
From: Schmalzer, Tracy (OPA)
To: Reich, Steven (ODAG); Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG); Richardson, Margaret (OAG)
Sent: 10/5/2011 11:20:11 AM
Subject: Fwd: Issa on CNN

see issa response --i don't know who "they" are -- but he says even AG didn't know or at least that's how i read it . either way - reiterates ken didn't know, and he was the briefer on GGG power point a MONTH before Issa got his briefing.

Issa: that is an outright lie that the justice department has been spinning. they shopped that to the newspapers until they found one that would print it. the fact is that kenneth melson, a man under oath very well recorded has said he didn't know much of this and clearly did not brief me in one briefing that was about gun trafficking into mexico. and let's understand something, anderson. they would have you believe that i knew that i knew what the attorney general didn't know, that i knew what they were deliberately withholding from atf and dea and from the u.s. ambassador to mexico. so is this cover-up and this game of spin and delay continues, t

Below is the interview with Issa. I have also included the full transcript from Anderson's segment:

Interview with Issa:

do you believe the attorney general lied to you?

Issa: i certainly believe that he either misrepresented the facts or he's sufficiently incompetent that he didn't know what was in his weekly briefings. i support the fact that the attorney general cannot investigate himself.

cnn has obtained some of the documents that you and your colleagues have referenced. and the attorney general did receive some memos last year acknowledging the existence of operation fast and furious but only in passing. the justice department is saying basically look he receives dozens of reports every week, some more than 100 pages, there's no indication he knew the problems of this operation that far back. do you believe that?

Issa: well, it's difficult to believe it. additionally there's a spin going that when they talked about guns walking in excess, that this or other programs, we've had testimony in front of our committee that says justice never lets guns walk. now we have written proof that they were concerned about the guns walking. they were concerned about the optics of press interviews in which they were going to talk about problems, including brian terry's murder. and very clearly this was not hundreds of pa pages of reports. this is the key weekly briefing that the attorney general received on which there was a paragraph on fast and furious repeatedly. so to say when asked specifically about fast and furious, he didn't understand the question, he certainly had to know that every week he was seeing briefings on fast and furious, he had to at least say i'm familiar with the name. what is it that you mean? or i don't fully understand everything as well as i did two weeks before. instead, in fairness both to myself and to jason chafitz, he implied he'd never heard of this two weeks before and that he didn't know what a felony stupid program this was that led to the death of brian terry and the release of 10,000 weapons into the worst of the worse people's hands.

they're pushing back on what you're saying. chairman issa, of all people, should be familiar with the difference between knowing about an investigation and being aware of tactics used in that investigation since documents provided to his committee show that he was given a briefing that included the fast and furious operation in 2010, a year before the controversy emerged. so i mean, did you yourself know about the operation last year?

Issa: that is an outright lie that the justice department has been spinning. they shopped that to the newspapers until they found one that would print it. the fact is that kenneth melson, a man under oath very well recorded has said he didn't know much of this and clearly did not brief me in one briefing that was about gun trafficking into mexico. and let's understand something, anderson. they would have you believe that i knew that i knew what the attorney general didn't know, that i knew what they were deliberately withholding from atf and dea and from the u.s. ambassador to mexico. so is this cover-up and this game of spin and delay continues, the problem is it's only creating problems that didn't initially exist. initially this was a dumb program that led to very adverse consequences. now it's about a cover-up, about deception, about slow rolling discovery of this and other committees. understand i got involved in this because senator grassley was denied any discovery because he wasn't the

chairman over in the senate, and i got involved somewhat on his behalf and my committee has taken a lead on it. but this was about stonewalling of the senate long before i got involved. i always thought this was the first time this kind of a program has been tried. new revelations tonight coming out that the bush administration had a similar weapons program something called operation wide receiver. do you think officials from that administration should be looked at as well?

Issa: we'd know a lot more about it except that's among the documents we're still waiting to get. what we do know about wide receiver is very small amount of weapons, much more intensive following but in fact we will get to the bottom of whether or not this practice in a smaller way may have begun on the bush watch. we're not putting it past any administration and giving anyone a pass. the american people and the people of mexico expect us to have a zero tolerance for letting drugs come into our country or weapons go into mexico.

congressman issa, appreciate your time.

thank you, anderson.

Full Segment:

now tonight keeping them honest. what newly uncovered memos say about the botched atf operation called fast and furious. the operation to let firearms bought in america get across the border into mexico. the idea was to trace them to drug cartel leaders, but instead of tracing them, the atf lost track of them. they never even informed the mexican government about the weapons. to add insult to injury no one told the mexican about the whole thing. the whole thing was predicated on being able to follow these things but no one told the mexicans. the u.s. is charged with arming murderous drug cartels and no one tells mexico. we're talking about thousands of weapons. two of them, two of those weapons turned up at the murder scene of a u.s. border agent named brian terry. that's his photo. it's important we remember his name. tonight the gop controlled house judiciary committee asked the white house to name a special counsel to determine whether the attorney general himself eric holder lied when asked about fast and furious. this is what he said back in may.

when did you first know about the program officially i believe called fast and furious, to the best of your knowledge, what date?

i'm not sure of the exact date, but i probably heard about fast and furious for the first time over the last few weeks.

however, keeping them honest, we've obtained memos that show otherwise. weekly reports from holder deputies to the attorney general, weekly reporting one dated the week of october 18th, 2010 talks about eight pending indictments then under seal in connection with gun running to mexico. quote, the ceiling will likely last until another operation, operation fast and furious, is ready for takeoff. assuming that attorney general holder read the memo, assuming that he was aware of the operation months before he testify head was. another memo from the first week that july also mentioned fast and furious and gives a brief thumbnail description of it. presumably the attorney general read that one as well. both, we should say, are heavily redacted. we don't know what else they say about fast and furious if they say anything at all. an official told us all we know for sure is that the memo suggests that eric holder had reason to at least be aware of the operation months before he said he did before the oversight committee last may. an official of the justice department says the attorney general was simply repeating the answer he gave a senate committee in march about whether he was aware of questionable tactics. this official says, and i quote, chairman issa, of all people, should be familiar with the difference of knowing about an investigation and being aware of questionable tactics employed in that investigation. but recall in the clip that was played congressman issa's question wasn't that complicated. he asked when attorney general holder became aware of the operation, not when he learned the details of it. so is our source at the justice department splitting hairs or is congressman issa? you can decide for yourself. we spoke with the congressman earlier tonight. the chairman of the house judiciary committee has formally asked the president to appoint a special counsel to investigate what attorney general holder knew and when he knew it. it was based on an exchange you had with him back in may. do you believe the attorney general lied to you?

Issa: i certainly believe that he either misrepresented the facts or he's sufficiently incompetent that he didn't know what was in his weekly briefings. i support the fact that the attorney general cannot investigate himself.

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