



The Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison's Department of Justice Newsletter

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Newsletter from the Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison

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Attorney General Mukasey Meets with European Officials



Attorney General Mukasey greets German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble at a press conference on March 11, 2008 in Berlin, Germany. Also pictured is German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries. Reuters photo.

Attorney General Mukasey traveled to Europe on March 11, 2008, where he visited Berlin, Germany, Bled, Slovenia, and London, England. In Berlin, the Attorney General met with government officials to discuss how Germany remains a strong partner in the fight against global terrorism. To this end, the United States and Germany have recently signed a bilateral agreement that permits access to biometric data and spontaneous sharing of data about known and suspected terrorists.

In Bled, the Attorney General participated in the Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial between the European Union and the United States. Various issues were discussed at the Ministerial including terrorist recruitment and radicalization, plans to share information to combat terrorists, and an increased focus on international organized crime.

The Attorney General also delivered remarks at the London School of Economics regarding the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom in law enforcement efforts, training, intelligence sharing, investigations, and prosecutorial support.

Attorney General Discusses Gangs, Public Corruption, and Intellectual Property

Attorney General Mukasey delivers remarks to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California on March 27, 2008.

Attorney General Mukasey visited California on a three day trip that began on March 26, 2008.

In Los Angeles, the Attorney General participated in a press conference with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and U.S. Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien to announce the results of a joint law enforcement operation targeting gang activity in the Central District of California as well as the formation of an additional FBI-sponsored Safe Streets Task Force to combat gang violence in communities north of Los Angeles.

In San Francisco, the Attorney General delivered remarks to the Commonwealth Club highlighting the Department's efforts to investigate and prosecute public corruption, one of his top priorities.

In his final stop, the Attorney General spoke to technology industry leaders in San Jose about the Department's efforts to prevent Intellectual Property theft.

Indictments Announced in Major Mortgage Fraud Scheme

U.S. Attorney McGregor W. Scott for the Eastern District of California and other federal officials announced on March 24, 2008, the indictment of 19 individuals for mortgage fraud-related offenses under Operation Homewrecker, the product of an extensive investigation by the FBI and IRS. According to the indictment, the leader of this nationwide scam is Charles Head, 33, of Los Angeles, California, who targeted homeowners in dire financial straits, fraudulently obtaining title to over 100 homes and stole millions of dollars through fraudulently obtained loans and mortgages.

In recent months, an Eastern District of California Mortgage Fraud Task Force has been established. This action was taken as a result of the significant increase in reported mortgage fraud as economic conditions and the housing market have worsened. The task force allows for a more targeted, coordinated approach in prioritizing the massive volume of referrals being made to federal and state agencies. Currently, there are over 50 FBI Mortgage and Corporate Fraud Task Forces across the country.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Deputy Attorney General Mark Filip Confirmed by the United States Senate

Mark Filip was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate on March 3, 2008, and was sworn in as Deputy Attorney General on March 10, 2008.

He has served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Chicago, a partner in the Chicago office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, and a lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.

Currently, several senior level Department of Justice appointees are awaiting confirmation. These officials include: Kevin O'Connor for Associate Attorney General; Gregory Katsas for Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Division; Grace Chung Becker for Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division; and Elisebeth Collins Cook for Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Policy.



Justice Scalia presided over the ceremonial swearing-in of new Deputy Attorney General Filip on March 25, 2008.



Protect America Act Update

Although the Senate passed a strong, bipartisan version of the Protect America Act, the House version of the bill, passed on March 14, 2008, does not provide retroactive immunity for telecom service providers who assisted with government surveillance immediately after September 11th. Also, the House bill requires that, for the first time in history, intelligence agencies must seek a court order before conducting surveillance on some targets located outside the United States. To date, there is no legislation pending before the President regarding this important issue. Below are excerpts of a joint letter from Attorney General Mukasey and Director of National Intelligence McConnell regarding provisions in the House version of the bill:

" [This bill] would require prior court approval before allowing surveillance targeting certain foreign terrorists and other national security threats located outside the United States. As we explained before, imposing this requirement in the context of surveillance of foreign targets located overseas results in the loss of potentially vital intelligence by, for example, delaying intelligence collection and thereby losing some intelligence forever."

"The [Senate Intelligence] Committee also concluded that 'without retroactive immunity, the private sector might be unwilling to cooperate with lawful Government requests in the future without unnecessary court involvement and protracted litigation. The possible reduction in intelligence that might result from this delay is simply unacceptable for the safety of our Nation.'"

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth L. Wainstein Appointed Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism



On March 19, 2008, President Bush announced the appointment of Assistant Attorney General for National Security Kenneth L. Wainstein as Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism where he will coordinate U.S. homeland security efforts to ensure continued progress on combating terrorism, securing our borders, and strengthening our emergency preparedness.

