



***JR. EDWARD
S.G. DENNIS***

***EVALUATION
OF THE HANDLING
OF THE BRANCH
DAVIDIAN
STAND-OFF
IN WACO,
TEXAS***



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Evaluation of the Handling of the Branch Davidian Stand- off in Waco, Texas

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Introduction

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This is a critical retrospective evaluation of the activities of the United States Department of Justice ("Department") and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") during the fifty-one day stand-off at the Branch Davidians' Mt. Carmel compound near Waco, Texas which ended on April 19, 1993 when fire consumed the compound, killing David Koresh and most of his followers. To make this evaluation, I have reviewed the procedures followed by the Department and the FBI, giving particular attention to the means employed, the alternatives considered and the decisions made in attempting to resolve the stand-off.

I have not been called upon to conduct a de novo factual inquiry. A comprehensive factual report is being prepared by the Department and the FBI. I have primarily relied upon the record gathered by the Department as the basis for the conclusions in this Report, supplemented by a number of follow-up interviews. However, I am satisfied that the factual inquiry by the Department was conducted in a thorough and objective manner.

Prior to my appointment, the Department had completed over 800 field interviews and gathered pertinent documentation. They continued to gather documents and conduct interviews thereafter. I have been afforded access to documents gathered in that effort and to the reports of interviews conducted for the factual investigation. In addition, since my appointment I participated in a number

of Department interviews. I have also conducted independent interviews of some witnesses.

The scope of this Report is confined to the activities of the Department and the FBI. I have not been asked to evaluate and I make no judgments about the activities of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms ("ATF") leading up to the February 28, 1993 gun battle at Mount Carmel. I have been assisted in my investigation and writing of this Report by Ms. Suzan E. DeBusk, Esq. whose invaluable contribution, I gratefully acknowledge.