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**From:** Weinstein, Jason  
**To:** Spencer, Lashawna  
**Sent:** 6/16/2011 11:23:19 PM  
**Subject:** RE: AG News Brief Summary Thursday Jun 16, 2011

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**Sent:** Thursday, June 16, 2011 5:48 PM  
**To:** Weinstein, Jason  
**Subject:** AG News Brief Summary Thursday Jun 16, 2011

**ATF Agents Testify To Congress About Failures Of "Operation Fast And Furious."** A hearing on Wednesday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, chaired by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), examined the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)'s "Operation Fast and Furious" gun-tracking program and generated significant media coverage, most of it portraying the agency and the Justice Department in negative lights. Among the revelations at the hearing was the interest taken in it by top ATF officials, including acting Director Kenneth Melson.

The AP (6/16, Yost) reports that three ATF agents told the committee "that they were repeatedly ordered to step aside while gun buyers in Arizona walked away with AK-47s and other high-powered weaponry headed for Mexican drug cartels in a risky US law enforcement operation that went out of control." Issa "said leaders of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were fully aware of the details of" the operation, "which was designed to track small-time gun buyers up to major weapons traffickers along the Southwest border." The AP adds, "Issa berated Assistant Attorney General Ronald Weich, because the Justice Department -- ATF's parent agency - has not turned over all the documents Issa wants," and Issa also "demanded to know who at Justice authorized Operation Fast and Furious. Weich said that question is the subject of an inquiry by the department's inspector general."

Fox News' Special Report (6/15, lead story, Baier) reported, "At a contentious hearing, Congress demanded answers on Operation Fast And Furious, but the agency in the hot seat, the Department of Justice wasn't playing ball." Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA): "Who authorized this program that was so felony stupid that it got people killed?" Assistant Attorney General Ronald Weich: "The attorney general has said he wants to get to the bottom of this." Fox added, "Unresolved is the standoff between the Justice Department, which refuses to turn over the unredacted documents," and the House Oversight Committee. DOJ "claims the committee is interfering with its own internal investigation. Chairman Issa is not happy, and unless DOJ cooperates with a subpoena, I am told he will pursue contempt proceeding against the department."

USA Today (6/16, Johnson, 1.83M) reports that in "emotional testimony," the agents, who are based in Phoenix, "also apologized to the family of US Border Patrol agent Brian A. Terry, slain last year by alleged cartel associates in a firefight where two weapons purchased in the risky ATF program were recovered. 'What we have here is a colossal failure of leadership,' said ATF agent Pete Forcelli, a supervisor in the Phoenix office. 'We weren't giving guns to people for killing bear, we were giving guns to people to kill other humans. This was a catastrophic disaster.'"

The New York Times (6/16, Walsh, Subscription Publication, 950K) reports that Melson "and his acting deputy, William J. Hoover, were 'keenly interested' in the operation and received weekly updates on its progress, according to internal e-mails released for the first time by" Issa. The Times adds that when pressed by Issa "as to who else in Washington authorized the operation or was aware of it," Weich "said releasing some of the documents that the committee sought would jeopardize continuing prosecutions."

The Los Angeles Times (6/16, Bennett, 657K) reports, "One email, from the ATF Phoenix supervisor in charge of the case, responded to five detailed questions that Melson had asked, including how to log onto a live video feed of the pole cameras installed in Arizona to capture footage of straw buyers coming into a gun shop to buy weapons for sale in Mexico. The email, dated March 11, 2010, gave the acting director the internet protocol address, the username and the password for logging into the live feed."

NPR (6/16) reports that the agents "testified that they tried for months to sound alarms about an operation called Fast and Furious, in which federal officers in Arizona watched AK-47s being sold to people who would pass them illegally to Mexican cartels. ATF agent Peter Forcelli didn't mince words. 'Sir, it's my belief that what we have here is actually a colossal failure in leadership from within ATF, within the chain of command involved in this case, within the United States attorney's office and within DOJ as to the individuals who were aware of this strategy,' he told lawmakers."

The CBS Evening News (6/15, story 6, 3:00, Pelley) reported, "After Terry's murder, ATF quickly rounded up gun trafficking suspects they'd watched for a year and the first reports of gun walking surfaced. Asked if they were true, ATF Phoenix Chief Bill Newell told reporters, 'Hell no,' surprising those who worked for him." Forcelli: "I was appalled because it was a blatant lie."

