



**NATIONAL GANG INTELLIGENCE CENTER
INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN**

21 December 2009

(U) Gangs Targeting Law Enforcement for Weapons and Equipment Theft

(U//FOUO) This intelligence bulletin addresses the standing gang intelligence requirement set Part I. B.1-2.

(U//LES) Gang members and criminals nationwide are targeting law enforcement officials, military, government vehicles, and residences in search of weapons, equipment, police badges, body armor, and uniforms.^a These incidents suggest that some gangs are becoming more brazen, tactical, and willing to engage law enforcement and rival gang members in potentially lethal encounters. The National Gang Intelligence Center assesses that these thefts could also allow gang members and criminals to impersonate law enforcement officers to gain better access to their targets.

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(U) Source Summary Statement

(U) Information for this bulletin was derived from reliable FBI, federal, state, and local law enforcement contacts with good to excellent access.

- (U//LES) According to FBI reporting in September 2009 unknown individuals burglarized the vehicle of an FBI agent in Indianapolis and stole an FBI SWAT uniform, two sets of body armor, and three guns, including a high-powered rifle. Subjects also entered the agent's garage—likely in search of more weapons—but did not take anything.^{1 b}
- (U//LES) According to Lee County, Florida Sheriff's Office officials, in May 2009 a member of the local Blood set burglarized a retired Lee County Sheriff's Office sergeant's home and stole, among other things, firearms and a police badge.²

^a (U//FOUO) Gang members may also acquire law enforcement weapons, equipment, and uniforms from retail stores and the Internet, as NGIC previously reported. See FBI; Intelligence Bulletin; 2817 March 2008; "(U) Gang Member Possession of High-Powered Weapons Poses Increasing Threat to Law Enforcement"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY/LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE.

^b (U//LES) This incident is one of several burglaries involving 12 homes in one neighborhood by an organized group.

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- (U//LES) According to US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reporting, in April 2009 a DHS employee in Washington, DC reported that his agency vehicle was burglarized in Fairfax County, Virginia. Unknown individuals stole a .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol, two fully loaded magazines, two concealed weapons permits, and a US Army ballistic vest. Local police advised that several police and government vehicles in the area had been targeted and suggested that gangs could be involved.^{3c}
- (U//LES) According to Knoxville, Tennessee police reporting in April 2009, Vice Lord members in Knoxville are reportedly directing their high school-aged members to identify other students who are children of law enforcement officers in an effort to target their residences for weapons, ammunition, and body armor for the gang.⁴
- (U//LES) In February 2009 suspected gang members in Broward County and West Palm Beach, Florida burglarized nearly a dozen marked and unmarked law enforcement vehicles stealing firearms, ballistic vests, and police identification. That same month a gang member was arrested in Miami for breaking into a police officer's home and stealing firearms and police gear. Police suggest that the suspect or his gang may have been involved in the vehicle burglaries.⁵

(U//LES) Law enforcement officials in Miami-Dade County, Florida who report a rise in burglaries of unmarked police vehicles parked at officers' residences over the past two years have also noted a rise in armed home invasion robberies involving police impersonations, and suggest that the thefts of equipment and home invasions could be related.⁶

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(U) Availability of Body Armor

(U) The availability of body armor and ballistic vests to criminals pose a different type of threat to law enforcement and has drawn a renewed focus following recent mass shootings. Criminals possessing ballistic vests and body armor may be planning a dangerous criminal activity or violent confrontation with police or other criminal groups. Federal law precludes anyone convicted of a violent felony from possessing body armor. In several states it is a felony to wear body armor while committing a violent crime.

(U) Sources: FBI, multiple law enforcement and open source reporting.

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(U) Public databases provide law enforcement officials' addresses

(U//LES) Law enforcement officers' and public officials' addresses, phone numbers, and social networking pages can be obtained from Web sites and public databases such as Intelius, Zabasearch and Peekyou, free of charge. Intelius, provides detailed records and background information on individuals for a fee as low as \$2.95. Recent source reporting by the South Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) indicates that criminals obtain personal information on law enforcement officers frequently.

