Federal Tactical Teams

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Summary

In 2014 and 2015, reports of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams used by law enforcement agencies in allegedly questionable raids or in what appeared to be aggressive responses to public disturbances generated interest among policymakers in federal tactical teams. There is no single source for data on federal tactical teams. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) surveyed federal agencies with law enforcement personnel to collect basic information on any tactical teams they maintain.

The number of tactical teams has proliferated among American law enforcement since the first SWAT team was formed by the Los Angeles Police Department in the 1960s. Research has shown that most law enforcement agencies now have a tactical team. Data also show that these teams are being deployed more frequently. As the acronym SWAT implies, such teams are deployed against particularly dangerous criminals and in challenging situations. This report provides baseline data on federal tactical teams.

Thirteen agencies that responded to a CRS questionnaire reported having 271 tactical teams. The federal-wide number is almost certainly higher, as the U.S. Park Police and the U.S. Capitol Police did not respond to CRS. Nearly all tactical teams (93%) are in agencies that are a part of the Department of Justice (213 teams) or the Department of Homeland Security (39 teams). A small proportion (2%) of all federal law enforcement officers serve on tactical teams, and for most of those who do, it is an ancillary duty. Data collected by CRS also suggest a 90% increase from 1,171 to 2,227 deployments by federal tactical teams between FY2005 and FY2014.

There are several issues policymakers might consider should Congress take up legislation or conduct oversight related to how federal agencies use tactical teams. Potential legislative issues include the following:

- Is there a need to collect data on federal tactical teams? If so, what data should be collected, who should collect it, and how frequently should it be disseminated?
- Should Congress place limits on when tactical teams can be deployed?
- Should federal tactical operations be centralized in one agency?
- Should federal tactical officers be required to participate in a basic training course that focuses on the skills necessary for participating on a tactical team? Should there be universal standards for the ongoing training of tactical officers?

Potential oversight issues include the following:

- What types of operations are federal agencies conducting with their tactical teams?
- Where are tactical officers receiving their training? What type of training are they receiving?
- How are decisions made about when to deploy tactical teams?
- What are the results of tactical operations?

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Several recent incidents in which Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams were reportedly used in questionable raids or in aggressive responses to public disturbances generated interest among policymakers in federal tactical teams (e.g., SWAT, special response, emergency response, or active shooter teams).[1] Legislation has been introduced in the current Congress that would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to issue an annual report on federal tactical teams.[2] Other legislation has been introduced that would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to collect, analyze, and publish data on federal, state, and local tactical teams.[3]

As indicated by the requirements that would be put in place by legislation introduced in the current Congress, there is a dearth of data on federal tactical teams. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) surveyed federal agencies with law enforcement personnel[4] to collect basic information on any tactical teams they maintain, and the results are presented in this report. The report provides a brief overview of the development of tactical teams at the state and local level and the concerns raised by their expansion. It then discusses the composition of these teams in the federal government. It concludes with a discussion of potential issues for policymakers to consider if they take up legislation or conduct oversight related to how the federal government uses tactical teams.

What is a SWAT Team?

While there is no universal definition of what constitutes a SWAT team (or police paramilitary units (PPUs), as they are sometimes called in related academic literature)[5] the National Tactical Officers Association defines a SWAT team as a "designated law enforcement team, whose members are recruited, selected, trained, equipped and assigned to resolved critical incidents involving a threat to public safety which would otherwise exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement first responders and/or investigative units."[6] Further, "[t]he primary characteristics of SWAT [teams] that distinguishes it from other units is the focus of effort. SWAT teams are focused on tactical solutions, as opposed to other functions, such as investigations."[7]

A scholar on police militarization notes that PPUs can be distinguished from traditional police in the following ways:

- PPUs are equipped with an array of militaristic equipment and technology (e.g., H&K MP5 submachine guns, semi-automatic shotguns, M16 assault rifles, and sniper rifles).
- PPUs have an array of "less-than-lethal" weapons and technology that they use when conducting "dynamic entries" (e.g., "flash-bang" grenades, tear gas, bean bag guns, battering rams, hydraulic door-jamb spreaders, and armored personnel carriers).

[1] American Civil Liberties Union, *War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing*, New York, June 2014; Niraj Chokshi, "Militarized Police in Ferguson Unsettles Some; Pentagon Gives Cities Equipment," *Washington Post*, August 14, 2014.

[2] See S. 1441.

[3] See S. 1245 and H.R. 2326.