The Washington Post (6/16, Davidson, 572K) reports that Weich told the lawmakers that the idea behind the operation "was 'dismantling a significant transnational gun-trafficking enterprise and the network of those who support the enterprise's criminal efforts, an investigation which has already led to the indictment of 20 defendants.' The agents on the ground, however, tell a different story, one of frustration and anger as they were repeatedly ordered not to stop people suspected of holding the illegal arms. They knew they would see those guns again, when it was too late - as was case with the AK-47s at Terry's killing."

The Hill (6/16, Yager, 21K) reports, "As the family of" Agent Terry "pleaded for justice, Issa said officials should be 'ashamed' for handing over heavily redacted documents about the program." Issa "has made the fight over the program his first big battle with the Obama administration. He and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, have tried for the past five months to find out who authorized" the operation, "which might have contributed to Terry's death." Weich "told lawmakers that the department was cooperating and actively working to respond to the committee's request. Outraged, Issa held up a piece of white paper with a giant black box of entirely redacted text on it. 'You should be ashamed of yourself,' Issa said to Weich. 'It doesn't take so long if you don't spend your life redacting it.'"

The Houston Chronicle (6/16, Freedman, 342K) reports that Grassley, who appeared at the hearing as a witness, said, "ATF is supposed to stop criminals from trafficking guns to Mexican drug cartels. Instead, ATF made it easier for alleged cartel middlemen to . . . buy hundreds and hundreds of weapons. Agents warned that inaction could lead to tragedy, but management didn't want to listen."

The Wall Street Journal (6/16, Perez, Subscription Publication, 2.02M) reports that the hearing revealed partisan differences, as agents said the operation was partly due to "toothless" current gun control laws, a characterization that was echoed by Democratic members of the committee.

The Talking Points Memo blog (6/16) reports, "Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) asked one of the agents if weak gun laws made their prosecutions difficult. 'One of you in your testimonies called these laws to prosecute "toothless." Could explain to me -- why are existing straw purchase laws "toothless"?' Maloney asked. Issa butted in to say that their ATF agent's opinions on US gun laws would not be 'considered valid testimony.' Eventually," Agent Forcelli "gave an answer. 'My opinion, ma'am, is that with these types of cases, for somebody to testify against members of a cartel where the alternative is seeing a probation officer once a month, they will opt towards not cooperating with the law enforcement authorities,' Forcelli said."

The Christian Science Monitor (6/16, Llana, 48K) reports that a report released this week by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), showed that "of 29,284 arms handed over for tracing by Mexican authorities in 2009-10, some 70 percent came from the US. The senators conclude that military-style guns have 'contributed to Mexico's dangerous levels of violence,' and that legislation to tighten gun laws, like reinstating the expired Assault Weapons Ban, is in order." The Monitor notes that gun-rights advocates say the figures in the report are misleading.

CNN (6/16) reports on its website, "When US Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was wounded and six others were killed in a January assassination attempt in Tucson, Forcelli said, an agency spokesman told him 'that there was concern from the chain of command that the gun was hopefully not a Fast and Furious gun.' Another agent, Lee Casa, said, 'This happened time and time again.' 'Every time there's a shooting, whether it was Mrs. Giffords or anybody, any time there is a shooting in the general Phoenix area or even in, you know, Arizona, we're fearful that it might be one of these firearms,' Casa told the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. The killings of three people connected with the US consulate in Juarez, Mexico, caused similar anxiety, Casa said." A third agent, John Dodson, "told

lawmakers: "I cannot begin to think of how the risk of letting guns fall into the hands of known criminals could possibly advance any legitimate law enforcement interest. I hope the committee will receive a better explanation than I." The Hill (6/16, Yager, 21K), BBC News (6/16) and Reuters (6/16) also report on the hearing.

**LulzSec Hacks CIA Website.** In the latest in a series of high-profile hackings, the AP (6/16, Baldor) reports that LulzSec yesterday claimed responsibility for "problems" with the CIA's website. During a period late Wednesday when "there were difficulties...accessing the agency's website," the group tweeted "Tango down - CIA.gov." According to the AP, the "mischief appeared to be targeting the CIA's public website, which does not include classified data and has no impact on the CIA's operation."

