

Aide: Gonzales involved in dismissals

by UPI

A former top aide testified Thursday that U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales was more involved than he has admitted in firing eight U.S. attorneys.

Under questioning by U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., Kyle Sampson told the Judiciary Committee that he does not think Gonzales was accurate when he said he had not participated in the process, The New York Times reported.

"I don't think it's accurate," Sampson repeated. "I think he's recently clarified it. But I remember discussing with him this process of asking certain U.S. attorneys to resign and I believe that he was present at the meeting on Nov. 27."

Sampson, in his opening statement, said that the initial response to questions about the dismissals was "badly mishandled."

"What started as a good-faith attempt to carry out the department's management responsibilities and exercise the president's appointment authority has unfortunately resulted in confusion, misunderstanding and embarrassment," he told the committee.

Sampson apologized for his part in the bungling. He said that the eight U.S. attorneys were dismissed for legitimate reasons but were "good people."

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