



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 21, 2011

Mexican Officials Furious Over ATF Gunrunning

High-ranking officials across Mexico including the Attorney General are reportedly demanding answers from the U.S. government about its secret program that sent high-powered weaponry across the border to drug cartels, saying the Obama administration's explanations so far are inadequate. The Mexican public is outraged as well.



Hundreds of Mexicans including law-enforcement officers have been murdered with guns traced back to the operation, which was handled by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (still known as ATF). "[Project Gunrunner](#)" weapons were also [involved](#) in the deaths of at least a few American agents including Border Patrol officer Brian Terry.

Under "Operation Fast and Furious," the Obama administration was deliberately providing sophisticated and powerful weapons to violent Mexican drug cartels — [often using taxpayer money](#). He was simultaneously campaigning for [stricter U.S. gun control](#) by citing violence in Mexico.

The U.S. Congress was kept largely in the dark about the scheme until whistleblowers within the ATF started coming forward. And according to officials south of the border, the Mexican government was not informed of the scheme either.

"At no time did we know or were we made aware that there might have been arms trafficking permitted," Mexican Attorney General Marisela Morales [told](#) the *Los Angeles Times* in a recent interview. "In no way would we have allowed it, because it is an attack on the safety of Mexicans."

Morales apparently found out about the deadly U.S. program by reading news reports. And she says Mexico still has not received an explanation from American officials — let alone an apology.

While reluctant to speak out before the results of pending American investigations, the chief Mexican law enforcement officer told the *Times* that purposefully allowing guns into the hands of Mexican cartels would be a "betrayal" of her country. And according to Congressmen probing the gunrunning scheme such as Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), that is exactly what happened.

"The ATF is supposed to stop criminals from trafficking guns to Mexican drug cartels, [but] was actually making that trafficking of arms easier for them," [said](#) Sen. Grassley on the Senate floor earlier this year. "The government actually encouraged gun dealers to sell multiple firearms to known and suspected traffickers."

It later emerged that [taxpayers were even financing](#) at least some of the weapons, and that U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder was lying when he claimed not to know about the program. In fact, he had



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boasted about it by name before the scandal exploded.

This month it was also revealed that the White House had also been [briefed about the program on multiple occasions](#). Several high-ranking officials have already resigned, but activists are [still hoping that a special prosecutor](#) will hold senior officials accountable in a court of law.

In addition to Mexico's Attorney General and [numerous](#) federal representatives, another outraged Mexican prosecutor who spoke to the *Times* takes the issue personally. Patricia Gonzalez, the former chief prosecutor for the Mexican state of Chihuahua, blames the Obama administration's weapons trafficking for the brutal slaying of her brother.

In 2010, Mario Gonzalez was tortured and executed by a cartel hit man who forced him to "confess" on video that his sister was being paid off by criminals. The killer's arsenal included AK-47s provided by the U.S. government.

The officials who approved *Fast and Furious* "caused the death of my brother and surely thousands more victims," [said](#) Gonzalez, the ex-prosecutor for Chihuahua. Despite her close ties to U.S. officials, she also found out about the link between her brother's murder and the ATF scheme from media reports.

Widespread corruption is the official reason cited for keeping the Mexican government out of the loop about *Fast and Furious*. The administration's justification for supplying the cartels with high-powered weapons was — supposedly — to trace them to drug kingpins later.

But analysts said the excuse was absurd for several reasons. More likely, according to critics, is that the Obama administration was [using the gun trafficking program as part of its anti-Second Amendment campaign](#) to further restrict the rights of law abiding Americans.

And if that was indeed the goal, the program can be called a success. In July, for example, Obama [used an executive order to unconstitutionally sidestep Congress and impose more gun control](#) — also in violation of the Constitution.

[Recent reports](#) have also suggested an even more sinister scenario: The Central Intelligence Agency played a key role in arming the cartels for geopolitical purposes. Other evidence, according to analysts, indicates that the CIA might have even [allowed drug shipments](#) into the country in collaboration with other federal agencies.

Several drug kingpins also alleged in recent months that the U.S. government was [supplying the cartels' guns while allowing narcotics to be shipped](#) across the border. So far the Justice Department has [denied some](#) of those claims, but not all.

More than 40,000 Mexicans have died in the last few years as a result of the war on drugs. But as fury over the Obama administration's gunrunning scandal continues to grow on both sides of the border, critics say it is time to get to the bottom of the U.S. government's role in the bloodshed.

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