The Washington Post (6/16, Nakashima, 572K) reports LulzSec sent its tweet at 5:48 p.m., but the site was "back up by 8 p.m." CIA spokeswoman Marie Harf said the agency is "looking into these reports." Still, experts said "the fact that the group could penetrate Web sites and harvest system administrators' credentials underscores the risks of failing to secure sites."

The Los Angeles Times (6/16, Mai-duc, 657K) briefly reports the CIA "declined to confirm the cause of the apparent crash," US officials "said no sensitive or classified material was compromised." AFP (6/16, Chapman) says LulzSec was likely formed from the group Anonymous, which "gained notoriety with cyberattacks in support" of WikiLeaks. The group, meanwhile, "is flaunting its notoriety with a telephone hotline for people to call and suggest targets."

The Washington Times (6/16, Lake, 77K), Wall Street Journal (6/16, Sherr, Subscription Publication, 2.02M), and Reuters (6/16, Finkle) also report on the story.

**Following CIA Website Breach, "Anonymous" Disrupts Malaysian Government Websites.** AFP (6/16, Jegathesan) reports, "Hackers have disrupted Malaysian government websites, authorities said Thursday, following threats by anti-censorship 'Anonymous' activists and a cyberattack on the CIA by an allied group. The strike against 51 government websites, which disrupted at least 41 of them according to Malaysia's Internet watchdog, came after the Anonymous group sabotaged Turkish sites last week to protest against Internet censorship. ... Malaysian Consumer Affairs Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob denounced the attacks on the government sites and denied allegations the Southeast Asian nation was attempting to curb Internet freedom."

Bloomberg News (6/16, Kuan, Ramasamy) reports, "At least 41 of the 51 government targeted websites were disrupted by the cyber attacks, which began at 11:30 p.m. local time, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission said in an e-mail today. The intensity of the attacks declined by 4:00 a.m., it said."

**At Least 32 "Anonymous" Hackers Arrested In Europe So Far.** The International Business Times (6/16) reports, "Up to 32 members of the hacking collective anonymous are currently either being detained by European law enforcement agencies or set to stand trial, some of whom are minors. While LulzSec sings its own praises, the hacking collective Anonymous has found itself at the receiving end of what some analysts have described as a twenty-first-century 'witch-hunt' born from the public's growing fear of cyber attacks." IBT notes the forty arrests "adds to the US's attempts, the country issued 40 arrest warrants for suspected Anonymous members in February alone."

**Senate Website Survives Second Cyberattack.** Reuters (6/16) reports that the Senate's public website was hacked for a second time this week. According to deputy Senate sergeant at arms Martina Bradford, the hackers were unable to gain access to sensitive data. Although LulzSec claimed responsibility for the first attack, which occurred this past weekend, no group or individual has come forward to take responsibility for the most recent cyberattack. Bradford claimed, however, that the two breaches were similar. She is quoted as saying: "They're getting nothing but the attacks continue. We've been able to stay ahead of the hackers and keep them out of the main Senate network."

**Lautenberg Blasts Administration Over Guns.** The New York Times (6/16, Steinhauer, 950K) reports, "Senator Frank R. Lautenberg, Democrat of New Jersey, has written a letter to President Obama rebuking him for not pressing Congress to create some restrictions on guns and gun ownership." Lautenberg "has filed three amendments on gun issues. One seeks to reinstate a ban on high-capacity gun magazines; another would close the so-called gun show loophole, which permits some people who buy guns at gun shows to avoid background checks otherwise required by federal law; the last would close gaps in the law that prevent the government from stopping suspected terrorists from buying firearms or explosives. In his letter, Mr. Lautenberg criticizes Mr. Obama for not

taking a stronger role on gun issues, especially since the shooting of Representative Gabrielle Giffords and others in Arizona earlier this year and generally since he became president."

**ATF Arrests Texas Man For Moving Guns To Gulf Cartel.** The McAllen (TX) Monitor (6/16, Taylor, 32K) reports, "A man faces federal weapons charges after investigators caught wind of his alleged plans to guide hundreds of assault rifles and three dozen pistols to the Gulf Cartel." The Monitor continues, "Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives arrested Jose Manuel Reyes last month after he told an Hidalgo police informant about the weapon smuggling ring, a criminal complaint states. ATF agents had been tracking Reyes after he began buying guns in late April from Victoria All Sports in Victoria, about 100 miles northeast of Corpus Christi. The store's owner, Darrell Hester, was unavailable for comment Wednesday afternoon."

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