



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 18, 2011

## Operation Fast and Furious a Deadly Gov't Failure

In an effort to combat the gun smuggling of Mexican drug cartels, law enforcement in the United States created "Operation Fast and Furious," a.k.a. Project Gunrunner. The plan was intended to pursue the prosecution of the "entire cartel network."

Unfortunately, despite the seemingly good intentions of the plan, a recently released congressional report indicates that it has turned out to be another grand failure. Fox News indicates that the plan has ultimately "left a trail of blood and bodies throughout the Southwest."



Andrew Breitbart's BigGovernment.com [wrote](#) that Operation Fast and Furious

was a project of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Fireworks [sic]. In late 2009, the ATF was alerted to suspicious buys at seven gun shops in the Phoenix area. Suspicious because the buyers paid cash, sometimes brought in paper bags. And they purchased classic "weapons of choice" used by Mexican drug traffickers — semi-automatic versions of military type rifles and pistols. According to news reports several gun shops wanted to stop the questionable sales, but the Bureau encouraged them to continue.

ATF managers allegedly made a controversial decision: allow most of the weapons on the streets. The idea, they said, was to gather intelligence and see where the guns ended up. Insiders say it's a dangerous tactic called letting the guns, "walk." Yes, that's right, the US government decided — in order to fight the Mexican Drug Cartels, we should arm them and let them keep their weapons once they were used in committing crimes (kind of the same thing we do with the Palestinian terror groups such as Fatah).

The House Oversight Report denounced the plan and listed a number of negative findings. Fox News [summarized](#) the findings as follows:

- Agents expected to interdict weapons, yet were told to stand down and "just surveil." Agents therefore did not act. They watched straw purchasers buy hundreds of weapons illegally and transfer those weapons to unknown third parties and stash houses.
- ATF agents complained about the strategy of allowing guns to walk in Operation Fast and Furious. Leadership ignored their concerns. Instead, supervisors told the agents to "get with the program" because senior ATF officials had sanctioned the operation.
- Agents knew that given the large numbers of weapons being trafficked to Mexico, tragic results were a near certainty.
- Operation Fast and Furious contributed to the increasing violence and deaths in Mexico. This result was regarded with giddy optimism by ATF supervisors hoping that guns recovered at crime scenes in Mexico would provide the nexus to straw purchasers in Phoenix.

In addition to these, the report also reveals that the same month in which ATF allowed gun smugglers to purchase 359 guns, 958 people died from gunfire in Mexico.



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The report also implicates the Department of Justice. BigGovernment.com explains that the DOJ “relies on a narrow, untenable definition of gunwalking to claim that guns were never walked during Operation Fast and Furious. Agents disagree with this definition, acknowledging that hundreds or possibly thousands of guns were in fact walked. DOJ’s misplaced reliance on this definition does not change the fact that it knew that ATF could have interdicted thousands of guns that were being trafficked to Mexico, yet chose to do nothing.” Sadly, the DOJ continues to deny that the operation was a poor one and resulted in deadly consequences.

The report ultimately concludes that the ATF lacked the necessary means to track the guns and should have been able to foresee the consequences that resulted from the failed operation.

After 18 months of so-called investigative work under Operation Fast and Furious, a mere 20 indictments resulted from the operation, and those arrests were buyers who were already on the radar before the start of the operation.

Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), a member of the House Government Oversight Committee, said of Operation Fast and Furious,

You’ve got people who are dead, you have weapons that are missing and you have an administration that doesn’t seem to want to take any accountability for it. There is absolutely no justification, no justification for this. There are people that are going to have to be held accountable.

One victim of Operation Fast and Furious is U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry, who was killed in December 2010 at the hands of Mexican cartels.

The House Oversight Report includes the testimony of four ATF agents, who provided firsthand accounts of how the operation was implemented. The report reads:

“ATF agents have shared chilling accounts of being ordered to stand down as criminals in Arizona walked away with guns headed for Mexican drug cartels,” said Rep. [Darrell] Issa [R-Calif.]. “With the clinical precision of a lab experiment, the Justice Department kept records of weapons they let walk and the crime scenes where they next appeared. To agents’ shock, preventing loss of life was not the primary concern.”

“These agents have risked their lives working for the ATF and they’ve risked their careers by coming forward to speak the truth about a dangerous strategy that was doomed from the start,” Sen. [Chuck] Grassley [R-Iowa] said. “The report shows the street agents’ perspective on this risky policy to let guns walk. It should help people who are wondering what really happened during Operation Fast and Furious understand why we are continuing to investigate.”

An investigation is now being launched by the DOJ Inspector General, which many contend poses a [conflict of interest](#). During today’s hearing by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, John Dodson, Special Agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives articulated such contentions:

“Well, I can see a conflict between the Office of the OIG [DOJ’s Office of the Inspector General], yes sir, the actual individuals that are working the case, my interaction with them since I’ve been interviewed by them, is that I think they get it,” said Dodson. He adds, “However those two offices being who they are and how they are aligned, there’s inherently a conflict of interest. If in fact someone at DOJ authorized this, knows about it, is as well versed as everyone at ATF — that



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thereby creates the conflict with OIG."

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