



FBI Finds Gangs Expanding, Even to U.S. Military

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ABC News on October 21, 2011 released the following:

“By Jason Ryan

A new FBI assessment has found there are now an estimated 1.4 million gang members in the United States with gangs expanding even infiltrating the U.S. military.

The National Gang Threat Assessment has found there are 33,000 officially designated gangs in the United States. The gangs’ 1.4 million members represent a 40 percent increase in gang membership since 2009. The FBI’s National Gang Threat Assessment has found that gangs are expanding in the United States and are responsible for up to 48 percent of violent crime in many urban communities.

FBI officials also say the use of social media sites has assisted in recruitment with youth becoming interested in gang culture and displays of bravado on Facebook and YouTube. The threat assessment notes that local police in Missouri have seen a rise in gang “promotion teams” using internet chat rooms to promote clubs and parties. Displays of gang signs and walks are found abundantly on YouTube which FBI officials say may influence youths to seek out gangs.

While FBI and law enforcement officials do not have estimates on the number of gang members in the military officials have seen gangs in 100 jurisdictions in the U.S. and overseas with 53 different gangs who are in every branch of the military. “Gang recruitment of active duty military personnel constitutes a significant criminal threat to the U.S. military,” the threat assessment noted. “NGIC [National Gang Intelligence Center] reporting indicates that law enforcement officials in

at least 100 jurisdictions have come into contact with, detained, or arrested an active duty or former military gang member within the past three years.”

“Some members are joining the military to get away from the gang life,” said Calvin Shivers, FBI assistant section chief of the Violent Criminal Threat Section, at a briefing today.

“Many gangs are sophisticated criminal networks with members who are violent, distribute wholesale quantities of drugs, and develop and maintain close working relationships with members and associates of transnational criminal/drug trafficking organizations,” the assessment noted.

“Gangs are becoming more violent while engaging in less typical and lower-risk crime, such as prostitution and white-collar crime. Gangs are more adaptable, organized, sophisticated, and opportunistic, exploiting new and advanced technology as a means to recruit, communicate discretely, target their rivals, and perpetuate their criminal activity.”

“Gangs are increasingly engaging in non-traditional gang-related crime, such as alien smuggling, human trafficking, and prostitution. Gangs are also engaging in white collar crime such as counterfeiting, identity theft, and mortgage fraud, primarily due to the high profitability and much lower visibility and risk of detection and punishment than drug and weapons trafficking,” the assessment prepared by the FBI’s National Gang Intelligence Center noted.

The report notes that while most gang members are in the West, gangs have been growing in the Northeast and the Southwest. The expansion in the Southwest could be because of gangs reaching out to and linking with Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (MDTOs).

“U.S.-based gangs and MDTOs are establishing wide-reaching drug networks; assisting in the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and illegal immigrants along the Southwest Border; and serving as enforcers for MDTO interests on the U.S. side of the border,” the assessment noted.

FBI officials say the increased figures are likely due to better reporting and analysis of information reported to them by state and local law enforcement agencies. The National Gang Intelligence Center is made up of officials from the FBI, DEA, The ATF, The US Marshals Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection.”

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

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