



Attorney General Eric Holder Speaks at the SEED School of Washington, D.C. 2012 Commencement Ceremony

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"Yet – if, as they say, what's past is prologue – and if this class's record of achievement is any indication – then I believe there is good reason for confidence in the future that your generation will create, and the legacy of progress that each of you will carry forward – and build upon," said Attorney General Holder.

Eric Holder appoints 2 US attorneys to lead leaks probe

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Boston Herald on June 9, 2012 released the following:

"By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two U.S. attorneys are taking over separate FBI investigations into leaks of national security information that critics have accused the White House of orchestrating to improve President Barack Obama's re-election chances, a claim Obama calls "offensive" and "wrong."

Recent news articles contained details of U.S. involvement in a partially successful computer virus attack on Iran's nuclear program and on the selection of targets for counterterrorism assassination plots. The leaked information generally painted Obama as a decisive and hands-on commander in chief.

"The notion that my White House would purposely release classified national security information is offensive. It's wrong," Obama told reporters at a news conference Friday. "And people I think need to have a better sense of how I approach this office and how the people around me here approach this office."

Obama promised investigations into the source of leaks about U.S. involvement in cyberattacks on Iran and drone strikes on suspected terrorists.

"We're dealing with issues that can touch on the safety and security of the American people, our families or our military personnel or our allies, and so we don't play with that," he said.

Hours later, Attorney General Eric

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(committee) that it cannot respond to our request for information regarding the leaks, a very troubling event indeed," Rogers said.

The CIA has come under fire for allegedly sharing with Hollywood filmmakers classified details of last year's U.S. raid into Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden.

A Justice Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said that some officials in the department's national security division recused themselves from

one of the leak probes but that the department overall was investigating.

There are at least three investigations ongoing into disclosures of classified information.

Before becoming U.S. attorney, Machen helped lead the white-collar and internal investigation practices at the prominent Washington law firm of WilmerHale. He served as an assistant U.S. attorney from 1997 to 2001.

Machen is leading a high-profile political

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Holder announced that two U.S. attorneys will lead a pair of criminal investigations already under way into possible unauthorized disclosures of classified information within the executive and legislative branches of government.

Holder said he was confident the prosecutors would follow the facts and evidence wherever they led.

"The unauthorized disclosure of classified information can compromise the security of this country and all Americans, and it will not be tolerated," he said.

Holder assigned Ronald Machen, the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, and Rod Rosenstein, the U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland, to direct separate probes that are already being conducted by the FBI.

Three weeks ago, FBI Director Robert Mueller said the bureau had launched an investigation into who leaked information about an al-Qaida plot to place an explosive device aboard a U.S.-bound airline flight. Separately, calls from Capitol Hill have mounted urging a leak probe into a New York Times [NYT] story a week ago about U.S. involvement in cyberattacks on Iran.

Obama said his administration has "zero tolerance" for such leaks and that there would be an internal administration probe. "We have mechanisms in place where if we can root out folks who have leaked, they will suffer consequences," the president said. "In some cases, it's criminal. These are criminal acts when they release information like this. And we will conduct thorough investigations, as we have in the past."

Leaders of the Senate and House intelligence committees said Thursday they were drafting legislation to further limit access to highly classified information and possibly impose new penalties for revealing it. The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee said he will investigate recent leaks.

Lawmakers have pointed to recent stories by The New York Times, The Associated Press and other news organizations that contain previously secret information and cite anonymous U.S. officials.

The strongest claims came Tuesday from Obama's 2008 election opponent, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

"They're intentionally leaking information to enhance President Obama's image as a tough guy for the elections," McCain said after taking to the Senate floor to list some of the alleged breaches. "That is unconscionable."

McCain called on the administration to appoint an outside special counsel to investigate.

In a statement Friday, McCain and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Holder's decision "falls far short of what is needed" and repeated McCain's call for a special counsel.

The House Intelligence Committee chairman, Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., said his committee would formally investigate the leaks but that he was concerned about the level of cooperation he would get from two government agencies.

"Just today, the CIA informed the

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corruption probe of officials in the District of Columbia. The latest development in that investigation came this week when District of Columbia Council chairman Kwame Brown resigned after being charged with lying about his income on bank loan applications and violating a city campaign law.

Brown pleaded guilty Friday.

Rosenstein was an associate independent counsel who worked for Whitewater prosecutor Ken Starr from 1995 to 1997. He was co-counsel in the fraud trial of Jim and Susan McDougal, the former real estate partners of Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Both of the McDougals were convicted in a trial that also resulted in the conviction of then-Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker.

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said he hopes that the Justice Department brings “the full force of the law against these criminals.”

“We need to send a clear message to

anyone who considers leaking sensitive information and putting Americans at risk: If you leak classified information, you will face jail time,” Smith said in a statement.

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., called Machen and Rosenstein “strong, capable, independent prosecutors” and said the Justice Department’s consultation with the Judiciary and Intelligence committees was an aid to congressional oversight.”

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