(U) Sources: South Florida HIDTA, Drug Enforcement Administration. See also Internet sites; www.intelius.com, www.peakyou.com, and

^c (U//LES) Since 2007 there have been several incidents involving the break-in and theft of weapons and equipment from police and government vehicles as well as the theft of government and police vehicles in the Virginia counties of Fairfax, Prince William, and Stafford. Given the nature and location of some of these incidents, police suspect that gangs may be involved. Law enforcement officials further suggest that the same group of individuals may be responsible for the incidents in both Fairfax and Prince William counties.

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(U) The National Gang Intelligence Center assesses that gang members and criminals armed with law enforcement and military style weapons and body armor may be more likely to engage in potentially lethal encounters with police, rival gang members, and civilians.

- (U//LES) Police in Palm Beach, Broward, and St. Lucie counties in Florida report that between January 2007 and March 2008, Hispanic gang members, including members of the 18th Street gang, burglarized over 60 marked police vehicles and several homes of law enforcement for weapons and ballistic vests. Several gang-related shootings and deaths occurred during this period, and police recovered a number of stolen law enforcement-issued weapons from subjects. The suspects stated to police that they were targeting law enforcement vehicles and residents for weapons and equipment in order to arm themselves for a confrontation with rival gang members.⁷
- (U//LES) In March 2008 an MP5 machine gun that had been stolen from an FBI vehicle in January 2007 was used in a shooting in northwest Washington, DC. The suspects involved in the theft—members of a local neighborhood drug gang—were allegedly involved in a number of burglaries involving vehicles carrying law enforcement-issued weapons and equipment.⁸

(U) Outlook

(U) Gang members targeting law enforcement for weapons and equipment pose a serious threat to law enforcement officers and the community. Thefts of law enforcement weapons from vehicles and residences will likely result in increasingly armed and dangerous gang members. Unauthorized access to law enforcement-issued equipment, badges, and uniforms also create the potential for criminals and gang members to impersonate law enforcement officers and gain access to their targets and weapons, further facilitating criminal activity and violence.

(U) This Intelligence Bulletin was prepared by the National Gang Intelligence Center. Comments and queries may be addressed to the National Gang Intelligence Center unit chief at (703) 414-8606.

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(U) Endnotes

¹ (U//LES) FBI; Electronic Communication; 21 September 2009; 17 September 2009; (U//LES) Theft of H&K MP5/10A3, Springfield 1911A1 Pistol, Rock River Arms LAR-15 Rifle, Two Sets of Body Armor and Swat-Issued Uniform from Bucar 2005-0540; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is an FBI agent.

² (U//LES) FBI; Electronic Communication; 9 December 2009; 22 May 2009; Intelligence Report; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a law enforcement officer with the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

³ (U//LES) FBI; Electronic Communication; 9 December 2009; 14 April 2009; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a law enforcement officer with the Fairfax County Police Department.

⁴ (U//FOUO) FBI IIR 4 214 4522 09; 27 February 2009; 2 February 2009; "(U//FOUO) Targeting of Law Enforcement by the East Tennessee Vice Lords to Procure Weapons, Ammunition and Body Armor"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source has provided credible information to the police and the FBI in the past.

⁵ (U//LES) Electronic Communication; 9 December 2009; 17 April 2009; Intelligence Report; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a law enforcement officer with the DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

⁶ (U//LES) FBI; Electronic Communication; 9 December 2009; 15 June 2009; Intelligence Report; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a law enforcement officer with the North Miami Beach Police Department.

⁷ (U//LES) FBI; Electronic Communication; 9 December 2009; 26 March 2009; Intelligence Report; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a law enforcement officer with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

⁸ (U//LES) FBI Electronic Communication; 19 September 2008; 9 September 2008; (U//LES) Theft of Government Property; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is an FBI agent.

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