



One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2011

The Honorable John Morton
Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Director Morton:

We are concerned about recent reports that suggest similarities between “Operation Castaway,” a firearms trafficking investigation led by the Tampa Field Offices of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and “Operation Fast and Furious,” an ATF program that provided firearms to Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Specifically, reports indicate that firearms under “Operation Castaway” may have been provided to dangerous criminal gangs in Honduras, including MS-13.

If true, these reports raise serious questions about the leadership of the ICE and ATF Tampa Field Offices. We support ICE’s efforts to disrupt criminal syndicates that traffic in firearms, drugs, and other illicit substances. However, when those efforts serve to fuel the operations of criminal enterprises through the provision of firearms, they must be stopped and those responsible must be held accountable. In an effort to address this issue, we would appreciate your response to the following questions.

1. What role did ICE agents and leadership play in “Operation Castaway?”
2. Can you confirm whether “Operation Castaway” included a gun walking scheme that allowed weapons to be trafficked to Honduras? If so, have any of these firearms ended up in the possession of the notorious MS-13 gang?
3. How many guns have been allowed to pass into Honduras and how many have since been accounted for?
4. Were these weapons subject to any special monitoring processes once they left the United States?
5. Is “Operation Castaway” still ongoing? If so, are you, in coordination with the ATF, planning to terminate the program?

We find it extremely troubling that the United States government would willfully allow weapons to be acquired by dangerous criminal and drug trafficking organizations, in direct

contravention of our strategic and national interests. We look forward to receiving your responses to these questions in a timely manner.

Sincerely,



GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Chairman
Subcommittee on Emergency
Preparedness, Response, and Communications



MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight,
Investigations, and Management



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