

DANA ROHRABACHER BROKERING DEAL FOR MAN PUBLISHING A CIA EXPLOIT EVERY WEEK

Yesterday, right wing hack Charles Johnson brokered a three hour meeting between Dana Rohrabacher and Julian Assange. At the meeting, Assange apparently explained his proof that Russia was not behind the hack of the DNC. In a statement, Rohrabacher promises to deliver what he learned directly to President Trump.

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange on Wednesday told Rep. Dana Rohrabacher that Russia was not behind leaks of emails during last year's presidential election campaign that damaged Hillary Clinton's candidacy and exposed the inner workings of the Democratic National Committee.

The California congressman spent some three hours with the Australian-born fugitive, now living under the protection of the Ecuadorian embassy in the British capital.

Assange's claim contradicts the widely accepted assessment of the U.S. intelligence community that the thousands of leaked emails, which indicated the Democratic National Committee rigged the nomination process against Sen. Bernie Sanders in favor of Clinton, were the result of hacking by the Russian government or persons connected to the Kremlin.

Assange, said Rohrabacher, "emphatically stated that the Russians were not involved in the hacking or disclosure of those emails." Rohrabacher, who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging

Threats, is the only U.S. congressman to have visited the controversial figure.

The conversation ranged over many topics, said Rohrabacher, including the status of Wikileaks, which Assange maintains is vital to keeping Americans informed on matters hidden by their traditional media. The congressman plans to divulge more of what he found directly to President Trump.

I'm utterly fascinated that Assange has taken this step, and by the timing of it.

It comes not long after Rod Wheeler's lawsuit alleging that Fox News and the White House worked together to invent a story that murdered DNC staffer Seth Rich was in contact with WikiLeaks. Both that story and this one have been promoted aggressively by Sean Hannity.

It comes in the wake of the VIPS letter that – as I've begun to show – in no way proves what it claims to prove about the DNC hack.

It comes just after a very long profile by the New Yorker's Raffi Khatchadourian, who has previously written more sympathetic pieces about Assange. I have a few quibbles with the logic behind a few of the arguments Khatchadourian makes, but he makes a case – doing analysis on what documents got released where that no one else has yet publicly done (and about which numerous people have made erroneous claims in the past) – that Assange's claims he wasn't working with Russia no longer hold up.

But his protestations that there were no connections between his publications and Russia were untenable.

[snip]

Whatever one thinks of Assange's election disclosures, accepting his contention that they shared no ties with the two Russian fronts requires willful blindness. Guccifer 2.0's handlers

predicted the WikiLeaks D.N.C. release. They demonstrated inside knowledge that Assange was struggling to get it out on time. And they proved, incontrovertibly, that they had privileged access to D.N.C. documents that appeared nowhere else publicly, other than in WikiLeaks publications. The twenty thousand or so D.N.C. e-mails that WikiLeaks published were extracted from ten compromised e-mail accounts, and all but one of the people who used those accounts worked in just two departments: finance and strategic communications. (The single exception belonged to a researcher who worked extensively with communications.) All the D.N.C. documents that Guccifer 2.0 released appeared to come from those same two departments.

The Podesta e-mails only make the connections between WikiLeaks and Russia appear stronger. Nearly half of the first forty documents that Guccifer 2.0 published can be found as attachments among the Podesta e-mails that WikiLeaks later published.

The Assange-Rohrabacher meeting also follows a NYT story revealing that the author of a piece of malware named in the IC's first Joint Analysis Report of the DNC hack, Profexor, has been cooperating with the FBI. The derivative reports on this have overstated the connection Profexor might have to the DNC hack (as opposed to APT 28, presumed to be associated with Russia's military intelligence GRU).

A member of Ukraine's Parliament with close ties to the security services, Anton Gerashchenko, said that the interaction was online or by phone and that the Ukrainian programmer had been paid to write customized malware without knowing its purpose, only later learning it was used in Russian hacking.

Mr. Gerashchenko described the author only in broad strokes, to protect his safety, as a young man from a provincial Ukrainian city. He confirmed that the author turned himself in to the police and was cooperating as a witness in the D.N.C. investigation. "He was a freelancer and now he is a valuable witness," Mr. Gerashchenko said.

It is not clear whether the specific malware the programmer created was used to hack the D.N.C. servers, but it was identified in other Russian hacking efforts in the United States.

But Profexor presumably is describing to the FBI how he came to sell customized access to his tool to hackers working for Russia and who those hackers were.

In other words, this bid by Assange to send information to Trump via someone protected by the Constitution's Speech and Debate Clause, but who is also suspected – even by his Republican colleagues! – of being on Russia's payroll, comes at a very interesting time, as outlets present more evidence undermining Assange's claims to have no tie to Russia.

Coming as it does as other evidence is coming to light, this effort is a bit of a Hail Mary by Assange: as soon as Trump publicizes his claims (which he'll probably do during tomorrow's shit-and-tweet) and they get publicly discredited, Assange (and Trump) will have little else to fall back on. They will have exposed their own claims, and provided the material others can use to attack Trump's attempts to rebut the Russia hack claims. Perhaps Assange's claims will be hard to rebut; but by making them public, finally, they will be revealed such that they can be rebutted.

I'm just as interested in the reporting on this, though, which was first pushed out through right wing outlets Daily Caller and John Solomon.

The story is presented exclusively in terms of Assange's role in the DNC hack, which is admittedly the area where Assange's interests and Trump's coincide.

Yet not even the neutral LAT's coverage of the meeting, which even quotes CIA Director and former Wikileaks fan Mike Pompeo, mentions the more immediate reason why Assange might need a deal from the United States. Virtually every week since March, Wikileaks has released a CIA exploit. While some of those exploits were interesting and the individual exploits are surely useful for security firms, at this point the Vault 7 project looks less like transparency and more like an organized effort to burn the CIA. Which makes it utterly remarkable a sitting member of Congress is going to go to the president to lobby him to make a deal with Assange, to say nothing of Assange's argument that Wikileaks should get a White House press pass as part of the deal.

Dana Rohrabacher is perhaps even as we speak lobbying to help a guy who has published a CIA hack of the week. And that part of the meeting is barely getting notice.