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GOVERNOR

STEPHEN B. STREET, JR.
STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
Office of State Inspector General

July 26, 2012

Honorable Charles R. Scott
District Attorney, First Judicial District
525 Marshall Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

Dear Mr. Scott:

This office received a complaint concerning the means by which the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office's (CPDAO) acquired eight fully automatic M-16 rifles from the Department of Defense's Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO). After investigating the matter, we found no violations of law in the CPDAO's possession of the weapons. However, we did find that the written justification submitted to the Louisiana Federal Property Assistance Agency (LFPAA) -- the state agency that administers acquisitions from LESO -- contained false information.

Based upon witness interviews and analyses of pertinent documents, we found that Caddo Assistant District Attorneys Lea Hall and Hugo Holland, Jr. completed the application form, weapons request form, and Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Louisiana and the CPDAO to obtain the M-16s. These documents were then presented for your signature as District Attorney. You advised us that you signed the documents as requested after "only glancing at" them and without realizing the weapons were fully automatic.

According to Mr. Hall and Mr. Holland, they worked together to fill out the forms that were submitted to the LFPAA. Mr. Hall requested Mr. Holland's assistance with the justification section on the weapon request form. Mr. Holland justified the acquisition by writing:

"This office recently staffed a Special Investigations Section which handles predominantly high profile and dangerous drug offenders. We routinely participate in high-risk surveillance and arrests (sic) activities with the Shreveport Police and Caddo Sheriff, and do not currently have the funds to provide patrol rifles to those involved in these high risk activities."

To evaluate the CPDAO's justification for the weapons, we interviewed personnel from the Shreveport Police Department and the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office. Persons from both agencies refuted the claim that Special Investigations Section (SIS) employees "routinely participate in high-risk surveillance and arrests activities" with the Shreveport Police Department and Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office.

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Mr. Hall acknowledged that the justification contained "inaccuracies" and stated that although Mr. Holland may have "said it wrong," Mr. Hall did not believe that any material misrepresentations were made about the SIS's mission. Both Mr. Hall and Mr. Holland stated that if they had the opportunity, they would word the justification differently. Both cited situations in which the weapons would be useful in protecting District Attorney employees who work in dangerous areas in Caddo Parish and act as advisors to local law enforcement.

On or about February 17, 2012, you learned from District Attorney Investigator Don Ashley that the M-16s were fully automatic. Seeing no need for your office to have automatic weapons, you took steps to have the weapons transferred to another agency. On March 15, 2012, all eight weapons were in fact transferred to the Webster Parish Sheriff's Office.

In light of the above findings, we recommend that you consider appropriate measures to ensure the truthfulness and accuracy of all documents that leave the CPDAO in the future.

I appreciate the cooperation you extended to my office during our investigation. This letter serves as notice that we are closing our file and taking no further action in this matter. Please also be aware that, upon your receipt of this letter, it will be considered a public document subject to disclosure pursuant to a proper public records request to this office.

If you have questions or wish to discuss the matter further, please feel free to call me at (225) 342-4262 or e-mail me at stephen.street@la.gov.

Sincerely,



Stephen B. Street, Jr.
Louisiana State Inspector General

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