

ON WIKILEAKS AND CHELSEA MANNING'S COMMUTATION

Today, President Obama commuted Chelsea Manning's sentence, effective May 17. May she have the fortitude to withstand five more months of prison.

Among the many responses to the commutation, many people are pointing to a tweet Julian Assange wrote in September, promising to agree to US prison if Manning got clemency.



Assange made a very similar comment more recently, on January 12.



To Assange's credit, he has long called for clemency for Manning; and whatever you think of Assange, his anger against Hillary was in significant part motivated by Clinton's response to the Manning leaks. Manning might have been able to cooperate against Assange for a lesser sentence, but there was nothing Assange did that was not, also, what the NYT has done.

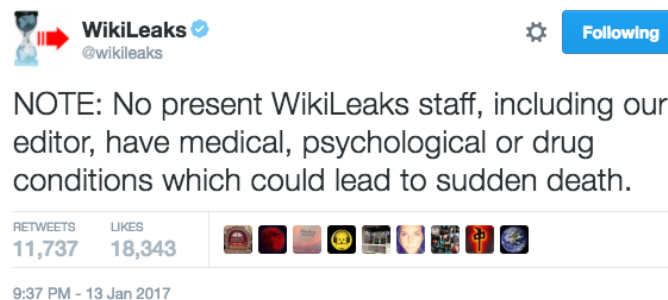
Indeed, the oddity of Assange's original tweet is that, as far as has been made public, he has never been charged, not even for aiding Edward Snowden as a fugitive.

Nevertheless, since the comments, Assange's European lawyer said he stands by his earlier

comment (though she points out the US has not asked for extradition).

But I'd like to point to a third tweet, which might explain why Assange would be so willing to be extradited now.

The *day after* Assange repeated his promise to undergo extradition, just as the uproar over the Trump dossier led Christopher Steele to go into hiding has been roiling, Assange also tweeted a comment at least pretending he thought he might be murdered.



Sure, Assange is paranoid. But while Assange has been hiding behind purportedly American IDed cutouts, claiming plausible deniability that he got the DNC emails from the Russians, he surely knows, now, those people were cut-outs. The Russians, Trump, and any American cutouts that Assange could ID would badly like him to sustain that plausible deniability.

And the Russians have a way of silencing people like that, even in fairly protected places in London.

So while Assange could just be blowing smoke, Assange may well be considering his options, coming to the US on a plea deal versus dealing with Putin's goons.

All of which might make such deals more attractive.

Update: Here's Assange's latest on this.



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Following

Assange is still happy to come to the US provided all his rights are guaranteed despite White House now saying Manning was not quid-quo-pro.

RETWEETS

775

LIKES

1,211



4:16 PM - 18 Jan 2017