelligence services as well.

As a threshold matter, no national security agency is going to monitor an American registered to work as an agent for the Saudis. That's all the more true if the agent has the last name Podesta.

But that brings us to another problem. John Podesta *isn't* the lobbyist here. His brother Tony is. So even assuming the FBI was collecting *all* the emails of registered agent for the Saudis, Tony Podesta, even assuming someone in national security wanted to blow that collection by revealing it via Wikileaks, they would pick up just a tiny fraction of *John* Podesta's emails. So this doesn't explain the source of the emails at all.

But if we believe that Murray believes this, we know that the intermediary can credibly claim to have ties to American national security.

Horton and Murray go on to discuss how WikiLeaks got the first batch of emails, the ones from DNC. That's specifically the context where Murray talks about the possibility Assange doesn't actually know. Though he suggests the leaker is a DNC insider angry about Bernie Sanders' treatment.

There's a section on the murdered DNC staffer, which I'm not going to focus on because I find it distasteful. But Murray explains that Assange offered a reward pertaining to his murder because he thought the staffer might be mistaken for the real source, but was not the real

source. Which suggests Assange implied to Murray that the documents were directly leaked by someone in a similar position. Again, someone who could pose as a DNC staffer.

Here, Murray states clearly that "Guccifer is not the source for WikiLeaks." He explains that claim based primarily off the assumption that the Russians would never employ such as buffoon as Guccifer, not direct knowledge. Remember Guccifer stated publicly he had given the documents to WikiLeaks, with no rebuttal from Assange I know of.

In other words, that doesn't seem to make sense either. And with Assange you are by necessity dealing with documents passed through at least one and in the Podesta email case, perhaps two or more intermediaries. So even assuming the best effort to vet people on Assange's side, he does have limited resources to do so himself.

One more comment. Murray ends with a description of the reception of the emails that doesn't make sense at all. He suggests the "mainstream media" ignored concerns about the Clinton foundation (he doesn't even mention that this coverage might come from the legally FOIAed emails). He says they ignored other details, such as that Donna Brazile gave Hillary a debate question and that the DNC conspired against Bernie. He claims members of the media "colluded" with the Hillary campaign.

I know some people believe these topics should have gotten more attention. Even if you believe these things, though, believing the traditional media didn't cover them requires a blind spot about the massive Trump corruption they might have been covering instead.

All that neither proves or disproves that *Murray believes* he got documents from someone in the national security establishment that were legally obtained. It just might explain why he'd believe something that, in this case, makes no sense.

Update: Now Assange is saying his source wasn't

Guccifer. He also snipes about Murray's comments.

“Craig Murray is not authorized to talk on behalf of WikiLeaks,” Assange said sternly.