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Sent: 2/3/2011 9:09:58 AM
Subject: WPost Praises Administration For Considering ATF Funding Increase; Guns Tracked By ATF Found At firefight scene

LA times mentions "widening congressional investigation," but I haven't received additional inquiries...

WPost Praises Administration For Considering ATF Funding Increase. The Washington Post (2/3, 605K) says in an editorial that that while many Presidents, "fearful of alienating the powerful gun lobby, have neglected the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Funding requests are often skimpy, making it that much more difficult for the emaciated agency to crack down on illegal sales and trafficking of firearms." The Obama Administration "was headed in this direction in mid-December, just weeks before the Arizona shootings" in Tucson of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and others, and "contemplated reducing the ATF's budget by some 13 percent - a \$160 million cut that would have brought the agency's budget to \$1.09 billion and put in jeopardy key programs." But the Administration "wisely - and in this political climate, bravely - appears to have had a change of heart," and is "promising to increase the ATF's budget beyond the \$1.13 billion currently included in the 2011 continuing resolution."

Guns Tracked By ATF Found At Arizona Firefight Scene. The Los Angeles Times (2/3, Murphy, 681K) reports, "In a sign of the cost of widespread US weapons smuggling into Mexico, federal law enforcement sources have confirmed that two guns, part of a series of purchases that were being monitored by authorities, were found at the scene of the firefight that killed a US Border Patrol agent in southern Arizona." The Times continues, "Sources said US authorities did not have the ability to adequately monitor the movement of the guns toward the southern border, in part because current laws and low levels of staffing. The disclosure comes amid a widening congressional investigation into allegations lodged by whistleblowers within the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. They allege the agency has been aware of the purchase of assault weapons in the US by buyers suspected of selling across the border, but failed to adequately track them."