[4] "Law enforcement personnel" were identified as employees of the agency who are authorized to carry firearms and make arrests.

[5] In this report the terms SWAT, tactical teams, and PPU will be used interchangeably.

[6] National Tactical Officers Association, *SWAT Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies*, September 2008, p. 2.

[7] Ibid.

- PPU organizational structures are modeled after the military and foreign special operations teams. They train collectively under a military command structure and discipline.
- PPUs are traditionally deployed for "high-risk" situations. High-risk situations are those that require a squad of police officers who are trained as use-of-force specialists.[8]

The Debate Over SWAT Teams

The debate about the proliferation and use of SWAT teams is framed by law enforcement's desire to protect their own from death or bodily injury in hazardous situations and concerns over how and when law enforcement uses force against citizens. A scholar on police militarization summarizes the debate over the expansion of PPUs as such:

> To many people, even among academics, the military model represents constraint, discipline, honor, control, competence, and even a type of patriotism. To others it stands for tyranny, state violence, human rights abuses, war, and an ideology which stresses that problems are best handled by technologized state force. Some will see the rise and normalization of PPUs as a necessary and rational approach to today's crime, gang, and drug problems; others will view it as bureaucracy building and as evidence of a government in crisis moving towards a police state.[9]

Theories About the Proliferation of SWAT Teams

Some scholarly speculation has addressed the forces driving the expansion of PPUs. For example, the "war on drugs" and the "war on terror" may have given rise to the militarization of police by providing a crisis in which law enforcement could expand its size, scope, and power.[10] The "war on drugs" and the "war on terror" may have increased demands from the public for the government to do something about the crises.[11] Additionally, cooperation between the military and law enforcement as they conducted joint operations in the "wars" may have contributed to the expansion of PPUs.[12] Finally, technological improvements have lowered the cost for law enforcement to adopt military technology. Technology that was once exclusively used by the military—such as facial recognition systems, thermal imaging, and satellite monitoring—can now be used by law enforcement.[13]

[8] Peter B. Kraska and Victor E. Kappeler, "Militarizing American Police: The Rise and Normalization of Paramilitary Units," *Social Problems*, vol. 44, no. 1, February 1997, pp. 3-4 (hereinafter, Militarizing American Police).

[9] Peter B. Kraska and Louis J. Cubellis, "Militarizing Mayberry and Beyond: Making Sense of American Paramilitary Policing," *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 4, December 1997, p. 627 (hereinafter, Militarizing Mayberry and Beyond.)

[10] Abigail R. Hall and Christopher J. Coyne, "The Militarization of U.S. Domestic Policing," *The Independent Review*, vol. 17, no. 4, Spring 2013, p. 489.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 495.

[13] Ibid., p. 490.

Background on How SWAT Teams are Used by State and Local Law Enforcement

This section provides a brief review of the literature on SWAT teams. To date the literature on this topic has focused exclusively on state and local law enforcement's tactical teams. The purpose of this literature review is twofold. First, it provides an overview of the findings of research that might have generated interest among policymakers in how federal law enforcement agencies are using their tactical teams. Second, it provides a basis for the questions submitted to federal agencies with law enforcement personnel by CRS to inquire about their tactical teams.

SWAT teams started to appear in the late 1960s. A series of high-profile incidents, such as a sniper attack at the University of Texas-Austin and the Watts riots in Los Angeles, raised concerns that regular law enforcement was not capable of responding effectively to some violent episodes.[14] As a result, some law enforcement agencies started to form SWAT teams as a way to handle extraordinarily dangerous situations.[15] From the start, tactics employed by SWAT teams were designed to protect the safety of officers, the public, victims, and offenders.

The Los Angeles Police Department created the first SWAT team in the late 1960s. Since then PPUs have proliferated to the point that most law enforcement agencies now have them. A 1996 survey of law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions of 50,000 or more people found that approximately 89% of responding agencies reporting having a PPU in that year, compared to 59% in 1982.[16] Another 1996 survey found that for law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions of between 25,000 and 50,000 people, 65% of responding agencies reported having a PPU in that year,[17] compared to only 20% at the beginning of 1980.[18] Of note, it does not appear that any agency or organization regularly collects and reports data on tactical teams; therefore, the surveys of PPUs conducted in 1996 provide the most complete data currently available.

