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**Gang Activities in Northern Virginia, State of Virginia, and USA**

Gang Activities in Northern Virginia

The FBI's Washington Field Office (WFO), with jurisdiction for Northern Virginia Counties, is a member of the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force. WFO is developing gang intelligence from the task force to pro-actively initiate investigations. A media plan and gang telephone tip line are forthcoming to combat gangs in Northern Virginia.

WFO's current role with the Northern Virginia Regional Task Force (NVRTF) is to support street level operations and have WFO's personnel regularly accompany the task force during operations to develop intelligence and enhance informant development. WFO accesses the Fairfax County Police Department/NVRTF database to obtain information that will be used to develop effective investigative strategies to address the emerging MS-13 gang problem in Northern Virginia.

Overall, WFO is very actively investigating a string of violent crimes that have taken place over the last few months in Northern Virginia. Working with the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA), Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Fairfax County Police Department and other local agencies, WFO has taken a leadership role in attempting to identify a federal nexus for the prosecution of MS-13 gang members involved in criminal acts. Federal prosecution(s) are expected to send a strong message to MS-13 members that their violent tendencies will not be tolerated.

The implementation of the planned intelligence process will represent a significant contribution by WFO to the task force. The importance of the process lies in law enforcement's ability to connect the dots in regard to MS-13 gang activities, hierarchy, and outside influences. WFO's intelligence plan includes the assignment of two analysts to gather, collate, and disseminate accurate and timely intelligence to drive both local and federal investigative efforts.

WFO also continues to provide resources and support to the Brenda Paz homicide investigation, which was indicted in the EDVA.

MS-13 is an emerging gang problem in Northern Virginia. There are an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 MS-13 members according to reports from local law enforcement. WFO has identified approximately 22 cliques existing in Northern Virginia. The cliques are primarily involved in homicides, malicious woundings, robberies, and witness intimidation. In addition, vandalism and other property crime is associated with MS-13. MS-13 cliques have been identified in Leesburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Herndon, Ashburn, Arlington, and Alexandria. In general, the areas from Centerville to Alexandria and Leesburg to Manassas were the sites of various levels of MS-13 activity.

While MS 13 remains a significant threat, other gang activity has been reported and documented in Northern Virginia. There has been an increase in the reporting of homegrown or "neighborhood" gangs. None of these gangs are known to have any direct connection with the

nationally known groups bearing similar or the same names. The Hell's Angels, Outlaws, Pagans and Bandits motorcycle gangs are reported to be increasing in numbers in Northern Virginia as well.

There are approximately 15 Asian gangs operating in Northern Virginia. Each clique has a reported average membership of 30 members. The Asian gangs have a documented presence in Arlington, Alexandria, Centerville, Falls Church, Fairfax City, and Bailey's Crossroads. In general, they operate primarily in Fairfax County, but live in areas from Centerville to the west and Alexandria to the east. They are involved in homicides, assaults, robberies, drug trafficking, prostitution, illegal gambling, extortion, burglaries, auto theft, and credit card fraud. Within the groups identified, the Vietnamese gangs remain the most violent. Operating primarily in Arlington, Falls Church and Fairfax, they engage in criminal activity such as drug trafficking, extortion, credit card fraud, gambling, burglary, and home invasion/robbery. The home invasion/robberies perpetrated by these gangs have had the most devastating impact on the Asian community. Their victims are predominantly local business owners who are believed to keep large sums of cash within their homes. These crimes often go unreported to law enforcement because of fear of retaliation. Since 1996, cooperation between the FBI and local law enforcement has led to the successful federal prosecution of more than seventy gang members. Continued use of RICO statutes to prosecute members of the two most notorious Vietnamese gangs has led to the dismantlement and the disruption of illegal activities committed by members of these gangs.

#### Gang Activities in State of Virginia

Criminal activities of the Carver Crew include extensive illegal drug trafficking, and homicides believed to have been committed in 1996 and 2001. Numerous subjects are currently in custody on state charges, and Assistant United States Attorneys expressed the intention to adopt certain of these individual cases for federal prosecution and further investigation based on the severity of the subjects' crimes and extensive criminal histories. Investigation revealed that during the period from approximately 1996 until present, it is believed that individuals within this group are responsible for at least two unsolved homicides in the Richmond, Virginia area, numerous aggravated assaults (shootings), and an extensive illegal drug trade primarily dealing in "crack" cocaine or cocaine base. To date, a total of 32 local arrests have been executed, charging 97 felonies and six misdemeanors, and five firearms have been recovered.

