

1. Operation Fast and Furious is an ongoing criminal investigation of a firearms trafficking organization believed to be sending weapons into Mexico through a network of straw purchasers. The investigation has so far resulted in one indictment charging 20 defendants with federal firearms offenses, and the investigation is continuing.
2. Fast and Furious is different from Gunrunner. As you know, Gunrunner is the name of ATF's overall enforcement efforts on the Border. Fast and Furious is the name of a single investigation. American media have confused the two.
3. We are aware there have been concerns raised in Mexico that Operation Fast and Furious involved a sting operation in which ATF agents were themselves engaged in illicit arms purchases that resulted in guns being sent into Mexico. Concern raised that the operation involved ATF agents engaging in undercover activities in Mexico. Neither of these things happened. Operation Fast and Furious was not a sting operation, nor did it involve our ATF agents conducting any undercover operations in Mexico.
4. There are some legitimate questions being raised about the operation. Question of whether we failed to take down the investigation quickly enough. Question of why we continued to monitor the suspected straw purchasers rather than arrest them. While we were monitoring, the straw purchasers kept purchasing guns, as part of a trafficking organization whose goal was to get the guns across the border into Mexico.
5. In any investigation, it's a judgment call of when to take it down and make arrests. Arrest too quickly and you risk only taking off the lowest level of the organization. But if you take too long to arrest, there's a lot of illegal activity that has continued to occur while you were building your case.
6. As you know, the gun laws in this country make these cases difficult. Question of when investigators have enough is a judgment call. Reasonable investigators disagree on when they have enough – enough to convict and enough to ensure that the illegal activity doesn't just continue with new straw purchasers. Question here is whether decisions made were within the reasonable range or outside of it.
7. The AG has asked the Department's IG to investigate. The AG has also made it clear to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors working along the Border that DOJ should never knowingly permit firearms to cross the border.
8. U.S. Congress will be holding hearings, likely beginning next week.