Data show that PPUs were deployed with increasing frequency during the 1980s and 1990s. There was a reported 1,400% increase in the total number of PPU deployments between 1980 and 2000 (an estimated 45,000 PPU deployments in 2000 compared to an average of 3,000 deployments in 1980).[19]

Data from an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) study also suggest that racial minorities are more likely to be the target of PPU raids.[20] In its study of PPU raids conducted by 20 law enforcement agencies in 11 states, the ACLU found that 39% of people affected by PPU raids were black, 11% were Latino, and 20% were white.[21] Data on the race of affected people were not available in 30% of the cases. The ACLU found that minorities were more likely to be affected by

[14] David A. Klinger and Jeff Rojek, *A Multi-method Study of Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Executive Summary*, final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant award #2000-IJ-CX-0003, August 2008, p. 1 (hereinafter, *A Multi-method Study of Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Executive Summary*.)

[15] Ibid.

[16] Militarizing American Police, p. 6.

[17] Militarizing Mayberry and Beyond, p. 612.

[18] Ibid., p. 613.

[19] Peter B. Kraska, "Militarization and Policing—Its Relevance to 21st Century Police," *Policing*, vol. 1, no. 4, 2007, p. 6 (hereinafter, Militarization and Policing—Its Relevance to 21st Century Police).

[20] American Civil Liberties Union, *War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing*, New York, June 2014, p. 35 (hereinafter, *War Comes Home*).

[21] Ibid.

PPU drug raids; 61% of all people affected by drug raids were minorities.[22] Minorities were also more likely to be affected by PPUs raids for serving search warrants; 54% of all people affected by search warrant raids were minorities.[23] This stands in contrast to raids where whites were more likely to be affected. In those cases, PPUs were more likely to be deployed for situations involving active shooters, barricaded suspects, or hostage situations.

The increase in the number of PPU deployments might not be a concern if it were related to PPUs' essential functions—namely reactive deployments of high-risk specialists for particularly dangerous events in progress, such as hostage, sniper, or terrorist situations. However, there is concern that PPU deployments are increasing because of "mission creep." Data show that nearly 80% of current PPU deployments are for proactive drug raids or to execute search warrants.[24] In addition, it has been reported that PPUs are increasingly being used to conduct routine patrol work in crime "hot spots."[25] Such uses seem to veer away from the extraordinarily violent or dangerous situations for which PPUs were created.

While it appears that in recent years police have deployed PPUs more frequently and used them more expansively, it is unclear whether this has led to increased violent confrontations between police and the people they serve. Two researchers who conducted a national study of PPUs in law enforcement agencies with more than 50 sworn officers reported that there is a high degree of professionalism in how PPUs conduct their operations. They concluded that members of PPUs conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their training and that they do not frequently use deadly force to resolve situations.[26] The researchers note that "officers took suspects under fire in just 342 of the tens of thousands of operations they undertook."[27] However, they also note that there were an unacceptably high number of accidental firearms discharges reported during PPU operations.[28]

Even though some research suggests that PPUs conduct their missions with a high level of professionalism, few studies have probed the effect that increased reliance on PPUs may have on public trust of police. Most police departments have standards in place that provide for PPU deployment for hostage taking, active shooters, barricaded suspects, emergency scenarios, or serving "high-risk" warrants (though what constitutes a high-risk scenario is largely left to the discretion of the officers involved).[29] Research from the ACLU raises questions about whether there is enough oversight of how PPUs are deployed. The ACLU reports that state or local authorities conduct little oversight of how law enforcement agencies are using PPUs.[30] In addition, it appears that many law enforcement agencies do not collect consistent data on PPU deployments—and they are reluctant to share it when they do.[31]

Professionalism depends on training, but training appears to be highly localized, varying from agency to agency. Training provides PPUs with opportunities to identify weak points in their

[22] Ibid., p. 36.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Militarization and Policing—Its Relevance to 21st Century Police, pp 6-7.

[25] Ibid., p. 7.

[26] *A Multi-method Study of Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Executive Summary*, pp. 12-13.

[27] Ibid., p. 7.

[28] Ibid., p. 14.

[29] *War Comes Home*, p. 32.

[30] Ibid., p. 28.

