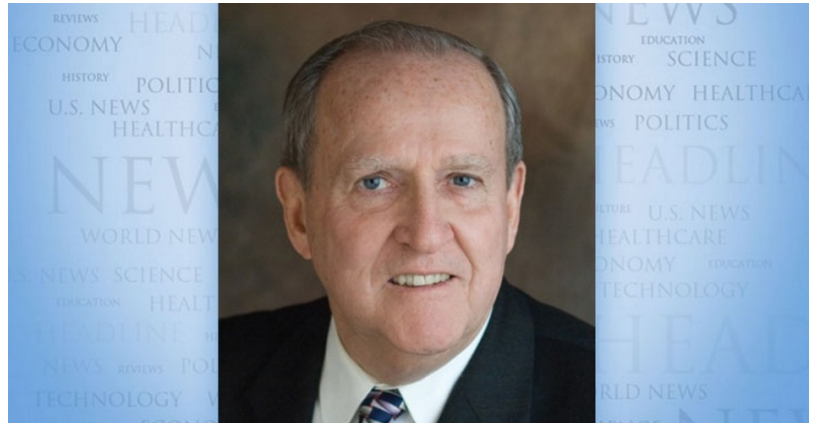




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on October 3, 2014

Stonewalling About Fast and Furious Will Soon End

On September 23, federal district judge John D. Bates ruled that documents related to the federal government's Fast and Furious operation that led to the slaying of U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry could no longer remain secret. The judge gave the Department of Justice until October 22 to submit the documents, explain why they were being withheld, and indicate how their release could supposedly harm someone. Two days later, Attorney General Eric Holder announced his resignation from the high office he has held for almost six years.



Fast and Furious was a program carried out by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (still known as BATF). It purposefully allowed firearms dealers in the U.S. to sell weapons to individuals known to be planning to ship them to Mexican drug cartel leaders. The BATF claimed that this "gun running" would enable its agents to track down and arrest Mexican drug pushers and gun-trafficking individuals. During the operation, however, [U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry](#) became a victim of one of the guns found at the scene of the crime. An estimated 2,000 weapons changed hands during Fast and Furious and only 700 were ever recovered. In simple terms, the program was a colossal and deadly failure.

The Obama administration has insisted that documents pertaining to the operation must be kept from view. More than two years ago, in the midst of his consistent stonewalling, [Attorney General Holder refused to cooperate](#) with a congressional investigation of the matter and, as a result, became the first sitting member of the U.S. Cabinet in history to be formally declared in contempt of Congress. But that didn't stop him from continuing his efforts to keep secret the documents that now must be produced.

Fast and Furious began on October 31, 2009 when an Arizona gun dealer reported that four individuals purchased a quantity of AK-47-style rifles. Another suspicious gun purchaser bought 244 weapons within a two-month period. But BATF agents were required to do nothing. Some eventually complained about the scheme but were ignored as guns fell into the hands of people they knew were about to commit crimes. Some agents have even reported that they were ordered by high-ranking personnel within the Attorney General's office to look the other way at this increase in gun-trafficking. Soon, even BATF agents stationed in Mexico were voicing their complaints about the program.

When agent Terry and his companion agents spotted suspected illegal immigrants on that fateful night, they fired non-lethal beanbag guns as a warning. But the suspects responded with rifle fire and a firefight resulted with Terry being killed. Four of the suspects were arrested and two of the seized AK-47 rifles were immediately traced to a Phoenix gun store involved in the Fast and Furious operation.

For several years, Eric Holder and President Obama have steadfastly refused congressional requests to release DOJ documents related to this fiasco. The president claimed executive privilege to impede the investigation. One can only conclude that the two surely have something to hide. As of October 22, 2014, there will be no more secrecy. Thanks are due to Judge Bates for his decision and to the Judicial



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Watch organization that has doggedly pursued this matter and finally won in their demands for an end to the stonewalling.

The founders were clear on the point of an individual's [right to keep and bear arms](#). The John Birch Society believes that gun-control laws and agencies do nothing but control the responsible individual and aid criminals. Also, the JBS opposes a monopoly of power on the part of government.

John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS blog](#) and is reprinted here with permission.



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