

AG clarifies controversial NSA remarks

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Threatened with a perjury investigation, U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales is clarifying remarks he made regarding federal surveillance actions. Congressional Democrats have blasted Gonzales for offering what they describe as misleading testimony both last week and in 2006. The attorney general sent a letter to leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday, confirming a dispute between the Justice Department and the White House in March 2004 involved National Security Agency watchdog activities, but stating the clash was not about warrantless wiretapping, the New York Times reported Thursday. "I recognize that the use of the term Terrorist Surveillance Program and my shorthand reference to the 'program' publicly 'described by the president' may have created confusion, particularly for those who are knowledgeable about the N.S.A. activities authorized in the presidential order," he said in the letter. Gonzales added that the confusion might have been most intense among those "who may be accustomed to thinking of them or referring to them together as a single N.S.A. program." However, The Hill reported Thursday that Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has dismissed the letter and is giving Gonzales until the end of the week to resolve apparent discrepancies in his testimony.

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