

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.

The investigation has received scrutiny from the media, from Congress, and from Mexican authorities. One allegation is that ATF allowed guns to “walk” – that is, ATF failed to prevent guns from crossing the border into Mexico when they could have stopped them from doing so. A second allegation is that one of the guns that ATF allowed to walk was subsequently used in the murder of CBP Agent Brian Terry.

In response to the allegations, the AG has asked the Acting IG to investigate. The AG has also made it clear to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors working along the SW Border that DOJ should never knowingly permit firearms to cross the border.

HOGRC held a hearing last week at which three ATF agents testified that they raised objections to the operation that were ignored. They also testified that the operation had the express purpose of letting guns go to the cartels so that ATF could attempt to follow them. The family of the murdered Border Patrol agent also testified.

There have been concerns voiced in Mexico that 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 or that the operation involved ATF agents engaging in undercover activities in Mexico. These concerns are unfounded. Operation Fast and Furious was not a sting operation, nor did it involve our ATF agents conducting any undercover operations in Mexico. My staff has briefed AG Morales and communicated this to her.

Recently, Chairman Issa sent a letter to Ambassador Sarukhan in which he cited to a Fox News report stating that two Fast and Furious guns were used in the kidnapping and murder of the brother of the former Attorney General of Chihuahua. We’ve been told by ATF that when Mexican law enforcement raided the kidnappers’ compound, they seized a number of firearms, two of which tie back to Fast and Furious. While it may be an overstatement to say that the guns were “used” in the murder, the core allegation appears to be true – namely, that the kidnappers/murderers were in possession of two guns that tie back to Fast and Furious.