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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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ATLANTA POLICE TO CREATE NEW CRIME- FIGHTING UNIT TO REPLACE RED DOG

Atlanta Police Chief George Turner announced today plans to form a new tactical crime-fighting unit to replace Red Dog, which was created in the late 1980s.

"This new unit will be a highly-trained, competent force," Chief Turner said. "They will be second only to SWAT in training and tactical efficiency. The members of this unit will be carefully screened and selected."

Turner noted that the nature of crime was different when Red Dog was created. The city of Atlanta had 37 public housing developments, homicides numbered well more than 200 per year (207 in 1987) and crack cocaine was still used and sold at epidemic levels.

The APD has needed to change its crime-fighting tactics as crime has changed, Turner said.

"Crime – and the drug trade in particular – has gotten more sophisticated, often moving indoors," Turner said. "We, too, have gotten smarter, using technology and intelligence-driven analysis to strategize and shift resources as needed. But let me be clear: That does not mean there still isn't a need for aggressive, street-level crime-fighting. There is."

Crime has dropped significantly since that time as well; homicides now number less than 100. Last year, there were 93 – only the third time since Lyndon B. Johnson was president that there have been fewer than four homicides in the city of Atlanta.

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Red Dog will continue to operate while the new unit is created. Over the next 60 days, the department will begin interviewing candidates for the new unit. Members for the unit will be carefully screened and selected.

The officers will have clean records, with no patterns of “use of force” complaints or disciplinary issues against them. Training will be paramount, with a particular focus on criminal procedure and court room testimony.

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