The Meadowbridge Boys and the Poe Street Boys are two rival gangs in the north side of Richmond, Virginia. Since approximately June 2002, various factions of the two gangs have committed homicides and aggravated assaults against each other. The groups are responsible for approximately eight or nine homicides and a large number of aggravated assaults and shootings into occupied dwellings. The age range of the various gang members is from 14 years to approximately 23 years of age. The investigation is a joint effort between the Richmond Office of the FBI, the Richmond Office of the ATF, and the Richmond Police Department. A significant number of cooperators have been developed in this matter, however, due to the closed nature of the gangs, other proactive measures have been employed to develop witnesses. For instance, numerous controlled drug buys have been employed to compromise witnesses who otherwise would not be forthcoming with information regarding the violence. One member of

the Meadowbridge Boys street gang attempted to kill two Federal witnesses/cooperators by shooting into their occupied dwelling and was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in the EDVA for that and related crimes. Additionally, a member of the Poe Street Boys was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury for drug violations, and a plea agreement has been reached. It should be noted that since the initiation of the Federal investigation there has been a marked cessation in the numbers of criminal acts involving the two gangs.

The 3rd Ward Gang investigation was initiated with the creation of the Petersburg Area Criminal Enterprise (PACE) Task Force. The Petersburg Police Department requested FBI assistance regarding a longstanding gang problem in Petersburg, Virginia. The 3rd Ward gang was quickly identified as the largest and among the most violent of street gangs operating within the city. Using the FBI's "Enterprise Theory of Investigation," a core group of 36 gang members were identified, which included the gang's leadership and narcotics suppliers, that led to twenty-three Federal arrest warrants charging 3rd Ward Gang members with gang related drug violations. Along with the PACE Task Force, members of the U.S. Marshals Service and Fort Lee, U.S. Army, Criminal Investigative Division, participated in the arrests. Seven additional gang members who were serving sentences in local prisons were also indicted for their roles in this gang conspiracy. In January 2004, a total of 17 subjects, including six previously unindicted 3rd Ward Gang members, were indicted on Federal RICO charges stemming from the gang's involvement in crack cocaine distribution, two homicides, and a half dozen other drive-by shootings between 1999 and 2003. Since January 2004, twenty-eight 3rd Ward Gang members have pled guilty, and all have agreed to testify against the remaining eight defendants. Of these 28 subjects, 22 have already been sentenced with terms of imprisonment ranging from 10 to 22 years.

Additional investigations are anticipated in Petersburg, Virginia, to address the "36 Street" and "5th Ward" gangs. Other investigations conducted by the Richmond Office of the FBI targeted the "Milton Street/Maryland Avenue" gang.

Richmond Office of the FBI has received intelligence of sightings of individuals with MS-13 tattoos, but to date no specific organized activity has been noted within the Richmond area. The FBI hopes to develop a significant trust within the Hispanic population in an effort to develop an intelligence base which would be necessary to address any MS-13 gang problem which might migrate to the area, particularly from the Northern Virginia/Washington metropolitan area.

Generally, the Central and Northern Virginia areas have seen a big increase in Hispanic gang activity over the last several years. Like most areas, there is a large legal and illegal Hispanic population. Fredericksburg and Culpeper are greatly influenced by Fairfax County's gang members. Local police reported upon gang related violence and gang recruiters in these areas. A recent shooting in Fredericksburg was believed to be an MS-13 gang retaliation shooting. While the problem is much less in Culpeper, the Culpeper Police Department and Sheriff's Office are considering a gang task force effort. The Shenandoah Valley and Winchester and Harrisonburg areas report the most Hispanic gang activity. Police reports indicate that Hispanic gang graffiti and gang members have moved into the Shenandoah Valley; recently, 47 Hispanic gang members were arrested there during a sheriff's office task force roundup.

The FBI's Richmond Office, working with several local law enforcement agencies which uncovered the existence of a Hispanic prostitution ring, initiated a noteworthy White Slave Traffic Act investigation which has a significant multi-jurisdictional and interstate nexus. Hispanic prostitutes are being brought into the area from other states by Hispanic subjects in order to conduct their prostitution business in the Richmond metropolitan area. Two violent double homicides have been associated with the activities of this prostitution ring and are believed to be the result of the victims encroaching on the territory of one of the subjects who established the prostitution ring. The FBI's Richmond Office plans to utilize this investigation to both help address the overall violent crime problem and to develop rapport and an intelligence base within a growing Hispanic population.

Gang activities in other parts of the state include Danville/Pittsylvania County and Lynchburg. Outside gang activity in the City of Danville and its metropolitan areas located in Pittsylvania County has been on the increase since 2002. Law enforcement identified gang members from El Salvadorian gangs, including MS-13, Sureno 13, and 18th Street, as well as Norte 14 gang members from Mexico. Law enforcement advised that Sureno 13 presence consists of two known members, with 20 to 30 suspected; Norte 14 presence consists of one known member and one suspected member. 18th Street presence consists of seven known members, with 30 to 60 suspected members. In addition, Latin King presence consists of three known members. Criminal activity by Latin King gangs has been minimal to date.

