



ATF News

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ATF EXPANDS EFFORTS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL FLOW OF FIREARMS INTO MEXICO

EL PASO, Texas – The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) plans to add additional staff members, including 35 special agents and 15 industry operations investigators, to the southwest border and deploy eTrace technology in nine U.S. consulates in Mexico in an effort to stem the illegal flow of firearms to Mexico as part of Project Gunrunner, ATF Acting Director Michael J. Sullivan and Director Arthur Doty of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) today announced.

Also, three additional ATF intelligence research specialists and one investigative analyst will be assigned to EPIC, and an intelligence research specialist will be hired for each ATF field division on the U.S.-Mexico border to focus exclusively on firearms trafficking to Mexico.

“ATF is deploying its resources strategically on the Southwest Border to deny firearms, the ‘tools of the trade’ to criminal organizations in Mexico and along the border, and to combat gun-related homicides on both sides of the U.S.- Mexico border,” said Acting Director Sullivan. “Project Gunrunner focuses ATF’s investigative, intelligence and training expertise to suppress firearms trafficking to Mexico, in partnership with the government of Mexico and other U.S. agencies. In FY 2007, ATF partnered with the firearms industry to conduct seminars to educate more than 3,700 federal firearms licensees near the border about straw purchasers and firearms trafficking.”

“The Gun Desk at EPIC is already the government’s information clearinghouse on firearms smuggling into Mexico,” said Director Doty. “ATF’s additional enhancements will go a long way to reducing the flow of guns to criminal organizations along the border.”

The expansion of enforcement and strategic efforts on the U.S.-Mexico border complement Project Gunrunner, ATF’s southwest border initiative to deprive drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) of firearms and reduce firearms-related violence on both sides of the border.

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Firearms tracing, using the eTrace technology, allows law enforcement agencies to identify trafficking trends of DTOs and other criminal organizations funneling guns into Mexico from the United States. In addition, eTrace assists criminal investigators to develop investigative leads in order to put firearms traffickers and straw purchasers (people who knowingly purchase guns for prohibited persons) behind bars before they cross the border.

ATF recently deployed the eTrace technology in U.S. consulates in Monterrey, Hermosillo and Guadalajara, with six additional deliveries scheduled by March 2008 to the remaining U.S. consulates in Mexico. ATF continues to meet with the government of Mexico to discuss deploying a Spanish-language version of eTrace to other agencies in Mexico.

More information on ATF and its programs can be found at <http://www.atf.gov/>.

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