[31] Ibid., p 27.

capabilities, such as conditions that lead to the accidental discharge of firearms, and make efforts to strengthen them. A large majority (81%) of teams reported training between 8 and 20 hours per officer per month.[32] Also, officers on part-time PPUs tend to train less than officers on full-time teams.[33] A national study of PPUs concluded that PPUs that are "currently on the lower end of the training time distribution should seek to increase the time they devote to training. Because the potential costs associated with [PPU] failure are quite high—the unnecessary loss of life and limb, as well as the potential fallout from [those actions]—[PPUs] should be encouraged to undertake the sort of rigorous training that will permit them to identify and correct problems before they lead to operational failure."[34]

As suggested above, there is concern that the reported normalization of PPUs is changing the face of policing in the United States and the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the citizens they serve. Some argue that militarized training and equipment used by PPUs can promote a soldier's mentality among police officers, which can act as a barrier to police-community ties by fostering an "us versus them" attitude.[35] Also, a militaristic ideology and organization may be adverse to democratic approaches to overseeing and administering police functions.[36] The military model arguably places a greater emphasis on the crime-fighting role of police and a warlike approach to solving social problems, such as drug use or gangs.[37]

It has also been argued that law enforcement agencies are integrating PPUs into their community policing strategies. Research on SWAT teams indicates that many law enforcement agencies believe they play an important role in community policing strategies.[38] In addition, scholars argue that "community policing" is just a way for law enforcement agencies to present their old ways in a new package. Two scholars note, "[law enforcement agencies] are managing to reconstitute their image away from the citizen-controller paradigm based in the autonomous legal order and towards a more comforting Normal Rockwell image—police as kind, community care-takers."[39] They contend that community policing is more about police transforming their image rather than the substance of their work.

As previously noted, the literature on PPUs has focused on their use by state and local law enforcement. Any of the issues raised in the literature are specific to state and local law enforcement PPUs, but they might serve as a basis for inquiry about how federal agencies use their PPUs. The lack of literature on federal tactical teams posed a barrier for CRS to respond to congressional inquiries about the topic. As such, CRS conducted its own inquiry into which federal agencies have tactical teams and how they are used. The report now turns to the results of CRS's study.

[32] *A Multi-method Study of Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Executive Summary*, p. 5.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., p. 14.

[35] Militarizing Mayberry and Beyond, p. 609.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Militarizing American Police, p. 13.

[39] Victor E. Kappeler and Peter B. Kraska, "A Textual Critique of Community Policing: Police Adaption to High Modernity," *Policing: An International Journal of Policing Strategies & Management,* vol. 21, no. 2 (1998), p. 306.

Federal Tactical Teams

CRS received data from 65 of the 71 federal agencies that employ law enforcement personnel.[40] Of the 65 responding agencies, 13 reported that they had tactical teams:[41]

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
- Bureau of Prisons (BOP);
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA);
- U.S. Marshals Service (USMS);
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF);
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP);
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE);
- U.S. Secret Service;
- Bureau of Diplomatic Security;
- Pentagon Force Protection Agency;
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Police;
- National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA); and
- National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) Police.

Number of Tactical Teams

These 13 agencies reported having a total of 271 tactical teams (**Table B-1**). Some 145 of those (54%) were part of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Nearly all tactical teams (93%) were in agencies that are part of the Department of Justice (DOJ, 213 teams) or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 39 teams).

While the term Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) has become synonymous with tactical teams, many federal agencies do not refer to their teams as SWAT (**Table B-2**). The FBI was the only federal agency that reported having SWAT teams. Many federal agencies refer to their tactical teams as Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) or Special Response Teams (SRTs).

Number of Tactical Officers

A small proportion of all federal law enforcement officers serve on tactical teams. Responding agencies reported employing 145,045 law enforcement officers (**Table B-1**). Of those, 2,888 (2%) were assigned to work on a tactical team. The data show that most law enforcement officers serve on tactical teams as an ancillary duty; 906 (31%) were assigned to a team full-time. The DEA, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Pentagon Force Protection Agency, and NNSA were the only agencies that reported that all of their tactical officers served full-time. All members of the FBI's

[40] The methodology CRS used to survey federal agencies that employ law enforcement personnel to inquire about whether they maintain tactical teams and a list of the questions CRS submitted to these agencies is provided in **Appendix A**. A list of agencies that responded to the CRS questionnaire can be found in **Table B-1**.

[41] The National Parks Service (NPS) did not respond to the CRS questionnaire. NPS's website reports that the U.S. Park Police have a SWAT team that was established in 1975; see http://www.nps.gov/subjects/uspp/special-forces-office.htm. The U.S. Capitol Police Department also declined to respond to the CRS questionnaire, media reports indicate that the department has a tactical unit called the Containment and Emergency Response Team (CERT); see http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/18/navy-yard-capitol-police-swat-team-recalled/2834079/.

Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) and CBP's Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) serve full-time. Nearly all (93%) of the agents who serve on CBP's SRT serve full-time.

