

THE US ASKS SPAIN TO PIN DOWN THE UC GLOBAL ACCUSATIONS BEFORE RESPONDING

Back in February, I noted some wild inconsistencies and unsupported claims in various reports that UC Global – a security firm employed at the time by Ecuador to protect their London embassy – worked with Sheldon Adelson and the CIA to spy on Julian Assange’s meetings with his lawyers.

As I noted, the actual details of the surveillance (which I don’t contest or minimize) are actually most consistent with UC Global head David Morales being served a subpoena and follow-up legal process served on UC Global’s US location by the known grand jury investigation in Alexandria, VA targeting both Assange and accused Vault 7 leaker Joshua Schulte, who appears to have remained in active communication with WikiLeaks at the time.

In his talk, AMM mentions that the US was unhappy about certain “publications,” plural, without describing them. There’s good reason to be silent about it – the same silence that WikiLeaks supporters like to enforce elsewhere. WikiLeaks was not only publishing CIA’s hacking tools with thin – and inaccurate – claims to justify doing so in the guise of journalism, but WikiLeaks was and is sitting on CIA’s actual hacking tools.

At the time, WikiLeaks was in ongoing communications with accused Vault 7 leaker Joshua Schulte (communication it continued at least as long as June 2018, when WikiLeaks posted the blogs Schulte published from jail, but probably even after that). The targeting of Schulte,

himself, might explain some of this surveillance. And Morales' presence in Alexandria (which AMM misstates as Arlington) is utterly consistent with someone subject to US subpoena appearing before a grand jury in EDVA; surveillance records are considered business records in the US subject to subpoena.

Certainly, questions about what WikiLeaks was doing with the still unpublished hacking tools might have elicited the surveillance. And in the months before the surveillance actually ratcheted up in December 2017 (which is when the surveillance in question really began), Schulte was doing some things on Tor that may have included reactionary communications with WikiLeaks.

Even AMM's presentation, however, confirms that before December 2017 – that is, before the US finally detained Schulte and charged Assange – much of Assange's private space was *not* covered by the surveillance.

Given the way WikiLeaks' claims about this surveillance don't match the public details of it, I'm particularly interested in the way that the US responded to Spain's request for more information about it: They're demanding that Spain nail down precisely what they're claiming happened, who is behind the accusations, and what IP addresses Spain believes the US government had some tie to.

US prosecutors have now sent a letter to María de las Heras, a liaison judge for Spain in the US, asking her to convey their demands to De la Mata. These include showing proof that the requested IP addresses are "relevant and substantial to the investigation." The document requests further details about the Spanish probe, including the sources

of information for most of the assertions made in the request for judicial cooperation.

The Spanish judge has been asked to answer a long list of questions regarding every aspect of his investigation, including who he believes that Morales was providing information to, or whether the judge thinks Morales was working for a foreign information service or as an agent for a foreign power – or whether it was simply a case of bribery.

US prosecutors have asked for all this information to be relayed before October 16, otherwise “we will assume that Spanish authorities are not interested” and the request will be shelved.

The Spanish accusations, as released to the public, make no sense. At the very least, the US may be trying to get Spain to pick one of the inconsistent explanations for the surveillance before denying or explaining it to avoid playing whack-a-mole regarding all the other claims.

The US may be asking totally inappropriate questions about a sovereign Spanish investigation. But they do have a point about the nature of the claims.