
From: Siskel, Edward
To: Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG)
Sent: 7/6/2011 3:37:25 AM
Subject: Re: 2011-07-05 CEG-DEI to AG.pdf

Here is the exchange from the press briefing today:

Q About the Fast and Furious program -- I know that there's this investigation going on internally -- weapons from the Fast and Furious program are now showing up in the United States attached to criminal transactions. The ABC station in Phoenix last week reported on several of these weapons from Fast and Furious turning up. How come we know so little -- the public knows so little about this program? And what is the administration doing to get to the bottom of these weapons, which are now showing up in crimes in the United States?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think there's an investigation going on precisely to get to the bottom of this. And I can't comment further on it, because there is an investigation going on.

Q Can the acting head of the BATF be permitted to go to Capitol Hill to testify? My understanding is that the -- that he has not been allowed by the administration to go there and explain what's going on.

MR. CARNEY: I'll have to refer you to Justice on that. I don't have any information on that.

Q Is this not something that you guys are worried about and incensed about? This is something --

MR. CARNEY: Well, Jake, I think it's being investigated for a reason. And obviously it's a matter of concern and that's why there's an investigation. But it would be a mistake for me to comment further on -- or to characterize further what happened or how to rate our unhappiness about it from here. So I think that I have to refer you to the Justice Department for that.

Q Lastly, I mean, we have heard at times when the President was upset about something -- "plug the damn hole," is one such anecdote that was shared exclusively with every single person in this room by the White House. Do you -- is the President upset about this? I mean, this is a government operation where now weapons -- I mean, the Mexicans are upset that guns are now turning up in --

MR. CARNEY: I think you could assume that the President takes this very seriously.

Q No one has lost their job. We don't --

MR. CARNEY: And there's an investigation going on, so to comment on people's jobs and that sort of thing is inappropriate. But the President takes it very seriously. I think he made clear when the -- during the Mexican state visit and the press conference he had then that he found out about this through news reports. And he takes it very seriously.

Also, I've copied a local ABC News story from Arizona that suggests guns listed in ATF's Suspect Gun Database are the same as guns involved in Fast and Furious. I assume that is not correct. Seems like something worth correcting.

Weapons linked to controversial ATF strategy found in Valley crimes

By: Lori Jane Gliha

PHOENIX - Weapons linked to a questionable government strategy are turning up in crimes in Valley neighborhoods.

For months the ABC15 Investigators have been searching through police reports and official government documents. We've discovered assault weapons linked to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' controversial "Fast and Furious" case strategy have turned up at crime scenes in Glendale and Phoenix communities.

THE HISTORY

Phoenix ATF agents recently testified during a Congressional hearing that they knowingly allowed weapons to slip into the hands of straw buyers who would then distribute the weapons to known criminals.

The strategy was designed to lead ATF officials to key drug players in Mexico, but some agents admitted they never fully tracked the weapons after suspicious buyers purchased them.

"It made no sense to us either, it was just what we were ordered to do, and every time we questioned that order there was punitive action," Phoenix Special Agent John Dodson testified.

According to the testimony of three Phoenix ATF agents, including Dodson, hundreds of weapons are now on the streets in the United States and Mexico, possibly in the hands of criminals.

Dodson estimated the number could be as many as 1,800 weapons.

"...Fast and Furious was one case from one group in one field division," he testified. He estimated agents in the Phoenix field division "facilitated the sale of" approximately 2,500 weapons to straw purchasers. A few hundred have been recovered.

THE ABC15 INVESTIGATION

Dodson guessed the majority of the missing weapons are in Mexico.

"I believe that these firearms will continue to turn up at crime scenes on both sides of the border for years to come," testified Phoenix Special Agent Peter Forcelli.

Weapons linked to the strategy have been turning up at dangerous and deadly crime scenes near both sides of the border, including the murder scene of Border Patrol agent Brian Terry, who was killed last December.

The ABC15 Investigators uncovered documents showing guns connected to at least two Glendale criminal cases and at least two Phoenix criminal cases also appear in the ATF's Suspect Gun Database, a sort-of watch list for suspicious gun sales.