Identified local gang activity since 2002 in the Danville area includes relatively unorganized groups known as Camp Grove Killers, Danville Kings, Pleasant View Gangsters, G-Unit, Mid Side Murderers, North Pointe Crew, and White Knights. Criminal activity involving these gangs in the Danville area has included three shooting incidents.

Street gang indicators were identified in Lynchburg. These indicators consisted of gang style graffiti and local area black male teenagers wearing "colors." In addition, a rise in simple assault crimes occurred indicating attempts to establish geographic territories. The gang activity increased to include street level narcotic distribution and several malicious woundings. In addition, the local factions attempted to align with the Bloods and Crips with negative results. Numerous local gang members were arrested in 2002 - 2003, effectively resulting in the dismantlement of the black street gang. Incarcerated members of MS-13 were transferred from Northern Virginia facilities to the Blue Ridge Regional Jail located in Lynchburg. Since the arrival of these prisoners, intelligence has been obtained that indicates an interest by MS-13 to establish a narcotics distribution network in the Lynchburg area. One El Salvadorian restaurant opened in Lynchburg and known Northern Virginia MS-13 members have met at the restaurant. At this time, no identified MS-13 member has been charged with committing any crime in the Lynchburg area, and there is no intelligence identifying their involvement in criminal activity.

Graffiti possibly attributed to MS-13 has been reported in the city of Norfolk and on the eastern shore of Virginia. Additionally, the Norfolk Police Department believes that it has encountered MS-13 members based upon field interviews and the presence of tattoos. No criminal activity has as yet been associated with any of the possible MS-13 sighting. The FBI's Tidewater Violent Crime Task Force was established in 1996 to address violent gang activity. This task force

accomplished the disruption of one local gang and is presently conducting investigations on two additional local gangs. The FBI's Peninsula Safe Streets Task Force was formed in 2002 to address violent gang activity ongoing in the east end of the city of Newport News. This task force effectively dismantled a local street gang with the arrest and subsequent conviction of 12 subjects.

### Gang Activities in America

The National Gang Strategy, initiated in 1993, is the FBI's framework for addressing gangs and combating violence in America. The FBI's immediate focus is on the violence perpetuated by those gangs characterized as local street drug crews and national/regional groups, claiming association and alliance with gangs using the same identification, creed, and operations including the Bloods, Crips, and the Vice Lords.

A long-term focus is placed on gangs such as outlaw motorcycle gangs (Hell's Angels, Outlaws, and the Pagans) and ethnic gangs (MS-13, 18th Street, and the Mexican Mafia) because of their impact on the economy through underworld enterprises of prostitution, drug trafficking, extortion, and other racketeering activities.

Currently, all 56 FBI field offices support gang investigations with squads, task forces, or Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs). The Safe Streets Task Force Program has been used for more than ten years to leverage the resources of federal, state, and local law enforcement, resulting in a more effective and efficient investigation of violent gangs in urban and suburban communities.

In 2004, 700 Agents positions were allocated toward gang investigations. There are approximately 900 gang investigations pending nationwide, with a preponderance focused on violent drug-trafficking street gangs.

There are approximately 150 task forces in about 50 FBI field offices with 75 specifically dedicated to gang investigations and the remainder addressing other violent criminal enterprises and violent crime matters.

In addition to the FIGs, the FBI developed and implemented an Intelligence Program at the headquarters level to effectively address gang violence and gang migration. Intelligence is collected, analyzed and disseminated from three distinct perspectives--strategic, tactical, and programmatic. The focus is to provide information that will assist in developing cases, as well as identify emerging trends, migration patterns, and related criminal activity. An FBI initiative to establish a National Gang Intelligence Center is pending before Congress.

The Intelligence Program takes full advantage of enhanced partnerships with the law enforcement and intelligence communities both nationally and internationally. Timely intelligence is shared routinely with federal, state, and local partners via Law Enforcement Online (LEO), interagency working groups, and law enforcement fora.

The Enterprise Theory of Investigation also is used as an intelligence-driven, proactive approach to disrupt/dismantle gangs through the use of sophisticated techniques (wiretaps/undercover operations) generally not available at the local and state levels; investigations are similar to organized crime investigations with use of RICO and Continuing Criminal Enterprise statutes.

From 2003 through the third quarter of 2004, the FBI has disrupted and dismantled 322 gangs, resulting in the arrest of 3,671 gang members and 2,542 convictions.