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WASHINGTON – Senator Chuck Grassley and Representative Darrell Issa are pushing for additional information and documents from the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in relation to the two agencies roles in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) reckless strategy known as Operation Fast and Furious. The strategy employed by the ATF allowed firearms to be purchased by known straw buyers and then transferred to third parties where the guns often crossed the border to Mexican drug cartels.

The letters are a follow-up to a recorded, transcribed interview with Acting ATF Director Ken Melson. The Acting Director was interviewed by congressional investigators on July 4 where he corroborated several details that included other agencies involved in Operation Fast and Furious.

In the letter to FBI Director Robert Mueller, Grassley and Issa asked about the “veracity of claims” regarding the possible involvement of paid FBI informants in Operation Fast and Furious and “specifically at least one individual who is allegedly an FBI informant” and “might have been in communication with, and was perhaps even conspiring with, at least one suspect whom ATF

Grassley, Issa Press for Answers from FBI, DEA in Fast and Furious Investigation

Written by Grassley Press
Monday, 18 July 2011 10:10

was monitoring.”

The letter to DEA Administrator Michelle Leonhart requested a briefing by DEA staff as well as “the number of informants or cooperating informants handled by other agencies identified in the course of any investigations related to Operation Fast and Furious.”

In addition, both letters (to Mueller and Leonhart) asked for communications of several members of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force who were working in coordination with the ATF to conduct Operation Fast and Furious.

Below is a copy of the text of the letters. Click here for a copy of the [signed letter to the DEA administrator](#) and [the signed letter to the FBI director](#)

July 15, 2011

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION □ □

Grassley, Issa Press for Answers from FBI, DEA in Fast and Furious Investigation

Written by Grassley Press
Monday, 18 July 2011 10:10

The Honorable Michele M. Leonhart

Administrator

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

700 Army Navy Drive

Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Administrator Leonhart:

On March 15, 2011, Senator Grassley sent you a letter requesting a briefing to gain a better understanding of the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) involvement in Operation Fast and Furious. Conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Operation Fast and Furious, was an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) case. That letter is attached for your ready reference. Nearly four months later, your agency has yet to respond directly.

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On April 12, 2011, the Department of Justice (DOJ) responded on behalf of DEA. In its letter, DOJ stated:

Generally speaking, . . . when another Department component leads an OCDETF investigation, DEA works cooperatively to support drug-related aspects of the investigation. Such cooperation means that DEA may share investigative expertise, report leads, and provide manpower to assist in an investigative or

enforcement operation as requested by the lead investigative agency. [\[1\]](#)

This information sharing, or lack thereof, is precisely the reason Senator Grassley made the initial request. Consequently, we request that you make arrangements by no later than July 19, 2011 for DEA supervisors and personnel with specific knowledge of details related to Operation Fast and Furious and the parallel DEA case to brief members of both of our staffs.

In addition to the aforementioned briefing, please provide the following documents:

- 1) The number of informants or cooperating defendants handled by other agencies identified in the course of any investigations related to Operation Fast and Furious defendants. For each informant or cooperating defendant, please identify the other agency, the date that DEA learned of their informant or cooperating defendant's status, and a description of how the DEA learned of their informant or cooperating defendant's status.

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2) All information related to indicted Fast and Furious suspect Manuel Fabian Celis-Acosta.

3) A list of all personnel designated as DEA liaisons with other federal law enforcement agencies in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Please also include any communications of the following individuals at DEA relating to Operation Fast and Furious or Manuel Fabian Celis-Acosta:

1) Elizabeth Kempshall, Special Agent in Charge, Phoenix

2) Doug Coleman, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Phoenix

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Written by Grassley Press
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Sincerely,

Darrell Issa, Chairman

Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and

Committee on the Judiciary

Government Reform

U.S. Senate

U.S. House of Representatives

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Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General

U.S. Department of Justice

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman

U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary

July 11, 2011

Written by Grassley Press
Monday, 18 July 2011 10:10

The Honorable Robert S. Mueller, III

Director

Federal Bureau of Investigation

935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Director Mueller:

For the past six months, we have been conducting an investigation into Operation Fast and Furious, conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). This program allowed approximately 2,000 heavy-duty assault type firearms to be illegally trafficked, and hundreds of these weapons have already been recovered at crime scenes in Mexico. Operation Fast and Furious was an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) prosecutor-led strike force case where ATF worked in coordination with other agencies. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was one of these agencies. To help us better understand the role of the FBI in this multi-agency OCDETF case, we request that you produce

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5) Did other law enforcement agencies learn of the involvement of FBI informants related to Operation Fast and Furious? If so, please explain in detail when and how?

Additionally, please provide the following:

6) Any FBI 302s relating to targets, suspects, defendants or their associates in the Fast and Furious investigation, including the 302s provided to ATF Special Agent Hope MacAllister during the calendar year 2011.

7) Any other investigative reports prepared by the Bureau relating targets, suspects or defendants in the Fast and Furious case.

Jaime Zapata

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If you have any questions regarding these requests, please contact Ranking Member Grassley's office at [\(202\) 224-5225](tel:(202)224-5225) or in Chairman Issa's office at [\(202\) 225-5074](tel:(202)225-5074). We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Darrell Issa, Chairman

Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and

Committee on the Judiciary

Government Reform

U.S. Senate

U.S. House of Representatives

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cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman

U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary

[\[1\]](#) Letter from Assistant Attorney General Ronald Weich to Senator Charles E. Grassley (Apr. 12, 2011).

[\[2\]](#) Letter from Benigno Martinez & Raymond Thomas to José Angel Moreno et al. (Jun. 14, 2011).