

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington

September 23, 2011

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Grassley:

I am writing in response to your letter to the National Security Advisor dated September 9, 2011 seeking information about the extent to which certain members of the National Security Staff were apprised of "Operation Fast and Furious," a criminal investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Your letter specifically expresses interest in certain communications between an ATF agent, William Newell, and Kevin O'Reilly, a former member of the National Security Staff.

It is my understanding that the Department of Justice has produced emails between these two individuals to the Committee and that those emails contain general information about ATF's efforts to combat gun trafficking along the Southwest Border (including non-specific references to a case that was subsequently disclosed as "Operation Fast and Furious" after the indictment was unsealed). It is also my understanding that these emails do not contain information about any decision to allow guns to "walk," which I understand to be the focus of the Committee's investigation. Nonetheless, in an effort to accommodate the Committee's interest in this matter, we are working to identify information related to "Operation Fast and Furious" in the files of the three NSS staff members you identified. I anticipate that we will be able to provide some information to the Committee by the end of next week.

In addition, as I understand my staff has already informed your staff, Mr. O'Reilly, who was on detail to the National Security Staff from the State Department during the time period of the communications you reference in your letter, has since returned to the State Department. We

understand from the State Department that Mr. O'Reilly is currently on a previously scheduled assignment to Iraq.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Ruemmler
Counsel to the President

Cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary