
From: Weinstein, Jason
To: Spencer, Lashawna
Sent: 4/1/2011 10:18:08 PM
Subject: RE: AG News Brief Summary Friday April 1, 2011

Thanks – have a great weekend

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Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 5:40 PM
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ATF Snubs Issa's Deadline For Project Gunrunner Documents. The [Daily Caller](#) (4/1, Boyle) reports that the ATF "snubbed" House Oversight Chairman Darrell Issa's "Wednesday deadline for documents on the Project Gunrunner program and, specifically, Operation Fast and Furious." A committee spokesman revealed "that ATF missed the deadline to produce documents on the operation that allowed gun smugglers to sell American guns to Mexican drug cartels." ATF allowed the weapons to fall into criminal hands as part of an effort "to track the illegal gun and drug markets using serial numbers and ballistics information from the American-sold guns -- after people were killed or the guns were shot." Issa may be investigating if guns tied to the ATF program were used in the shooting of CBP Agent Brian Terry.

McCaul Introduces Bill Listing Mexican Cartels As Terrorist Organizations. [The Hill](#) (4/1, Cohn, 21K) reports that Rep. Michael McCaul introduced a bill Thursday that labels six Mexican drug cartels as terrorist groups. Specifically, "McCaul's bill would add the six cartels to the Foreign Terrorist Organization list, which also includes al Qaeda, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Shining Path and the Real IRA." According to McCaul the legislation is necessary because of increased violence along the Mexican border. He said during a hearing, "The last time I visited the El Paso Intelligence Center and requested to go across the border to Juarez, the State Department told me they could not guarantee my safety." McCaul also issued a broader challenge to the President, saying that the US needs his leadership "in the battle against the cartels, which he called 'a war.'" Furthermore, McCaul claims the Merida Initiative isn't working. Democrats on McCaul's subcommittee believe that Mexico should "lead the fight" against cartels.

McCaul said yesterday that Mexican drug cartels are currently plotting to kill US agents working north of the border, the [AP](#) (3/31) reported. McCaul "said a law enforcement bulletin was issued this month warning that Mexican gangsters were overheard plotting to kill Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and Texas Rangers stationed along the border. McCaul did not identify which cartels or what agency issued the bulletin."

Locals See Little Change Despite Officials Declaring A Win Over Mexican Drug Cartels. The [Washington Post](#) (4/1, Booth, Miroff, 572K) reports, "Mexican forces have hit the La Familia drug cartel harder than any other criminal organization in Mexico" and "for the first time, Mexican officials are declaring that a major cartel is on the brink of collapse," while 20 "of the 37 most-wanted drug lords in Mexico are dead or behind bars." Mexican and US officials also say "that worsening violence is a sign they are winning, forcing the cartels into more desperate acts," but "George Grayson, a US scholar who has written a book about La Familia, said the organization has regrouped, forming new alliances with the Sinaloa cartel and other gangs." Even "wary locals say that little has changed." One such citizen claimed, "The narcos will never go away" and the "truth is that the people like the narcos more than the government."

Calderon Names New Attorney General. The [New York Times](#) (4/1, Malkin, 950K) reports that Mexican President Felipe Calderon appointed Marisela Morales, "Mexico's top prosecutor against organized crime" as attorney general. If approved, she'll be the first woman to take the post. The outgoing attorney general, [State/Privacy] has been at his post less than two years and has been accused "of being ineffective in fighting the powerful drug cartels."

US Launches Broad Strategy To Neutralize Transnational Criminal Groups In Latin America. [AFP](#) (4/1, Zamora) reports, "The United States is launching a broad new strategy that would funnel several hundred million dollars for drug interdiction in Latin America, a senior official told lawmakers Thursday." National Drug Control Policy Director

Gil Kerlikowske explained that "global nature of the drug threat requires a strategic response that is also global in scope," saying, "It is not realistic for countries to expect to be effective if they are operating in a vacuum." The Western Hemisphere Counterdrug Strategy, which is expected to be complete by summer's end, "will merge a handful of existing programs, including Plan Colombia, which has received more than \$6 billion in US aid since it was launched in 2000, and the Merida Initiative for Mexico, for which Congress has appropriated \$1.5 billion since 2008."

US, Venezuela Clash Over Makled Extradition. The Wall Street Journal (4/1, De Córdoba, Crowe, 2.06M) reports that Walid "The Turk" Makled, who stands accused of being one the world's most prolific drug lords, is straining the already contentious relationship between Venezuela and the US. Last year, the cocaine kingpin was arrested in Colombia and it appears that he will soon be extradited to Venezuela to face drug charges. This does not sit well with the US, considering Makled himself says he is very close to high-level military and political officials in Venezuela.

"Operation Gang Crusher" Crackdown Nets 30 Suspects In Austin. The AP (4/1) reports, "A nearly yearlong gang-related crime sweep in the Austin area has led to more than two dozen arrests. Police on Thursday announced 40 warrants had been issued in the investigation dubbed 'Operation Gang Crusher.'" Thirteen suspects are sought by authorities. According to police, the investigation began during the summer of 2010 and "included undercover drug buys targeting people suspected of belonging to gangs." The charges include "murder, robbery, assault, tampering with evidence, engaging in organized criminal activity, plus drug-related and weapons counts."

The Austin (TX) American Statesman (4/1, Grisales) reports, "Police said the initiative marks a major milestone in the fight against local gang activity. ... The gangs targeted include the Tango Blast and Aryan Brotherhood prison gangs, as well as the Bloods, Crips and Latin Kings street gangs. The suspects were targeted because of their active roles with area gangs, with some showing connections to transnational drug-trafficking organizations, as well as extensive and violent criminal histories, police said."

KXAN-TV Austin, TX (4/1, Sadeghi, Cosel) reports, "The Austin police gang unit has been working with the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the governor's office and the Travis County District Attorney's Office on the operation."

Judge Denies Bail For Police Chief Accused Of Transferring Guns Into Mexico. Reuters (4/1, Gaynor) reports that Columbus, NM police chief, Angelo Vega, was denied bail by US District Court Judge Robert Brack. The judge believes Vega is a flight risk. Unrelated was arrested along with 13 others, including Columbus' mayor and village trustee, for gun running. The indictment alleges the defendants facilitated the safe transfer of more than 200 guns to Mexico. Brack said, "I'm particularly concerned of the mind-set of a man with a badge who sold the strength and protections associated with that badge to promote a virtual war going on south of the border." ATF assisted with the investigation leading to the arrests.

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