The Role of Federal Tactical Teams

In general, federal tactical teams can be divided into two classes. There are tactical teams that support law enforcement officers who investigate and respond to criminal activity (i.e., the CBP, ICE, FBI, ATF, USMS, and DEA, though the DEA reported that their teams do not operate domestically), and there are tactical teams that provide support to law enforcement officers who are responsible for providing security for federal property and/or personnel (i.e., the BOP, Secret Service, Pentagon Force Protection Agency, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, NIH Police, NASA Police, and NNSA). **Table B-3** provides descriptions of the roles for federal tactical teams.

It appears that many of the tactical teams that support law enforcement agencies whose primary role is to provide security would not conduct operations off federal property. For example, the BOP's tactical teams most likely would not conduct operations outside of a federal prison. This would make these tactical teams somewhat different that PPUs operated by state and local law enforcement and tactical teams operated by federal law enforcement agencies with investigatory responsibilities in that they would not conduct operations in people's homes or on private property. However, while on federal property their functions and operations resemble those of a regular PPU.

Within these two broad classes, federal tactical teams have a variety of responsibilities. In general, agencies appear to deploy their tactical team(s) in situations that they feel are beyond the abilities of their regular law enforcement personnel or in instances where a higher level of security needs to be provided. Responses from the 13 agencies that reported having tactical teams show that the teams are deployed for a variety of reasons (**Table B-6**). Some of these reasons are consistent with how SWAT teams are used by local law enforcement agencies: serving high-risk warrants or used for high-risk apprehensions (six agencies); responding to active shooters (four); rescuing hostages (five); responding to terrorist attacks (four); and responding to barricaded suspects (five).

However, agencies also identified reasons why their tactical teams would be deployed that are related to the unique jurisdiction of some federal law enforcement agencies. For example, seven agencies indicated that they would deploy their teams to provide protection for high-risk targets such as government officials or foreign dignitaries. Four agencies reported that they would deploy their teams to provide security at special events. Also, the U.S. Marshals Service reported that its tactical team can be used to apprehend fugitives, provide witness security, or transport high-risk or dangerous prisoners. The NIH Police and the NNSA use their tactical teams to provide security for sensitive materials, such as nuclear material. The DEA's tactical teams conduct counter-drug operations overseas and provide assistance to foreign governments' drug enforcement agencies. The BOP deploys its tactical teams to respond to institutional disturbances.

In addition, four agencies reported that they deploy their tactical teams to help respond in cases of natural disasters; three agencies reported deploying their teams to conduct high-risk surveillance; four agencies reported they would deploy their teams to respond to terrorist attacks; and two agencies would deploy their teams to provide support to undercover operations.

Tactical Team Training

Agencies reported that officers who serve on tactical teams receive their training from a variety of sources, and many indicated that their officers receive training from more than one source.

- A majority of agencies that reported having tactical teams (11 of 13) provided some training to their tactical officers in-house.
- Two agencies reported that their tactical officers receive some training through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).
- Four agencies reported that their tactical officers receive some training from outside organizations or experts such as the National Tactical Officers Association.
- Two agencies reported that their tactical officers receive training from other law enforcement agencies.

The number of reported training hours for tactical teams ranged from 3 to 160 hours per month (see **Table B-4**). The DEA reported that its tactical teams train 160 hours per month (when they are not deployed), which is a clear outlier. The next highest number of training hours per month was 80 for the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team. The average amount of training hours per month for all 13 responding agencies was 36. The median number of training hours was 22 hours per month.

On average, full-time tactical teams train more frequently (65 hours per month) than part-time teams (19 hours per month). Even if the DEA is excluded, full-time teams train an average of 41 hours per month.

When Were Tactical Teams Established?

The earliest that any responding agencies reported establishing their tactical teams was 1971 (the USMS Special Operations Group and the Secret Service Counter Sniper Branch). The majority of tactical teams (232 of the 271) were established prior to 1990 (see **Table B-5**). It was reported that the 39 remaining tactical teams were founded in 1996 or later; two-thirds of these were DHS tactical teams. The most recently established tactical teams are all a part of DHS.[42] ICE established 11 of its 17 Homeland Security Investigation SRTs and all 8 of its Enforcement and Removal Operations SRTs between 2005 and 2013. CBP established its Office of Field Operations SRT in 2007.

