

We don't operate on 'leaks': Obama blasts FBI's decision to reopen Hillary email probe

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Orlando: US President Barack Obama on Wednesday broke his silence on FBI's decision to reopen probe into the email controversy involving former secretary of state and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

Barack Obama speaks to supporters while campaigning in Chapel Hill.

In an interview to NowThis News, Obama said that the "FBI operates on concrete decisions" and not on "incomplete" information or leaks.

"I do think that there is a norm that, you know, when there are investigations, we don't operate on innuendo. We don't operate on "incomplete" information. We don't operate on "leaks". We operate based on concrete decisions that are made," the President said.

Obama appeared to be critical of FBI director James B Comey in his remarks even though the White House refuted that the president's statement gave any such impression.

Declaring that he had made a deliberate effort to make sure that it did not look like he was "meddling" in what are supposed to be independent processes for making these assessments, Obama also expressed his confidence in Hillary.

"Setting aside the particulars of this case. I know that she is somebody who has always looked out for the interest of America and the American people first," Obama said.

Citing the conclusions of FBI, Justice Department and repeated congressional investigations he said, Hillary had made some "mistakes" but there was not anything there that was prosecutable.

The White House, however, refuted that the Obama's weighing in on the issues reflected that he was critical of the FBI's decision in this regard.

"Nothing changed. If you read the full transcript of the President's remarks, you will see that the President went out of his way that he wasn't going to comment on any specific investigation. The President said that a couple of times," White House Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz told reporters travelling with the President.

"We are not going to be in a position to defend or criticise the FBI Director. That is our view. But what is also true, and what Josh said on Monday and what the President reiterated yesterday, is that we do take seriously these longstanding norms and customs that historically limit the sort of public speculation and public discussion of facts and materials that are collected in the context of a law enforcement investigation," Schultz said.

What the President was talking about was the importance of adhering to those norms and practices that have governed the rule of law for a long time now, he stressed.

"I'll also say that the President believes these customs shouldn't only apply to someone who's famous or if an election is around the corner, but these are principles worth upholding no matter the circumstances surrounding any particular investigation," he asserted.

Obama arrived in Miami, Florida yesterday evening for addressing several election rallies scheduled for today.

- With PTI Inputs