



No, President Obama Has Not Said He Is Refusing to Leave Office

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A recent article making waves on Facebook claims that President Obama has refused to step down from the presidency, given the results of the 2016 presidential election.

The article -- "Breaking: Barack Obama Refusing To Leave Office: 'I Cannot, in Good Conscience, Cede the Presidency to Donald Trump' -- was posted on the U.S. Postman website on Dec. 15, as well as on more than two-dozen other websites, including FN4Y and Universe Politics. The text of the story seems to have appeared for the first time on Dec. 9 on a site called The New York Journal.

While it's true that Obama is no fan of President-elect Donald Trump, he hasn't said anything about trying to block him from the presidency -- and has actually been quite clear about his desire for a smooth transition of power.

U.S. Postman and FN4Y did not respond to requests for comment from ABC News. No contact information was available for the New York Journal. And despite the article's claims that the comments from Obama and Trump were made publicly to reporters, Universe Politics told ABC News: "My source is private, I'm not sharing it."

So, ABC News dug into the claims in the article and found that virtually everything in the story - including the headline -- is false.

Obama Says He Supports a Smooth Transition of Power

Just 12 hours after Trump was declared the winner of the election, President Obama, speaking from the Rose Garden, praised a smooth transition.

"We are now all rooting for his success in uniting and leading the country," Obama said of Trump. "The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of our democracy and over the next few months we are going to show that to the world."

When Trump and Obama met the next day, the president said the same thing.

"My number one priority in coming two months is to try to facilitate a transition that ensures our president-elect is successful," he told reporters in the Oval Office.

Obama said as recently as Wednesday at the Armed Forces Full Honor Review Farewell Ceremony that "my days as your commander in chief are coming to an end."

None of the Quotes Attributed to Obama, Trump or Pelosi Exist

The most concerning part of the story is that the quotes from Obama, Trump and Pelosi appear to be entirely invented. The article claims that Obama made the announcement at a news conference, but President Obama did not make any public comments on Dec. 9 -- the date the article first appeared. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi also made no public comments on that date.

And while the article says Trump made the comments in the lobby of Trump Tower, he did not make any public comments there and actually spent most of his day on his "Thank You" tour in Louisiana and Michigan. The article also mentions a tweet from Trump about taking the issue to the Supreme Court -- but Trump's Twitter account has not sent out any tweets about the topic.

A Google search for the article's quotes find that the only websites with these quotes are the more than two-dozen websites with the exact text of this story.

(It's also worth noting the article incorrectly states that Pelosi was previously House majority leader. She was actually speaker of the House. She also did not "step down" from that role, but was not re-elected to the spot.)

Yes, Executive Order 13603 Exists -- But It Doesn't Allow Obama to Remain President

The article starts off by claiming that Executive Order 13603, "National Defense Resources Preparedness Order," is Obama's justification for remaining in the White House.

While that executive order exists -- and the article even got the title and year correct -- nothing in the executive order would allow a president to stay in office beyond his or her term in a national emergency. The 20th Amendment is clear that a president's term ends at noon on Jan. 20, and the 22nd Amendment limits a president's terms to two.

That particular executive order has raised some questions about the authority of the executive branch under martial law. Jim Powell, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote an opinion article in Forbes Magazine that warns against a "potentially totalitarian regime obsessed with control over everything."

Still, Executive Order 13603 seems to be a favorite for fake news sources: Another fake news articles cited the executive order as authorizing slavery in the United States.