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From: JSOC

ATF

Sent: Sat Jul 23 09:51:12 2011
Subject: Here are the News Clips for 7-23-2011

Here are the ATF News Clips for Saturday July 23, 2011

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

ATF News Summary

Saturday, July 23, 2011

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Firearms

Pp 2-3, 7/23/2011, San Francisco Chronicle: ATF data defy theory, tie U.S. gun flow to cartels

Arson & Explosives

p 3, 7/23/2011, Associated Press: Possible arson investigated in Texas church fire

Of Interest

pp. 4-7, 7/23/2011, CNN: Survivor: Gunman screams 'we all shall die' during shooting spree

ATF data defy theory, tie U.S. gun flow to cartels

Dan Freedman, Hearst Newspapers

Saturday, July 23, 2011

Washington --

The claim that Mexican cartels rely on huge stocks of military surplus weaponry from civil wars in Central America is the mantra of pro-gun organizations fearful that linking drug violence to U.S.-purchased weapons could lead to more gun control.

Though gun-rights advocates and at least one prominent U.S. senator ferociously stand by that politically charged theory, federal firearms data show only a tiny percentage originate south of Mexico's border.

Indeed, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and others have cited the Mexico-bound flow of weapons from firearms dealers in border states including Texas and California in arguing for restoring the expired federal assault-weapons ban and other gun restrictions.

In response to a query from Feinstein, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives reported last month that of the 29,284 weapons recovered in Mexico and submitted for tracing in 2009 and 2010, a total of 20,504 - 70 percent - were "United States-sourced firearms." Virtually all of the remaining weapons were not traceable because insufficient information was submitted.

Those numbers have set off a firestorm of controversy at a time when the ATF is defending itself against a widening congressional inquiry into Operation Fast and Furious, in which Phoenix-based ATF agents were instructed not to intercept straw purchasers buying weapons at local gun stores for the drug cartels.

The ATF's aim was to follow the weapons to the higher-ups, instead of just arresting the low-level straw purchasers. But the ATF lost track of the weapons, which ended up in Mexico and were implicated in various crimes, including the murder of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry in December.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, who along with Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista (San Diego County), House Oversight and Government Reform Committee chairman, is leading the congressional probe of Operation Fast and Furious, accused the ATF of disseminating data that "paints a grossly inaccurate picture of the situation."

Weapons seized in Mexico and submitted to the ATF for tracing represent only a small fraction of the 300,000-plus confiscated weapons that Mexican authorities keep locked up in a vault, Grassley said in a June 16 letter to ATF acting Director Kenneth Melson.

ATF officials sent a response to Grassley but declined to release it. A copy of the response obtained by Hearst Newspapers shows that of the 29,284 weapons in Mexico submitted for tracing, only 346 - 1 percent - were traced to any other nation besides the United States.

Possible arson investigated in Texas church fire

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July 22, 2011, 7:47AM

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ZEPHYR, Texas — Federal investigators will help determine whether arson is to blame for a fire that destroyed a nearly century-old country church in West Texas.

Brown County Sheriff Bobby Grubbs on Thursday said the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is helping investigate the July 15 blaze at Bethel Baptist Church near Zephyr, along with some suspicious fires in ditches.

The 91-year-old church was engulfed in flames and the roof had collapsed by the time firefighters arrived.

A dog trained to detect accelerants was at the scene Tuesday. Lab results are pending.

Grubbs says a previous attempt to burn the church happened last October.

No one has been arrested.

Pastor Buddy Cobb says the church, about 125 miles southwest of Fort Worth, will be rebuilt.

Read more: <http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story.mpl/ap/tx/7664713.html#i:zz1SvMiDasj>

Survivor: Gunman screams 'we all shall die' during shooting spree

Oslo, Norway (CNN) -- A young man who survived a gunman's rampage on Norway's Utoya island says he is alive because he played dead, grabbing on to bodies around him, an account that came as authorities on Saturday raised the death toll from the attack a day earlier to 84.

Adrian Pracon's account provided the clearest detail to date of Friday's shooting attack at the ruling Labour Party's youth camp that police said left at least 84 people dead. The attack came shortly after an explosion in the Norwegian capital of Oslo that killed seven people, raising the combined death toll in both attacks to 91.

"Me and two others were laying down and survived because of the bodies we could hang on to and pretend that we are dead," Pracon told CNN early Saturday by telephone from his hospital room.

"I could feel his breath," said 21-year-old Pracon. "I could hear his boots."

Norwegian television and newspaper reports have identified the suspect in the attacks as 32-year-old Anders Behring Breivik.

Police have not released the identity of the man, telling reporters Saturday they detained a 32-year-old Norwegian man who is being questioned in both the Oslo bombing and the shooting attack at the youth camp on Utoya island, about 20 miles from the Norwegian capital. Police spokesman Are Frykholm told CNN Saturday that authorities are investigating further, based on information provided by the man in custody.

"The official questioning is starting now. He will be charged both for the bombing and the killing," Roger Andresen, a deputy police chief, told reporters during a news conference. The suspect was cooperating with police, making it clear he wanted to explain himself, Andresen said.

