

File 20120302.1214: On Schneier's blog there is a story about how the U.S. State Department replied to an FOIA request with redacted versions of cables already published by Wikileaks: http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2012/03/state_department_1.html#comments. I replied with this:

Under FOIA regulations, State had to reply with something, or offer a good reason why they could not. To release the original, unredacted cables would have violated their own security policy. But to release redacted information, knowing that the unredacted version is readily available, risks leaking information: specifically, the contents of the applicable security classification guide, itself classified information.

State was in a real bind here; should they defy the law, knowingly violate security policy, or look like a hypocrite?

One possibility that has *not* been mentioned: release the cables, but with redactions intended to communicate wrong information to your adversaries. Could the State Department have been that clever?

Releasing a redacted version of something already available in un-redacted form is just like a crib to cryptographers.

References