

THE USA PURGE: DOJ'S IG PUNTS

Well over a year after the Department of Justice's Inspector General started an investigation into the US Attorney firings, they're set to punt tomorrow. They won't refer Gonzales—or anyone else—for prosecution, but they will recommend that someone—someone with subpoena power—continue the investigation.

Justice Inspector General Glenn A. Fine and Office of Professional Responsibility director H. Marshall Jarrett, who wrote the report, will not absolve Justice Department officials of blame but will recommend that efforts continue to resolve unanswered questions, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the findings have not yet been made public.

The problem, it seems, is the same problem that prevented Congress from determining the truth behind the US Attorney firings: key participants refused to cooperate.

An intense effort to determine how the firing plan originated and whether perjury or obstruction of justice laws were violated in refusing to reveal the basis for the dismissals has been thwarted, partly because investigators lack the power to compel testimony from people outside of the Justice Department.

[snip]

Investigators did not win access to lawmakers and their assistants or former White House aides despite attempts to interview them.

Yeah, those key participants: Harriet Miers, Turdblossom, Bush, Domenici and his staffers,

Heather Wilson and her staffers, etcetera. What a surprise. Mukasey's refusal to appoint a prosecutor last year—and his ongoing support for the claims of executive privilege and absolute immunity—bought the White House a year in their attempts to stall or quash this investigation.

And, as if you didn't already guess, Mukasey seems unprepared to appoint a special counsel to investigate this—he seems poised to appoint someone internal, just as he did with the torture tape destruction investigation.

Despite calls from some of the fired U.S. attorneys, Mukasey will not name a special prosecutor from outside the department. Instead, he intends to hand over the project to a career lawyer with experience in public corruption work, the sources said.

Tune in tomorrow where we see yet more evidence of DOJ's changing stories about why they fired the US Attorneys.