A victim who was shot during the attack on the island told CNN Saturday that he had seen pictures of Breivik taken from what is believed to be his Facebook page and shown on television stations NRK and TV2. The victim said he recognized the man from news reports as the gunman.

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg did not rule out the possibility that there was more than one person involved in the bombing and shooting attack that left at least 91 people dead.

"They have so far arrested one person," Stoltenberg told reporters Saturday. "They have not concluded whether there is one or more than one person behind the attacks."

That attack and the massive explosion that targeted government buildings in the heart of Oslo are linked, police said.

Seven were killed in the explosion, Frykholm said. In all, 90 people were hospitalized as a result of the blast, said Erik Hansen, a spokesman for Oslo Mayor Fabian Stang.

It was while authorities were searching for survivors of the mid-afternoon bombing in Oslo that a man wearing a police uniform and identifying himself as a officer arrived by boat at Utøya island, where word was spreading among the campers about the explosion in the capital, Pracon said.

The hundreds teens and young adults attending the camp were gathered in a large meeting room where camp organizers were sharing information about the bombing in Oslo when the police officer asked if he could address the group, Pracon said.

"We, of course, allowed him to come" in and address the group, Pracon said.

It was then, Pracon says, the man started shooting.

What followed, Pracon says, was panic and chaos as some campers ran from the shooter, while others went towards the man because they believed it was a drill or a test.

Many who fled ran toward the shore, jumping in the water to try to swim the three-fourths of a mile of water between the island and the mainland.

Pracon was among those who attempted to swim, but was forced to turn back.

"I felt I couldn't breathe. I already swallowed too much water. I also jumped because I was the last person running to the shore from this man. So I didn't have time to take my clothes off. As I was swimming, I felt the clothes pulling me down because they were heavy boots, clothes," he said.

"I wasn't sure if I was going to make it because I was already exhausted."

Labour Party member Bjorn Jarle Roberg-Larsen told CNN that the man told campers he was there to carry out a security check.

"After just a few minutes, he took a handgun and started to shoot people," Roberg-Larsen said. "A panic broke out: people tried to hide; some jumped into the water and tried to swim ashore."

Others took shelter in caves or bushes, or climbed trees. "And he went after them," the party member said. "Unfortunately, a lot of people are wounded and also a lot of people are dead."

Pracon said the shooter chased people to the shore, screaming at them as he fired at them.

Pracon was lying on the shore when the gunmen opened fire at those in the water and on the shore.

"I was maybe 5, maybe 7 meters away from him as he was yelling he was going to kill you all and we all shall die. He pointed his gun at me, but he didn't pull the trigger," Pracon said.

"He left and returned maybe an hour later ... he shot almost everyone."

When police arrived on the island, many survivors believed they might also be gunmen posing as police.

"Everyone started screaming, crying and begging police officers to throw away their weapons," Pracon said.

An elite police unit took the gunman into custody on the island, Andresen said. The man did not put up a fight during his arrest, he said.

Authorities were searching the waters Saturday around the island, looking for bodies of campers who may have drowned trying to swim to safety, police said.

Frykholm, the police spokesman, said that the man arrested on the island appeared to match the description of a person who was seen near the government buildings shortly before the bomb erupted.

The man, whose identity has not been released by authorities, does not work for police, Frykholm said.

The acting national police chief, Sveinung Sponheim, told reporters in Oslo that the gun was an automatic weapon and that undetonated explosives were found on the island after the attack.

The vast majority of the Labour Party youth movement attendees were between the ages of 16 and 22, though some were as young as 13 and as old as their early 30s, Roberg-Larsen said. They had been planning to attend political training classes and participate in group activities during the day and sleep in tents at night, he said.

Stoltenberg, the prime minister, was not in his office at the time of the blast and was not hurt, officials said. Stoltenberg, who has been prime minister since October 2005, heads a coalition government comprising the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party.

Nick Soubiea, an American-Swedish tourist in Oslo, said he was fewer than 100 yards from the blast, which he described as deafening. "It was almost in slow motion, like a big wave that almost knocked us off our chairs," he told CNN. "It was extremely frightening."

Several buildings in Oslo were on fire, smoke billowing from them, he said.

The blast also damaged the Oil Ministry, which caught fire.

Seventeen victims in the island attack were taken to Oslo University Hospital, one of the largest trauma hospitals in northern Europe, where they were being treated for shooting injuries, said Erik Carlsen, the medical director. Ten people wounded in the blast were also being treated at the facility, he said.

While the hospital has trained for such large-scale traumas, Carlsen said the staff was shocked at the number of casualties.

In brief remarks to reporters from the Oval Office, U.S. President Barack Obama extended his condolences to the victims of the violence in Norway, saying the incidents are "a reminder that the entire international community has a stake in preventing this kind of terror from occurring."

British Foreign Secretary William Hague also condemned the attacks.

"We condemn all acts of terrorism," he said. "The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Norway and all our international allies in the face of such atrocities."

CNN's Jack Maddox, Chelsea J. Carter, Holly Yan, Laura Smith-Spark, Joe Sterling, Moni Basu, Chelsea Bailey, Claudia Rebaza, Mishan Afsari and Cynthia Wamwayi contributed to this report.

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