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Yesterday morning, the Lafayette Police Union referenced the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office purchase of two rifles with SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) applications. The Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office is concerned that the release of such information by the Union places the lives of Lafayette residents, deputies and the Union's own officers in danger, purely for political gain. The purchase of these weapons and their applications are not subject to disclosure under normal circumstances, because it relates to security, operational and tactical procedures.

One of the reasons we believe the Union's release of this information is placing its own officers in danger, along with our deputies, is because the Lafayette Police Department's SWAT team has also trained with the weapons and has them at their disposal in the event they are needed. It is not a secret that specialized units, such as SWAT, maintain "special weapons" to be prepared to handle any number of emergencies. However, exposing detailed information about SWAT tactics and/or equipment could jeopardize the safety of law enforcement by allowing a suspect to be better prepared for a confrontation.

In reference to these particular weapons, history has shown us that a number of incidents may occur that require a vehicle to be disabled before it causes further damage to people or property. In some of these incidents, common "SPIKE" strips may not be effective. In those rare situations, the ability to crack a vehicle's engine block may be the only way to stop the vehicle, bus, machinery, etc.

Examples:

- 1995, San Diego California. Army National Guard tank was used to create havoc in the community.
- 2004, Colorado. Bulldozer was used to demolish houses and businesses.
- 2015, Dallas, Texas. Armored van used to ambush a Dallas Police facility and open fire on officers. A .50 caliber rifle was used to disable the vehicle.
- 2016, Lafayette, Louisiana. A suicidal subject was confronted on a back hoe in a residential development. Deputies had no way to prevent him from damaging the area or harming citizens. The need for disabling vehicles by means other than spike strips was identified, and the LPSO administration authorized their purchase.

Since 2016, 124 people have been killed as a result of 13 separate vehicle ramming attacks. These deaths included 86 during the Nice, France incident, and 8 during the

2017 New York City truck attack. Unfortunately, we can expect these types of incidents to continue in the future.

Earlier this morning, the Union released additional information about the Sheriff's Office purchase of an armored personnel carrier (BearCat). This vehicle is also used by the Sheriff's SWAT team and is designed to offer team members protection when making their approach to a building. It is also designed to be used as a rescue vehicle for anyone who may be injured while still under threat of gunfire. This vehicle is similar in nature to the one currently owned and operated by the Lafayette Police Department. It is also important to note that our SWAT team supports more than just our own needs. We also provide SWAT operations for the municipal Police Departments of Broussard, Carencro, Duson, Scott and Youngsville and are available for UL Police, Lafayette City Marshal and Park Police, in addition to support of the Lafayette Police Department.

The BearCat APC went into service on November 2, 2017 and has been used on seventeen occasions since then. In fact, both the Sheriff's and Lafayette Police Department BearCats were used simultaneously during one of those incidents.

In addition to everything else mentioned above, if the Union would communicate with its own administration, it would be aware the cost of the Rifles and Armored Personnel Carrier (BearCat) were reimbursed to the Sheriff's Office by the Lafayette Consolidated Government as part of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA). Copies of that invoice containing those items have been provided with this release.

In closing, the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office makes no apology for making the safety and security of citizens of this parish a top priority. We will continue to make every effort to field the best trained and equipped SWAT team possible.