

THE LEAKED CABLES I WANT TO SEE

As you've no doubt heard, on Wednesday, both Amazon.com and Ecuador decided they didn't want to be associated with Wikileaks.

In Amazon.com's case, it's not entirely clear they would have known Wikileaks had switched to their servers on Sunday. But on Tuesday, some of Joe Lieberman's flunkies contacted the company to let them know that Holy Joe disapproved of the book store-and-server helping Wikileaks facilitate its leaks.

The company announced it was cutting WikiLeaks off yesterday only 24 hours after being contacted by the staff of Joe Lieberman, chairman of the Senate's committee on homeland security.

[snip]

Lieberman said: "[Amazon's] decision to cut off WikiLeaks now is the right decision and should set the standard for other companies WikiLeaks is using to distribute its illegally seized material. I call on any other company or organisation that is hosting WikiLeaks to immediately terminate its relationship with them."

The department of homeland security confirmed Amazon's move, referring journalists to Lieberman's statement.

Now, given DHS' confirmation referencing Lieberman, it's not clear whether the government officially contacted Amazon.com, or only Holy Joe. But it is worth noting that Amazon.com presumably gets requests for "tangible things" from the government under the PATRIOT Act's Section 215. And while the Obama Administration has not branded Julian Assange as a terrorist the way Peter "Material Support for Irish

Terrorists” King has, they could presumably claim a counter-intelligence interest in obtaining records about Wikileaks under Section 215. So the government could make legitimate requests for information on Wikileaks’ hosting use, if not request it be closed down.

Then there’s Ecuador, which I find even more interesting. On Monday, Deputy Foreign Minister Kintto Lucas had said Ecuador was prepared to offer Assange asylum. But then yesterday, President Rafael Correa stated that Lucas had no authority to make the offer. As Al-Jazeera’s article on the Correa comment makes clear, Ecuador has shown as much resistance as just about anyone to US demands, particularly since the US backed a Colombian raid on FARC in Ecuadoran territory.

Nevertheless, presumably the US said something to Ecuador to make it rethink Lucas’ offer of asylum to Assange. What carrots or sticks, I wonder, would be revealed if the diplomatic cables between the US and Ecuador regarding this matter were leaked?

The point being, of course, that if Correa’s retraction of the asylum order was a response to US pressure, it means that even as the US’ heavy-handed ways are exposed in the Wikileaks dump, they continue to use those same ways to combat Assange.