

WikiLeaks figure says 'disgusted' Democrat leaked Clinton campaign emails



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By Dave Boyer - *The Washington Times* - Wednesday, December 14, 2016

A WikiLeaks figure is claiming that he received leaked Clinton campaign emails from a "disgusted" Democratic whistleblower, while the White House continued to blame Russian hackers Wednesday for meddling in the presidential election and asserted that Donald Trump was "obviously aware" of Moscow's efforts on his behalf.

Craig Murray, a former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and a close associate of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, said in the report by the Daily Mail that he flew to Washington for a clandestine handoff with one of the email sources in September.

He said he received a package in a wooded area near American University. "Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians," Mr. Murray told the British newspaper. "The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks."

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WikiLeaks published thousands of emails stolen from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, providing a steady stream of negative news coverage of the Democratic presidential nominee during the final weeks of the campaign. Mr. Murray said the leakers were motivated by "disgust at the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders."

The Daily Mail report noted that Mr. Murray was removed from his diplomatic post amid allegations of misconduct.

The White House said Wednesday that Mr. Trump was "obviously aware" of Russian hacking to benefit his presidential campaign and suggested that the administration didn't retaliate against Moscow because the U.S. has more to lose than Russia does in an all-out cyberwar.

Referring to Mr. Trump's offhand snark last summer that Moscow might be able to locate missing emails from Hillary Clinton's private server, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the Republican might have viewed Russia's cyberattacks as helpful to his presidential campaign.

"There was ample evidence that was known long before the election, and in most cases long before October, about the Trump campaign in Russia, everything from the Republican nominee himself calling on Russia to hack his opponent," Mr. Earnest said. "It might be an indication that he was obviously

aware and concluded, based on whatever facts or sources he had available to him, that Russia was involved and their involvement was having a negative impact on his opponent's campaign."

Mr. Trump has openly rejected the idea that Russia was behind the attacks or that the cyberintrusions were intended to help him win the election.

He also accused the administration and liberal news outlets of trying to delegitimize his election. There is no evidence that the election process was hacked, by the Russians or anyone else.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence had to cancel a closed-door classified briefing on the issue of suspected Russian interference after U.S. intelligence agencies refused to cooperate.

Rep. Devin Nunes, California Republican and committee chairman, requested that the FBI, CIA, Office of the Director of National Intelligence and National Security Agency provide witnesses, in part in response to reports last week in The Washington Post and The New York Times that intelligence agencies think the Kremlin deliberately tried to push the election to Mr. Trump, something not supported by postelection testimony to the panel.

But according to Fox News, "agencies refused to provide representatives for the session."

"It is unacceptable that the Intelligence Community directors would not fulfill the House Intelligence Committee's request to be briefed tomorrow on the cyber-attacks that occurred during the presidential campaign," Mr. Nunes said in a statement. "The Committee is deeply concerned that intransigence in sharing intelligence with Congress can enable the manipulation of intelligence for political purposes."

Kellyanne Conway, Mr. Trump's campaign manager, accused people within intelligence agencies of trying to undermine the U.S. election results to curry favor with liberal media and are now ducking accountability.

"We should all be very concerned about that," she said in an appearance on Fox News Channel.

The Democratic National Committee, essentially an arm of the Obama White House, compounded the friction Wednesday by accusing Mr. Trump of giving Russia “an early holiday gift that smells like a payoff” with the nomination of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson to be secretary of state. The DNC warned that Mr. Tillerson would be too cozy in his dealings with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“It’s rather easy to connect the dots,” the DNC said. “Russia meddled in the U.S. election in order to benefit Trump, and now he’s repaying Vladimir Putin by nominating Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson as secretary of state.”

It was the latest broadside by the White House and its allies against the president-elect in an increasingly tense transition debate over the impact of the cyberintrusions, which mainly targeted Democrats such as Mr. Podesta.

Departing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Nevada Democrat, compared the alleged Russian hacking to terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on U.S. soil. “I think this is as big a deal as Watergate, as 9/11,” he said.

Democrats in hindsight have accused the administration of failing to warn the public about Russia’s alleged hacking as early as May, when private assessments pinned the blame on Moscow. In October, the administration released a statement from Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper that identified Russia as the culprit.

The White House said Mr. Obama waited until October, just weeks before the election, to raise concerns about Russia’s involvement because he didn’t want to appear to be playing politics with the issue.

“It would have been inappropriate for White House figures, including the president of the United States, to be rushing the intelligence community to expedite their analysis of this situation, because we were concerned about the negative impact it was having on the president’s preferred candidate in the presidential election,” Mr. Earnest said.

The president’s spokesman also said the administration tried to get bipartisan cooperation from Congress this fall to warn state election officials about Russian interference, but top Republicans balked.

“Leader [Mitch] McConnell and Speaker [Paul D.] Ryan did not readily agree to

it,” Mr. Earnest said. “We didn’t get the kind of prompt cooperation we would have liked.”

The administration eventually did issue warnings to state election officials and said there was no evidence of Russian interference via the internet on Election Day.

The White House still won’t say whether the U.S. has retaliated against what it describes as Russian efforts to influence the election of Donald Trump. “It merits a proportional response. I am not in a position to confirm whether we have initiated it or not,” Mr. Earnest said.

He said “the United States is particularly vulnerable” to cyberattacks because of its heavy reliance on the internet.

“Given the interconnected nature of our society and our economy, the United States is in a unique position, vis-a-vis the rest of the world, because we rely on 21st-century communications technology for just about everything, in a way that lots of other societies and economies and countries don’t,” he said.