

Cohen assertions are not evidence of WikiLeaks “collusion” with Trump or Russia

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28 February 2019

Michael Cohen, the former attorney for Donald Trump, has testified under oath at the House Oversight Committee that he overheard a phone call between Trump and political consultant Roger Stone on an unspecified date in July 2016.

Cohen stated: “Mr. Stone told Mr. Trump that he had just gotten off the phone with Julian Assange and that Mr. Assange told Mr. Stone that, within a couple of days, there would be a massive dump of emails that would damage Hillary Clinton’s campaign. Mr. Trump responded by stating to the effect of ‘wouldn’t that be great.’”

The WSWS has no way of knowing whether Cohen, a convicted perjurer, is lying about over-hearing this phone call. If Roger Stone did make such a statement to Trump, however, then Stone was lying, and he has publicly admitted to the fact.

Stone, a self-promoting and dubious figure, sought to bolster his credentials during 2016 by claiming to have “inside” knowledge of what WikiLeaks was publishing concerning the US presidential election and when it would be released. Most absurdly, he claimed to have had dinner with Julian Assange, who has been effectively imprisoned in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since June 19, 2012.

Stone was indicted on January 24 by the investigation headed by special counsel and former FBI director Robert Mueller, for making “multiple false statements to HPSCI [House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence] about his interactions regarding Organization 1 [WikiLeaks].”

Stone categorically denied before the HPSCI ever having communicated with WikiLeaks or Julian Assange. He admitted that he had been lying when he had publicly claimed to have done so.

The months of investigation preceding the indictment

involved the forensic examination by Mueller’s team of the records of all of Stone’s communications including phone, SMS, online chat, Twitter messaging and every other means.

The Mueller indictment did not include a single example of Stone speaking with or communicating directly with WikiLeaks or Julian Assange.

Instead, he was indicted on five counts for making false statements about his approaches to radical radio host Randy Credico and right-wing *Infowars.com* editor Jerome Corsi. Stone had contacted both to try and find out what leaked information WikiLeaks possessed and when it would be publishing it.

The information provided to Stone by Credico and Corsi was largely speculative and often inaccurate. Both have denied they were provided anything by WikiLeaks and have stated they relayed information to Stone that had already been publicly revealed and was being widely discussed.

Perhaps Roger Stone did, sometime in July, seek to ingratiate himself with Trump by claiming Assange had told him about an impending publication of leaks from the Democratic Party that would have an impact on Hillary Clinton.

Julian Assange had publicly revealed, on June 12, 2016, in an interview with British ITV’s “Peston on Sunday,” that WikiLeaks had emails linked to Hillary Clinton and would be publishing them.

The Mueller indictment *did not mention* the one example of when the official WikiLeaks Twitter account did communicate with Stone during the election—on October 13, 2016—because it confirms that it had no relationship with either him or the Trump campaign.

As the WSWS wrote on January 30, 2019:

“Stone messaged WikiLeaks to complain that it had

publicly stated it had no relations with him. The right-wing operative asserted that he was ‘defending’ WikiLeaks, so it should therefore stop ‘attacking’ him.

“WikiLeaks replied: ‘We appreciate that [the defence]. However, the false claims of association are being used by the democrats to undermine the impact of our publications. Don’t go there if you don’t want us to correct you.’

“Stone replied two days later: ‘Ha, the more you ‘correct’ me the more people think you are lying. Your operation leaks like a sieve’” (see: “Stone indictment presents no evidence of links between WikiLeaks and Trump campaign”).

In other words, the Mueller indictment *left out* a categorical statement by WikiLeaks that his claims of association were “false.”

WikiLeaks and Assange did not “collude” with Russia or the Trump campaign. As a media organisation, it published leaks that it had been given, by an unknown whistleblower source, exposing that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had sought to undermine the campaign of Bernie Sanders in the party primaries to ensure the nomination of Hillary Clinton.

Later, WikiLeaks published further leaks—emails sent by Clinton campaign manager John Podesta—that contained speeches given to corporate audiences by Clinton in which she boasted of her militarist record and pledged to protect the interests of Wall Street and big business.

The political responsibility for the victory of Donald Trump—via the Electoral College, not the popular vote—rests squarely with the hierarchy of the Democratic Party, including Bernie Sanders. Despite the facts exposed by WikiLeaks, the Democrats nominated Clinton, a despised right-wing warmonger. In doing so, it abandoned the 13 million, mainly younger and working-class people who had voted for Sanders due to his claims to be a “socialist” and for a “political revolution.” In disgust, millions of people, particularly in key industrial states, did not vote at all.

The motive behind the vilification of WikiLeaks over the DNC and Podesta leaks has three main components. Firstly, it is part of the political civil war over which faction of the American ruling class will control the White House and the levers of state power. Secondly, it is a pathetic attempt by the Democratic Party to explain its defeat in 2016. And finally, by slandering Assange

as being a “Russian stooge,” the defenders of the imperialist establishment are attempting to justify both his persecution and the broader attempt to censor and silence all independent and critical media.

All defenders of democratic rights need to reject the attack on WikiLeaks and demand the immediate and unconditional freedom of Julian Assange.

The author also recommends:

Rally to demand that the Australian government acts to free Julian Assange!

Sydney, Martin Place Amphitheatre, 2 p.m., March 3!

Melbourne State Library, 1 p.m. March 10!



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