

REMEMBER, THE PRESIDENT'S REVIEW GROUP CONSULTED WITH ATF

In a follow-up to its release on the DEA's use of a license plate reader database the other day, ACLU reveals an email that shows ATF in Phoenix considered using the database to track people leaving gun shows in April 2009.

The April 2009 [email](#) states that "DEA Phoenix Division Office is working closely with ATF on attacking the guns going to [redacted] and the gun shows, to include programs/operation with LPRs at the gun shows." The government redacted the rest of the email, but when we received this document we concluded that these agencies used license plate readers to collect information about law-abiding citizens attending gun shows. An automatic license plate reader cannot distinguish between people transporting illegal guns and those transporting legal guns, or no guns at all; it only documents the presence of any car driving to the event. Mere attendance at a gun show, it appeared, would have been enough to have one's presence noted in a DEA database.

Responding to inquiries about the document, the DEA [said](#) that the monitoring of gun shows was merely a proposal and was never implemented.

Given the timing, location, and target – 2009, Arizona, and legal permanent residents, or Green Card holders – this consideration intersects interestingly with Fast and Furious.

But don't worry, DEA says, this was just a consideration, tracking the movements of legal

gun show attendees didn't really happen.

All that said, I couldn't help but remember that among the more obvious intelligence agencies the President's Review Group into the NSA consulted in 2013 was ATF, which suggests that ATF is using at least some of the nifty toys NSA is using. As I noted at the time, that may be quite explicable, in that Section 215 has been used to track explosives precursors (and probably has been used to track acetone and hydrogen peroxide – where are TATP precursors, fertilizer, and maybe even pressure cookers).

But the fact that ATF is considering tapping into other agencies dragnets does raise further questions for me about why the PRG would need to consult with ATF.