"I am grateful for Ken's extraordinary service to the Department, and I am especially appreciative of his leadership in successfully managing the establishment and operations of the Department's National Security Division, which has helped make the American people safer. While I am sorry to lose Ken as part of my leadership team, I can think of no better choice to serve as the President's Homeland Security Advisor."

-Attorney General Mukasey

Jury Finds Former Sailor Guilty of Terrorism and Espionage Charges

Kevin J. O'Connor, U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut, and other federal officials announced on March 5, 2008, that a federal jury in New Haven, Connecticut, had found Hassan Abu-Jihaad, formerly known as Paul R. Hall, 32, of Phoenix, Arizona, guilty of providing material support of terrorism and disclosing previously classified information relating to national defense.

According to the evidence provided at trial, in 2001, four or five months after the October 2000 attack on the U.S.S. Cole, Abu-Jihaad provided classified information regarding the movements of a United States Navy battle group, to an organization that is alleged to have provided material support and resources to persons engaged in acts of terrorism.

Arms Dealer Charged in U.S. with Conspiracy to Provide Weapons to a Terrorist Group

Michael J. Garcia, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Michele M. Leonhart, the Acting Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, announced on March 6, 2008, the unsealing of charges against Viktor Bout, an international arms dealer, and his associate Andrew Smulian for conspiring to sell millions of dollars worth of weapons to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC") – a designated foreign terrorist organization based in Colombia, according to the Complaint unsealed on March 6.

An indictment or a criminal complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

President Bush and Attorney General Mukasey Address the National Association of Attorneys General

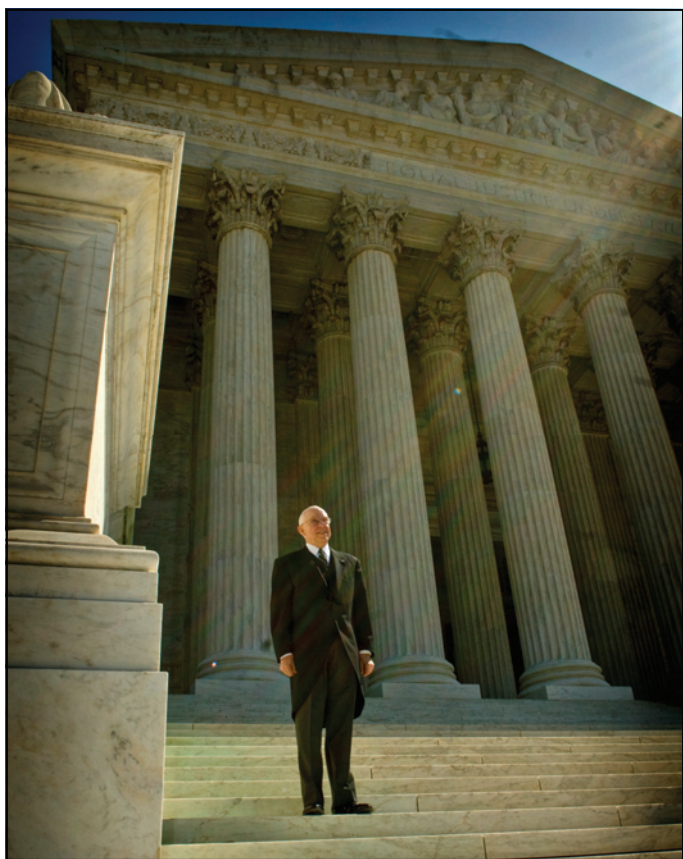


The President and Attorney General address the National Association of Attorneys General on March 3, 2008 at the White House.

President Bush and Attorney General Mukasey met with the National Association of Attorneys General (“NAAG”) on March 3, 2008, at the White House. The Attorneys General were in Washington to attend NAAG’s Annual Spring Meeting.

The President addressed several important issues including the need for renewal of the Protect American Act, stating, “...there’s a serious debate here, and some of the Attorneys General have written a letter, both Democrats and Republicans, urging that the debate be solved in such a way that the professionals can do the job. And I thank you for wading in. There’s a lot of legal complexities on the FISA renewal debate, but the real issue comes down to this: To defend the country, we need to be able to monitor communications of terrorists quickly and be able to do it effectively.”

Attorney General Argues Terrorism Case Before Supreme Court



Attorney General Mukasey, pictured here in front of the Supreme Court, argued on behalf of the U.S. Government in the case, *United States v. Ahmed Ressaym* on March 25, 2008.

Women's History Month



Washington, D.C. Chief of Police Cathy L. Lanier delivered remarks at the Department’s celebration of Women’s History Month on March 27, 2008, at the Great Hall.