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SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

JIM ROACHE, SHERIFF

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SHERIFF ROACHE DISPUTES LEAKED JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REPORT -- WORST OF APPLES & ORANGES; BROAD BRUSH BIAS

San Diego -- San Diego Sheriff Jim Roache today disputed the leaked, repudiated Justice Department police brutality portrayal of the San Diego Sheriff's Department in the late 1980's as being flawed and having a broad brush bias.

"The Justice Department study was leaked by two Congressmen seeking to produce an inflammatory impact. The report, rejected by the authors at the Justice Department itself, is flawed and obviously biased," said Sheriff Roache, "In the post-Rodney King environment, these Congressmen are serving only to divide our community, when we should be seeking to unite it."

The report was developed in 1991 but the Justice Department refused to release it because it served no meaningful analytical end. It allegedly cited the San Diego Sheriff's Department as the 9th worst in civil rights complaints being filed in America during October, 1984 - September, 1990, which predates Sheriff Roache's term of office. It claims an average of 15 civil rights complaints filed annually against the department. In sharp contrast, the considerably smaller New Orleans, Louisiana, Police Department averaged 35 complaints annually.

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"We have several highly critical comments about this report and its being leaked," said Sheriff Roache:

- "What the report omits is that not one criminal complaint to our knowledge was ever found by the FBI to have the substance for prosecution. Only one of the civil rights complaints was found to have sufficient merit by the U.S. Attorney to pursue in court. And that deputy, who had already been fired by the department for other reasons, was found not guilty in his Federal civil rights case. <u>That is one deputy out of every complaint filed for five successive years</u>.
- San Diego Sheriff's Deputies contact over one million citizens annually. Out of that only 15 complaints were filed. While we would prefer no complaints at all, that ratio is extremely small. This report, therefore, should be kept in perspective.
- The timeframe preceded Sheriff Roache's term of office but did include the period in the late 1980's which included the rash of complaints from the El Cajon Jail. We estimate that over 50 of the alleged 70 complaints may have originated in a 6 month timeframe.
- Even the Justice Department itself recently indicated in Capitol Hill testimony that no useful conclusions could be drawn from the report because it was incomplete. It also represents the worst statistical basket of apples and

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oranges imaginable. Small Louisiana Parishes of 3,000 people are lumped in with mega-communities like Los Angeles County at nearly 8 million residents.

- On a complaint per capita basis, the San Diego Sheriff's Department falls to 105th on the list. This is a far cry from the impression the report would give at first glance.
- The report itself was not released by the Justice Department. It was leaked by two Congressman with political agendas which transcend reasonableness or rationality. Congressman Conyers (D-Michigan) is a militant liberal who recently to the House of Representatives that the looters and killers in Los Angeles were not criminals but simply frustrated."

"Only one thing is clear: Jumping to any conclusion based on this flawed study is unwarranted," Sheriff Roache said, "Since 1990, we have taken many positive steps forward, such as:

- Instituted a Civilian Law Enforcement Review Board,
- Created the first Community Relations Coordinator in the Sheriff's Department,
- Improved our hate crimes awareness training,
- Established a new era of openness with the media."

During the timeframe of the report, San Diego had one of the most severely overcrowded jail systems in America according to the "Mega Jail Survey" published by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. This contributed directly to serious friction

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between jail deputies and inmates. In addition, the deputy staffing ratios on patrol were then and continue to be meager at best.

In fact, patrol deputy ratios are between 0.4-0.5 deputies per thousand residents in the Sheriff's jurisdiction. By contrast, the San Diego Police Department is struggling to cope with their crime rates and only 0.8 officers per thousand -- nearly double the Sheriff's ratio!

At the same time, the local crime rate is hitting new highs. The Sheriff's year-end 1991 report indicated historical highs in most FBI Crime Index measures, particularly violent crime.

"What this report does underscore is our immediate need for adequate jail space, proper jail deputy staffing and more patrol deputies on our streets, " Roache said, "It also proves that complaints unsupported in court cannot be used to condemn the many fine and professional deputies in this department."

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