

Former DOJ Atty Who Led Petraeus Case Joins Snell & Wilmer

By **Martin O'Sullivan**

Law360, New York (June 9, 2016, 1:39 PM ET) --

A former Justice Department trial attorney who led the successful prosecution against former CIA Director David Petraeus has joined Snell & Wilmer LLP, where he will work on both cybersecurity and white collar regulatory enforcement matters, the firm announced.

James P. Melendres started at Snell & Wilmer's Phoenix office as partner this week, following a stint as both a Justice Department trial attorney and counsel to a United States assistant attorney general. In his new role at the firm, Melendres will draw on his experience working on complex white collar investigations and trials — including that of Petraeus — as well as cyberattack prevention and response, he said.



James P. Melendres

“They have a great existing SEC enforcement team, which is a fantastic complement to my white collar background,” Melendres said of the firm in a Thursday interview with Law360. “I think that, in combination with the cybersecurity and data protection team they have in place already, is going to be a great foundation for me to help lead both those practice areas to new heights.”

Melendres in 2014 joined the Justice Department's national security division as a trial attorney, where he led the charge against Petraeus, who in April 2015 was sentenced to two years of probation and fined \$100,000 for giving classified material to his mistress and biographer.

Melendres said he was “gratified” that the Justice Department entrusted him with the the Petraeus prosecution, which he described as very complex.

“Working on a matter of that sophistication required the white collar background that I had, and I think it is directly translatable to the additional work in my new role as a white collar defense practitioner in terms of complex white collar investigations and matters,” he said.

Since January, Melendres served concurrently as both a DOJ trial attorney and counsel to Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Carlin. In his new additional role, Melendres advised Carlin on issues stemming from sophisticated network intrusions, corporate data breaches and cyber extortion, he said.

Melendres said he will work on cybersecurity matters with clients spanning many industries, including financial services, healthcare, biosciences and energy. Additionally, Melendres will work with many of the technology companies and data centers located in Arizona, he said.

“The firm services a roster of clients ... that are facing an array of challenges based on rapidly evolving cyber threats and the corresponding regulatory and legal landscape,” he said.

Melendres said that cyber extortion will present complex questions in his field, such as the legal issues arising from paying a ransom to an anonymous hacker threatening a cyberattack.

Melendres initially joined the Justice Department in 2007 as an assistant U.S. attorney in California’s Southern District. He worked in its major fraud and special prosecutions unit on a variety of complex financial matters, he said.

Before the Justice Department, Melendres was an associate at Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP precursor LeBoeuf Lamb Greene & MacRae LLP from 2003 until 2006.

He then worked as a law clerk in the U.S. District of New Mexico for one year before joining the DOJ in 2007.

Melendres received his law degree from Stanford University Law School in 2003 and his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College in 2000.

--Editing by Patricia K. Cole.

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