Justice Probes Documents Alterations in Sales to Iraq

By Douglas Farah

WASHINGTON

The Department of Justice is investigating allegations that Bush administration officials altered records to avoid congressional and federal oversight of the sale of arms to Iraq. The investigation is focused on the Department of Commerce, which handles licenses for such sales.

The investigation, which is being led by the Justice Department's inspector general, has found that there was a systematic effort to alter records and delete information about sales to Iraq.

The Justice Department has identified at least 12 officials who may have been involved in altering records. Among them are top officials in the Department of Commerce, including its undersecretary, and officials from other agencies, such as the State Department and the Defense Department.

The investigation has also found that some officials were aware of the alterations and did nothing to stop them.

The Justice Department has not yet publicly announced any charges or indictments.

The investigation is being conducted by the Justice Department's inspector general, who is responsible for overseeing federal agencies.

The alleged alterations to the records included changes to the dates of sales, the quantities of items sold, and the purpose of the sales.

The Justice Department has not released any details about the evidence it has collected or the progress of the investigation.

The alleged misconduct occurred during the Bush administration, which was in office from 2001 to 2009.

The investigation is expected to take several months or even years to complete.

The possible criminal charges that could be brought against the officials include false statements, obstruction of justice, and fraud.

The Justice Department has not yet announced any plans to release the results of the investigation.

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