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COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime is a category of transnational, national, or local groupings of highly centralized enterprises run by criminals who intend to engage in illegal activity, most commonly for money and profit. Some criminal organizations, such as terrorist groups, are politically motivated. Sometimes criminal organizations force people to do business with them, such as when a gang extorts money from shopkeepers for so-called "protection». Gangs may become disciplined enough to be considered organized. A criminal organization or gang can also be referred to as a mafia, mob, or crime syndicate; the network, subculture and community of criminals may be referred to as the underworld. European sociologists (e.g. Diego Gambetta) define the mafia as a type of organized crime group that specializes in the supply of extra-legal protection and quasi law enforcement. Gambetta's classic work on the Sicilian Mafia generates an economic study of the mafia, which exerts great influence on studies of the Russian Mafia, the Chinese Mafia, Hong Kong Triads and the Japanese Yakuza.

In the United States, the Organized Crime Control Act (1970) defines organized crime as "the unlawful activities of a highly organized, disciplined association». Criminal activity as a structured process is referred to as racketeering. In the UK, police estimate that organized crime involves up to 38,000 people operating in 6,000 various groups. Due to the escalating violence of Mexico's drug war, a report issued by the United States Department of Justice characterizes the Mexican drug cartels as the "greatest organized crime threat to the United States".

In the USA there is an extensive system of subdivisions fighting with the organized crime:

1. The United States Coast Guard (USCG), which is a branch of the United States Armed Forces. The United States Coast Guard carries out three basic roles, which are further subdivided into eleven statutory missions. The three roles are: maritime safety, maritime security, and maritime stewardship. The eleven statutory missions as defined by law are divided into homeland security missions and non-homeland security missions. Non-homeland security missions include: marine safety, search and rescue, aids to navigation, living marine resources (fisheries law enforcement), marine environmental protection, and ice operations. Homeland security missions include: Ports, waterways, and coastal security (PWCS); drug interdiction; migrant interdiction; defense readiness; and other law enforcement.

2. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforce federal laws governing border control, customs, trade and immigration to promote homeland security and public safety. ICE was created in 2003 through a merger of the investigative and interior enforcement elements of the former U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

3. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the largest federal law enforcement agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security. It is charged with regulating and facilitating international trade, collecting import duties, and enforcing U.S. regulations, including trade, customs, and immigration. Its primary mission is to safeguard America's borders thereby protecting the public from dangerous people and materials while enhancing the Nation's global economic competitiveness by enabling legitimate trade and travel.

4. The U.S. Secret Service. It fights crime on a global scale through its field offices located in the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The agency works closely with local, state and federal law enforcement organizations. These entities are valued partners of the Secret Service, and they are integral to the agency's investigative and protective endeavors.

5. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is a law enforcement agency in the United States' Department of Justice that protects communities from violent criminals, criminal organizations, the illegal use and trafficking of firearms, the illegal use and storage of explosives, acts of arson and bombings, acts of terrorism, and the illegal diversion of alcohol and tobacco products. It collaborates with communities, industries, law enforcement, and public safety agencies to safeguard the public it serves through information sharing, training, research, and use of technology.

6. The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States and bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States; or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States; and to recommend and support non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets.

7. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI's main goal is to protect and defend the United States, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners. Currently, the FBI's top priorities are:

- to protect the United States from terrorist attacks,
- to protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage,
- to protect the United States against cyber-based attacks and high-technology crimes,
- to combat public corruption at all levels,
- to protect civil rights,
- to combat transnational/national criminal organizations and enterprises,
- to combat major white-collar crime,
- to combat significant violent crime,
- to support federal, state, local and international partners, and
- to upgrade technology to enable, and further, the successful performances of its missions as stated above.

8. The United States Marshals Service. The Marshals Service is responsible for apprehending wanted fugitives, providing protection for the federal judiciary, transporting federal prisoners, protecting endangered federal witnesses, and managing assets seized from criminal enterprises. The Marshals Service is responsible for 55.2% of arrests of federal fugitives.

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