All four cases involve drug-related offenses. In one Glendale police report dated July 2010, police investigators working with DEA agents served search warrants at homes near 75th and Glendale avenues in Glendale, and 43rd and Glendale avenues in Phoenix as part of a "large scale marijuana trafficking" investigation.

Police investigators reported they "obtained information that members of the (trafficking) organization were using the homes...as stash houses used to store large amounts of marijuana temporarily."

They reported finding hundreds of pounds of marijuana, more than \$63,000 in U.S. currency and three guns inside the homes. One of the recovered weapons, a Romarm/Cugir WASR-10 rifle, appeared in an official ATF Suspect Gun Summary document in November 2009, proving agents knowingly allowed the suspicious gun sale, months before the weapon turned up at the crime scene.

In a separate Glendale Police Department case, dated November 2010, detectives discovered "bulk marijuana and weapons" inside a residence near 75th Avenue and Bethany Home Road in Glendale. Investigators recovered nearly 400 pounds of drugs and several firearms from the home.

One of the recovered weapons, another Romarm/Cugir WASR-10 rifle, appeared in an official ATF Suspect Gun Summary document in February 2010.

PHOENIX CASES

The two Phoenix cases, also connected to drugs, occurred in March and August 2010.

In the August case, Phoenix officers conducted a traffic stop near 83rd Avenue and McDowell Road in Phoenix. They discovered marijuana and an AK-47 in the driver's trunk as well as other weapons.

One of the suspects explained he purchased the Romarm/Cugir Draco weapon for \$600 on the street, but he wouldn't reveal from whom he purchased the gun. ATF documents show the weapon had been entered into the ATF Suspect Gun Database in January 2010.

Officers recovered an FN Herstal Five-Seven weapon in the March case. During that ongoing drug investigation, near 43rd Avenue and Camelback Road in Phoenix, officers had been conducting surveillance after receiving information that a suspect was

selling methamphetamine and marijuana.

CONGRESSIONAL LEADER RESPONDS

“With people like you down there in Arizona investigating this,” said Sen. Chuck Grassley, (R-Iowa), “and with Congressman Issa and this Senator on the case, they know we’re not going to give up.”

Grassley has been demanding information from ATF leaders, trying to determine who had knowledge of the controversial strategy and when they knew.

His staff also sent public records requests to every sheriff’s department in Arizona and several local Valley departments, requesting information about weapons that have turned up at Valley crime scenes that may have been connected to the Fast and Furious operation.

“Who

knows where they’re going to end up,” Grassley said. “There’s ample evidence – even besides your own investigation – that they’ve been used in crimes on this side of the border, but how many? I can’t give you a figure.”

ATF RESPONSE

ATF representatives denied ABC15’s open records request for documents showing other weapons connected to the Fast and Furious case that may have been involved in other crimes in the United States.

They also denied our request for an interview, saying the case is still under investigation.

From: Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG) <Matthew.Axelrod@usdoj.gov>
To: Siskel, Edward
Sent: Tue Jul 05 18:53:03 2011
Subject: FW: 2011-07-05 CEG-DEI to AG.pdf

From: Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) [mailto:Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 05, 2011 6:48 PM
To: Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG)
Subject: FW: 2011-07-05 CEG-DEI to AG.pdf

FYL...

From: Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep)
Sent: Tuesday, July 05, 2011 6:38 PM
To: Molly.Gaston@usdoj.gov
Cc: CEG (Judiciary-Rep); Virkstis, Matthew (Judiciary); Castor, Stephen (Stephen.Castor@mail.house.gov)
Subject: 2011-07-05 CEG-DEI to AG.pdf

Please find attached a letter from Chairman Issa and Senator Grassley. Please ensure all official correspondence is sent to ceg@judiciary-rep.senate.gov. Please confirm receipt.

Jason A. Foster
Chief Investigative Counsel

Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate

Privacy

DOJ-FF-47325

