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**From:** Sherwood, Robert (USAAZ) [Contractor]  
**To:** Rob Sherwood  
**Sent:** 5/18/2011 10:52:56 PM  
**Subject:** Fw: appears this guy Issa is a liar

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**From:** Burke, Dennis (USAAZ)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2011 08:53 PM  
**To:** Cunningham, Patrick (USAAZ); Morrissey, Mike (USAAZ); Hurley, Emory (USAAZ); Sherwood, Robert (USAAZ) [Contractor]; Scheel, Ann (USAAZ); Hernandez, Rachel (USAAZ); Larson, Brian (USAAZ)  
**Subject:** appears this guy Issa is a liar

## Did the Mexican government say the Obama administration committed an 'act of war'?

By Glenn Kessler

Picture (Device Independent Bitmap)  
(Joshua Roberts/Bloomberg)

*"The people of Mexico, their government called it an act of war and quite frankly, if you deliberately and knowingly let weapons go into a country that prohibits guns and where gun violence is the number one thing killing their federal agents, they're pretty close to right."*

— Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), April 20, 2011

Earlier this week, talk radio host Rick Amato [posted quotes](#) from a May 12 interview he had with Rep. Darrell Issa, the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, in which he quoted him as saying this about the Mexican reaction to a controversial Justice Department program to track guns into Mexico: "The Mexican government has called this 'an act of war'."

That's pretty strong stuff, given that Mexico is one of the closest trading and diplomatic partners of the United States.

When we inquired with Issa's office about this quote Tuesday, spokeswoman Becca Glover Watkins came back to say she had listened to a tape of the interview and Issa did not say that at all.

Instead, she rendered the quote as thus: "In many ways, we have to put confidence back in the system on both sides of the border, that law enforcement doesn't let weapons walk, doesn't contribute to a situation the Mexican government has called an active war." (In other words, she explained, he was referring to the war on drugs.)

Watkins added: "We're working with Rick to clear up any confusion on Mr. Issa's exact statement as well."

You can listen to the tape as well, if you [click here and go to Hour 1](#), at the 19:00 mark. We listened to it a few times and it certainly sounds like "act of war" to us — otherwise the quote makes little sense — but others may disagree. (Amato, after being contacted by Issa's staff Tuesday and listening to the tape again, edited his web posting to change the phrase to "active war.")

Nevertheless, Issa also called it an “act of war” a few weeks ago on the Rick Roberts show. (Go to the 15:38 mark). The phrase is pretty clear there.

So, has the Mexican government called this an “act of war”?

## The Facts

Operation Fast and Furious is a federal program that was designed to let weapons from the United States pass into the hands of higher echelons of Mexican drug cartels. But officials lost track of hundreds of firearms, and some of those weapons have been linked to killings such as the fatal shooting of a Border patrol agent. Reports about the apparently bungled operation certainly spawned outrage in Mexico.

Officials in Mexico were even more upset when the U.S. embassy suggested that Mexican officials knew about the operation — and assertion that was immediately denied by the Mexican Attorney General’s office.

President Obama said he was unaware of the operation, as did Mexico’s President Felipe Calderon.

Asked about Issa’s “act of war” statement, Ricardo Alday, a spokesman for the Mexican embassy, said: “We have said many things about Fast and Furious but nothing of that sort, nothing of that tone.”

Indeed, in a recent interview with Univision, Calderon spoke diplomatically about the case.

“Obviously it is an issue of great concern. This operation has to be investigated in its entirety, but certainly we are unaffiliated with the operation itself,” Calderon said. “The fact is that we did not know; what I will continue to support are the actions, within the law and respect that we owe each other as countries, that American agencies take to stop the criminal flow of arms into Mexico.”

Watkins pointed us to a news clip in the Huffington Post, which stated: “Opposition members of the Mexican Congress, media, and public have ordered an investigation and called the operation a violation of international law and even an act of war.”

We would maintain that there is a difference between opposition members of Congress and the Mexican government, but Watkins disagrees.

“I think it’s completely fair for Mr. Issa to report that their government has in fact voiced the ‘act of war’ statement,” Watkins said. “If Mr. Issa had said ‘Calderon said that this is an act of war’ that would be a problem. But he didn’t. He said their government did. I refuse to concede the point that an opposition member of Congress does not count as government.”

## The Pinocchio Test

We find it interesting that Issa’s office denied he said “act of war” but then defended his right to do so when shown a second quote.

Clearly, there is distress in Mexico about what appears to be a bungled operation. But we can find no evidence that the Calderon government ever made such a claim.

If opposition members of Congress are deemed to be part of “the government,” then does that mean that

every statement by Issa should be considered official policy of the Obama administration? He is, after all, the chairman of an important congressional committee.

We would hope not, especially if the congressman persists in so cavalierly tossing around inflammatory phrases such as “act of war.”

## **Two Pinocchios**

Picture (Device Independent Bitmap)

(About our rating scale)