

Hackers Assist Beleaguered WikiLeaks

by Cassandra Vinograd via no-one - AP Monday, Feb 27 2012, 10:13am

international / mass media / other press

Hacker group Anonymous has delivered a trove of five million emails hacked from the analysis/intelligence firm Stratfor to WikiLeaks. Assange was in dire need of a haul like this as his site has been floundering since the Iraq/diplomatic cable release. Hopefully Assange will learn which side his bread is buttered on and give credit where it's due; not necessarily by name but by recognition of his 'anonymous' sources.



Assange announcing release of hacked email trove

One wonders why "gifted hacker" Assange was unable to hack compromising material for himself.

AP report follows:

LONDON (AP) — WikiLeaks said Monday it was publishing a massive trove of leaked emails from the geopolitical analysis firm Stratfor, shedding light on the inner workings of the Texas-based think tank that bills itself as a leading provider of global intelligence to a range of clients.

The online anti-secrecy group said it had more than 5 million Stratfor emails and it was putting them out in collaboration with two dozen international media organizations.

The small selection so-far published to WikiLeaks' website gave a rare look at the daily routine at a private intel firm: One described a \$6,000-a-month payment made to a Middle Eastern source, another carried bits of gossip dropped by a retired spook, and many were filled with off-color office banter.

An initial examination of the emails carried out by The Associated Press turned up a mix of the innocuous and embarrassing, but WikiLeaks chief Julian Assange promised more explosive material in the coming weeks.

"What we have discovered is a company that is a private intelligence Enron," Assange told London's Frontline Club, referring to the Texas energy giant whose spectacular bankruptcy turned it into a byword for corporate malfeasance.

Assange accused Stratfor of funneling money to informants through offshore tax havens, monitoring activist groups on behalf of major multinationals, and making investments

based on its secret intelligence.

"Stratfor is simply out of control," he said.

Stratfor pushed back against the suggestion that there was anything improper in the way it dealt with its contacts.

"Stratfor has worked to build good sources in many countries around the world, as any publisher of global geopolitical analysis would do," the company said in a statement. "We have done so in a straightforward manner and we are committed to meeting the highest standards of professional conduct."

The Stratfor statement suggested the company wouldn't be commenting in any further detail on Assange's allegations.

"Having had our property stolen, we will not be victimized twice by submitting to questioning about them," the statement said.

How WikiLeaks got the company's emails remains unclear — Assange refused to answer questions about the matter Monday — but Stratfor said the messages appeared to be the same ones stolen by hackers over the Christmas holidays. The breach, claimed by the Internet activist group Anonymous, ravaged the company's servers and led to the disclosure of thousands of credit card numbers, among other information.

Several media groups, including Rolling Stone magazine and Germany's NDR broadcaster, say they have been offered advance access to the emails and that they will publish stories based on the documents if appropriate.

One journalist involved in the deal said that the documents were made available by WikiLeaks within the past month.

"They haven't told us anything about how they obtained them," the journalist said, speaking anonymously to discuss sourcing issues.

Austin, Texas-based Stratfor is a subscription-based publisher providing political, economic and military analysis to help customers reduce risk. It charges subscribers for its reports and analysis, delivered through the web, emails and videos.

The emails thus far posted to the Web are generally mundane — dealing with training, staffing, budgets and administration. Others carry boasts about the company's reach. In one, Stratfor Vice President of Intelligence Fred Burton brags about his "trusted former CIA cronies." In another, he promises to "see what I can uncover" about a classified FBI investigation.

Messages left for Burton weren't immediately returned. Stratfor has speculated that some of the leaked emails may have been altered or forged, although the firm did not provide any evidence of tampering.

The hackers involved took to Twitter to reject the suggestion as "pathetic."

One Stratfor email warned about letting people know too much about how the company

operated.

"I think showing too much of our inner workings devalues our Mystique," the email said.
"People don't know how we collect our intelligence and that's one of the cool, mysterious things about STRATFOR."

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<http://tinyurl.com/7qx8p9n>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-3035.html>