



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on December 21, 2011

## AG Holder Pulls Race Card on Republican Critics

Referring to a "more extreme segment" of his critics, Holder said his political adversaries are not judging his merits as Attorney General, but are instead driven to demonize him and President Obama because of their skin color. "This is a way to get at the president because of the way I can be identified with him," he [told](#) the *Times*. "Both due to the nature of our relationship and, you know, the fact that we're both African-American."



Holder's allegations of racism arrive as calls for his resignation have proliferated and now include 60 Congressmen, two Senators, two Governors, and every major GOP presidential candidate. Additionally, 75 Congressmen have [signed](#) a House resolution for a "no confidence" vote on his performance as Attorney General.

Operation Fast and Furious, a program of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (still known as ATF), shoveled at least 1,500 weapons across the U.S.-Mexico border in 2009 and 2010, ostensibly to monitor the traffic as firearms were transferred from straw buyers in the United States into the hands of drug cartels in Mexico. However, the ATF (whose parent agency is the DOJ) didn't actually track the weapons, and so the operation led to serious criminal activity, including hundreds of murders in Mexico with the Fast and Furious weapons and at least one in the United States, in which Border Patrol agent Brian Terry was killed.

The pot was further stirred after memos containing inside details of how the program operated were released, showing that, in contrast to what Holder had claimed, he was in fact aware of the operation's flagrant improprieties.

One of the memos supplied to Holder [read](#),

This investigation [Fast and Furious, which is named earlier in the memo] — initiated in September 2009 in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Phoenix Police Department — involves a Phoenix-based firearms trafficking ring headed by Manuel Celis-Acosta. Celis-Acosta and straw purchasers are responsible for the purchase of 1,500 firearms that were then supplied to Mexican drug-trafficking cartels. They also have direct ties to the Sinaloa Cartel, which is suspected of providing \$1 million for the purchase of firearms in the greater Phoenix area.

Another [e-mail](#) between two DOJ officials surfaced showing that Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer was aware that weapons were being "walked" across the border. Moreover, the e-mail indicated that Breuer would have difficulty evading the problem "given the number of guns that have walked." Yet, the DOJ wrote a letter to Congress in February explaining that agents had always tried to prevent



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weapons from crossing the border, which was a perceptibly false claim that the department was forced to withdraw.

In addition to blaming congressional Republicans for what he characterized as baseless criticism, Holder also castigated media outlets and political pundits who have been covering the scandal. The *Times* reported in the Sunday story,

Mr. Holder contended that many of his other critics — not only elected Republicans but also a broader universe of conservative commentators and bloggers — were instead playing "Washington gotcha" games, portraying them as frequently "conflating things, conveniently leaving some stuff out, construing things to make it seem not quite what it was" to paint him and other department figures in the worst possible light.

In addition to the gunrunning scandal, Holder has come under intense scrutiny for an array of politically divisive issues, including his opposition to clean-up-the-vote efforts in states and his condemnation of Arizona's efforts to deal with illegal immigration.

In the *Times* interview, Holder suggested that his inimical treatment is "payback" for the way his predecessors in the Bush administration, namely John Ashcroft and Alberto Gonzales, were treated by Democrats and the liberal media. Ashcroft was routinely pummeled by Democrats over civil liberty violations relating to terrorism, Holder asserted, and Gonzales was subjected to contentious oversight hearings about issues such as the firing of a group of U.S. attorneys. "They want to go after some high-level official in the administration," Holder averred.

But those who do not discriminate against him because of his race, the Attorney General told the *Times*, are motivated solely by ideological reasons, and not because of his actions or qualifications as Attorney General. In effect, Holder's perception of his opposition's criticism is that it is all motivated by hate or revenge, not because of he actually did anything wrong — even though his department is responsible for hundreds of deaths, among other things.

Photo of Eric Holder: AP Images



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