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Subject: Statement on Fast and Furious
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We finally have a coordinated set of statements with the GOM. We are immediately issuing the statement below. PGR will be issuing the statement just below the tear line. Thanks to everyone for your concerted efforts in making this possible. Let's see if we can finally get a break in the news cycle.

Note to Editors: We believe the following comments from the U.S. Attorney General, head of the U.S. Department of Justice, may be of interest to you.

In testimony today before the United States Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder addressed recent allegations involving gun trafficking investigations and stated that he has made it clear to the law enforcement agencies and prosecutors working along the Southwest Border that no one in the Department of Justice should allow guns to illegally cross the border into Mexico.

Following is the Attorney General's direct testimony today on this topic.

Attorney General Holder (in response to question from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison):

"The mission of ATF is to stop the flow of guns into Mexico and to people who shouldn't have guns here in the states. ATF has served greatly here and in Mexico.

It is true, there have been concerns. I take those allegations very seriously and that is why I asked the IG to report on it. Letting guns 'walk' is not something that is acceptable. Guns are different than drugs or money when we are trying to follow their trail. That is not acceptable. We cannot have a situation where guns are allowed to walk. And I made that clear to attorneys and agents in charge of ATF. "

Additional general background information:

Both Presidents Obama and Calderon have made clear that fighting criminal activity along the U.S.-Mexico border – including the illegal trafficking of guns to Mexico – is a priority for both governments.

The mission of ATF and other law enforcement agencies is to stop the flow of illegal weapons and drugs across the border, and it will continue to be. The Department of Justice is aware of the questions that have been raised by ATF agents and takes those very seriously – that is why the Attorney General has asked the Acting Inspector General to get to the bottom of what happened.

The Attorney General has made it clear to the law enforcement agencies and prosecutors working

along the U.S. Southwest Border that no one in the Department of Justice should allow guns to illegally cross the border into Mexico.

“Fast and Furious” was one of many priority anti-gun trafficking operations conducted on U.S. territory. It was a successful operation that broke up a trafficking ring in the United States and led, among other things, to the indictments announced January 25 in Phoenix against 20 defendants accused of illegally trafficking firearms from the United States into Mexico.

U.S. law enforcement briefed Mexican counter-trafficking officials as plans unfolded on operations in the United States through January 25, 2011, when 19 of the 20 indicted defendants were arrested. Mexican law enforcement officials were present for these arrests on January 25 in Phoenix.

Attorney General Holder’s prepared remarks from the March 10 hearing are available at www.justice.gov.

PGR Statement:

En relación con el operativo “Rápido y Furioso” (“Fast and Furious”) de la Oficina de control de Alcohol, Tabaco, Armas de Fuego y Explosivos (ATF), y habiéndolo tomado nota del pronunciamiento emitido esta mañana por el Procurador General de Estados Unidos, Eric Holder, en una audiencia ante el Congreso de su país, la Procuraduría General de la República manifiesta lo siguiente:

- La decisión del Departamento de Justicia y la propia ATF de iniciar una investigación sobre este caso refleja la voluntad de asegurar el apego a las leyes de ambos países y a los principios de cooperación mutuamente acordados. Como ya se ha señalado, el Gobierno de México seguirá este proceso con especial atención y ha solicitado formalmente información detallada al Gobierno de Estados Unidos. La PGR ha ofrecido el apoyo que pudiera ser necesario a fin de que se esclarezcan plenamente los hechos y, en su caso, se sancione cabalmente a quienes hubieran cometido irregularidades. Desde que se tuvo conocimiento de las afirmaciones expuestas en medios, la PGR inició la investigación correspondiente para esclarecer delitos que eventualmente se pudieran haber cometido en territorio mexicano.
- Como parte del intenso intercambio de información que sostiene con el Departamento de Justicia tienen lugar contactos frecuentes sobre diversos casos específicos contra traficantes de armas. En casos asociados a este operativo, la coordinación sostenida fue para el desahogo de diligencias, sobre detenciones de presuntos traficantes en Estados Unidos y para el acceso a sus interrogatorios. El Gobierno de México no ha tenido conocimiento de la existencia de un operativo que incluyera el trasiego o tráfico controlado de armas a territorio mexicano.
- Como ha declarado el Procurador Holder, el objetivo de las acciones contra traficantes siempre es evitar que las armas lleguen a México y no sería aceptable que fueran traficadas mientras se les

da seguimiento. Tras consultas sostenidas con diversas dependencias estadounidenses, y como se refleja en las declaraciones de dicho funcionario estadounidense, se entiende que Estados Unidos no autorizó el trasiego intencional y controlado de armas a territorio nacional como parte de este operativo. El Gobierno de México no ha dado ni dará su autorización tácita o expresa, bajo ninguna circunstancia, para que ello ocurra.

- El Gobierno de México ratifica su compromiso de fortalecer la cooperación bilateral para evitar y detener el tráfico de armas desde Estados Unidos hacia territorio mexicano, siempre sobre la base de la responsabilidad compartida y la confianza y el respeto mutuo.

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