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Conyers wants criminal probe of Bush 'abuses'

By KEN THOMAS (AP) – 4 hours ago

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee on Friday urged Attorney General Eric Holder to appoint a special counsel to examine potential abuses by former President George W. Bush's administration.

Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., said in a speech to the National Press Club that Holder "must appoint a special counsel to review the Bush administration abuses of power and misconduct. A criminal probe — he's got to do that."

Conyers' committee has sought an investigation of Bush administration moves criticized by Democrats, including its methods of interrogating foreign detainees, use of warrantless wiretaps, alleged retribution against critics, and allegations that officials intentionally misused intelligence.

He said the criminal probe should be accompanied by a "9/11-type panel" to gather facts and make recommendations on preventing the misuse of power.

A Justice Department spokesman did not immediately comment. Holder is considering whether to appoint a prosecutor to review the Bush administration's methods of interrogating suspected terrorists.

President Barack Obama has expressed reluctance to conduct a probe into alleged Bush-era abuses and resisted an effort by congressional Democrats to establish a "truth commission," saying the nation should be "looking forward and not backwards."

Conyers also called for the enforcement of subpoenas issued by his committee to former White House chief of staff Josh Bolton and White House lawyer Harriet Miers. Conyers said Bolton has "lots of documents and all the bread crumbs, as we call them, go right to the White House."

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