Spanish court summons Mike Pompeo to testify on CIA plot to kidnap or assassinate Assange

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Spain's National High Court has summoned former CIA director and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to give testimony on a massive spying operation he allegedly orchestrated against Julian Assange and a related Trump administration plot to kidnap or assassinate the WikiLeaks publisher in London.

The summons, revealed by ABC Spain last Friday, was issued by National High Court Judge Santiago Pedraz. It reportedly compels Pompeo, along with former US National Counterintelligence and Security Center director William Evanina to testify before a Spanish court, either in person or by video link, later this month.

Pompeo and Evanina have been subpoenaed in a criminal case against Davis Morales, a former Spanish marine who headed the UC Global private security firm. In 2015, Morales' company was hired by the Ecuadorian government to provide security for its London embassy, where Assange lived as a political refugee.

According to UC Global whistleblowers, who provided evidence to the Spanish proceedings, Morales entered into an agreement with US authorities in 2016 to extensively surveil the WikiLeaks founder. The former employees also stated there were discussions of potentially abducting Assange or poisoning him the following year.

This ties in with a *Yahoo! News* exposé last September, which alleged that in 2017 there were discussions in the top levels of the US Trump administration about taking extraordinary measures against Assange, including a possible kidnapping or assassination.

The report, based on discussions with 30 former US officials, alleged that Pompeo, as then CIA director, was central to the plotting, instructing subordinates that in the campaign against Assange, "nothing is off limits."

According to *Business Insider*, Pompeo has not responded to the Spanish summons, even though he has been called only to give evidence and the Spanish court has made clear he is outside its prosecutorial jurisdiction.

Pompeo was closely associated with the Trump administration's assault on democratic rights and its warmongering, which included open violations of international law. As Trump's secretary of state, Pompeo would have been involved in the January 2020 assassination of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Iraq.

Pompeo has already given something of an accounting of his time as CIA director, telling a Texas audience in 2019, a year after he had left the position: "When I was a cadet, what's the cadet motto at West Point? You will not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do. I was the CIA director. We lied, we cheated, we stole. We had entire training courses. It reminds you of the glory of the American experiment."

When the *Yahoo! News* report was published, Pompeo called for its sources to be prosecuted under national security laws, all but confirming the veracity of the report.

The attitude of the US Justice Department to the Spanish proceedings is also a tacit admission of guilt. Last November, *Yahoo! News* reported that the Justice Department had stonewalled all requests from Spanish judge Santiago Pedraz for assistance in the prosecution of Morales.

The US government was refusing to provide any information about American computer IP addresses that had access to the illegal surveillance of Assange collected by UC Global. At the same time, Justice Department officials had sought to prise information from Pedraz, including an extraordinary and disturbing request for the identities of the UC Global whistleblowers.

According to Assange's lawyers, Evanina has provided an even more direct confirmation that the allegations of collusion between the US government and UC Global are true.

Documents from Assange's lawyers to the Spanish court, cited in the *Objective*, claim Evanina "confessed" that: "United States Intelligence had access to the cameras of the

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Embassy of Ecuador in London, to recordings of conversations within the mission, to the devices of the visits and to the travel documents of all of them, having even planned the murder or kidnapping of the asylee."

Evanina was the only former Trump administration official to go on record for the *Yahoo! News* story that detailed the alleged plot to kidnap or assassinate Assange. While repeatedly denouncing the WikiLeaks founder, Evanina stated that the US "had exquisite collection of his plans and intentions." He spoke about the escalation of electronic and human surveillance against Assange.

Referencing an aborted plan for Assange to escape the embassy and seek asylum abroad, sometime in 2017, Evanina stated: "We were very confident within the Five Eyes that we would be able to prevent him" from getting out of the clutches of the British and US authorities. The Five Eyes is the US-led electronic surveillance alliance, involving Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The remark points to the breadth of the imperialist campaign against Assange, and significantly implicates the Australian authorities and central participants in the assault on the WikiLeaks founder's rights, despite the fact that he is an Australian citizen and journalist.

In other words, whether Pompeo shows up to the Spanish court or not, the US-led dirty tricks campaign against Assange is a matter of public record. The Spanish summons again exposes the ongoing US attempt to extradite Assange from Britain as the pseudo-legal cover for a criminal rendition operation, involving the violation of international law and domestic legislation across multiple jurisdictions.

The *Yahoo! News* report made plain that the stepped-up US campaign against Assange was a response to WikiLeaks' exposure, in early 2017, of illegal CIA spying operations. An indictment against Assange was drawn up, over separate 2010 and 2011 publications, revealing war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that there would be a sham legal basis for Assange's detention in the US were he kidnapped from London by the CIA.

This was raised by Assange's lawyers, during British High Court hearings related to Assange's extradition last October. Mark Summers QC stated: "This is the first time, of which we are aware, that the US has sought the assistance of a UK court in obtaining jurisdiction over someone where the evidence suggests it has contemplated, if not plotted, the assassination, kidnap, rendering, poisoning of that person."

Despite this, the High Court accepted worthless and self-contradictory US diplomatic assurances that Assange would not be treated as poorly as claimed by his lawyers if he were dispatched to an American prison. In March, the UK Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from Assange against the decision.

WikiLeaks stated on Twitter yesterday that British Home Secretary Priti Patel will imminently announce whether she is granting an extradition order. Given the intense hostility of the British government to Assange, the outcome is all but a formality. On paper, he has one other avenue of appeal within the British legal system, but more than a decade of arbitrary attacks on his rights means that even this is not guaranteed.

In other words, Assange faces the prospects of a rapid rendition to the US, or a further extended period in the maximum-security Belmarsh Prison, where he has been held for over three years, in the event of an appeal being allowed.

The open criminality of the assault on the WikiLeaks founder demonstrates that the fight for his freedom cannot go forward through plaintive appeals to the governments, courts and official institutions. The campaign against Assange is supported by the entire political establishment, as a means of intimidating widespread anti-war sentiment, amid US confrontations with Russia and China, and of establishing a precedent for attacks on broader social and political opposition in the working class.

The US persecution began under the Democratic Party administration of Barack Obama, was intensified by the Republican Trump administration and is being continued by Joseph Biden. In Britain, the Conservatives and Labor are as one against Assange. In Australia, the newly-elected Labor government has already signaled it will do nothing to defend the WikiLeaks publisher, while signing up to US demands for anti-China aggression.

The fight for Assange's freedom, in other words, is inextricably tied to a political struggle against all these governments, by the working class, the vast mass of the population. The defence of Assange must be brought into the growing social and political struggles of workers, as a spearhead of the fight against militarism, war and the accompanying turn to authoritarian forms of rule.

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