Tactical Team Deployments

Eleven of the 13 agencies that reported having tactical teams were able to provide data on how many times those teams were deployed each fiscal year from FY2005 to FY2014 (see **Table B-7**). However, two agencies, the USMS and the NASA Police, only provided an annual average number of deployments. Also, three agencies submitted data for fewer than 10 fiscal years: CBP (FY2007-FY2014),[43] ICE (FY2006-FY2014), and the NIH Police (FY2014).[44] **Figure 1** presents data on the number of deployments for federal tactical teams for the past 10 fiscal years.

The data presented in **Figure 1** must be interpreted with caution. Not all agencies were able to provide data on the number of times their teams deployed. As noted, two agencies only provided an average annual number of deployments, and not all responding agencies provided data for

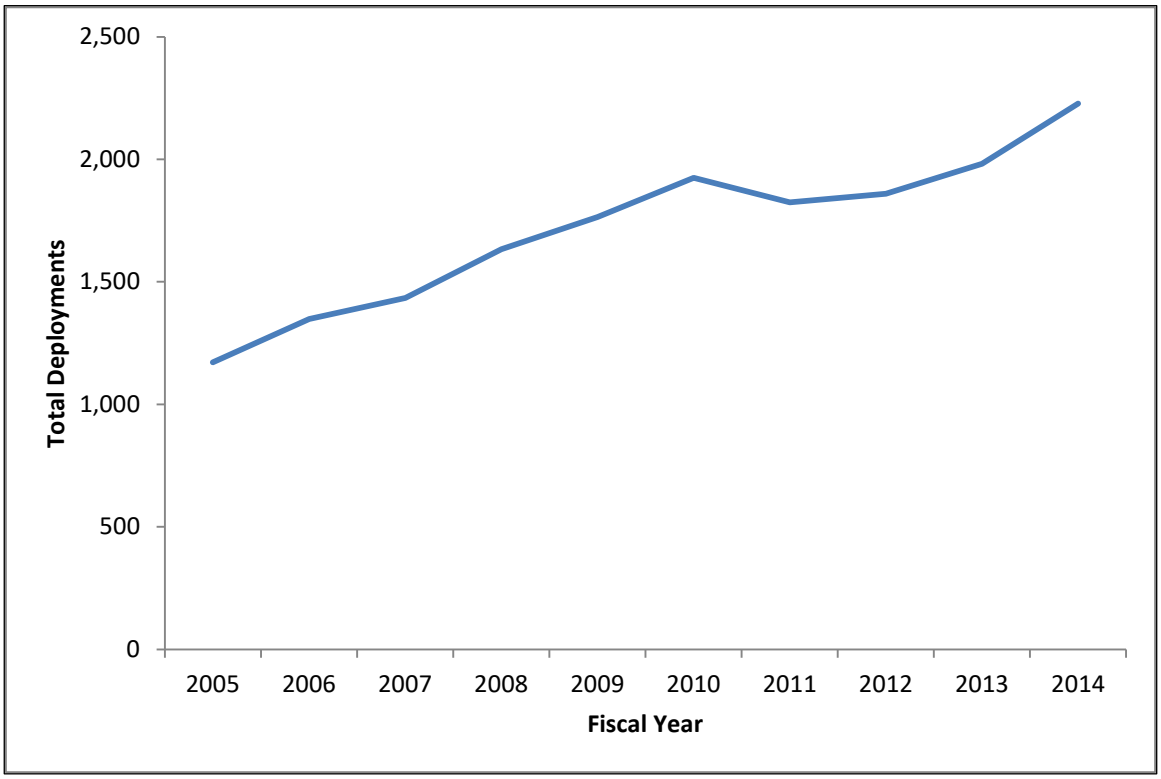
[42] The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-296) transferred the functions, relevant funding, and most of the personnel of 22 agencies and offices to the new Department of Homeland Security (created by the act). It is possible that some of DHS's tactical teams were established as part of a different department.

[43] CBP only provided deployment data for its Special Response Team, which was established in 2007. CBP did not provide deployment data for its Border Patrol Tactical Unit.

[44] The NIH police reported that it did not collect data on the number of times its Special Response Team was deployed prior to 2014.

each of the 10 fiscal years. Also, the data are limited to the past 10 fiscal years. So while the data suggest that tactical team deployments have been increasing, it is possible that the reported number of deployments in FY2005 was a historical low and the number of reported deployments in the later fiscal years is a return to historical norms. As such, the data can provide some insight into the trend in the number of federal tactical team deployments over the past 10 fiscal years, but the data do not show the *actual* number of deployments each fiscal year.

Figure 1. Estimated Number of Deployments for Responding Federal Tactical Teams, FY2005-FY2014



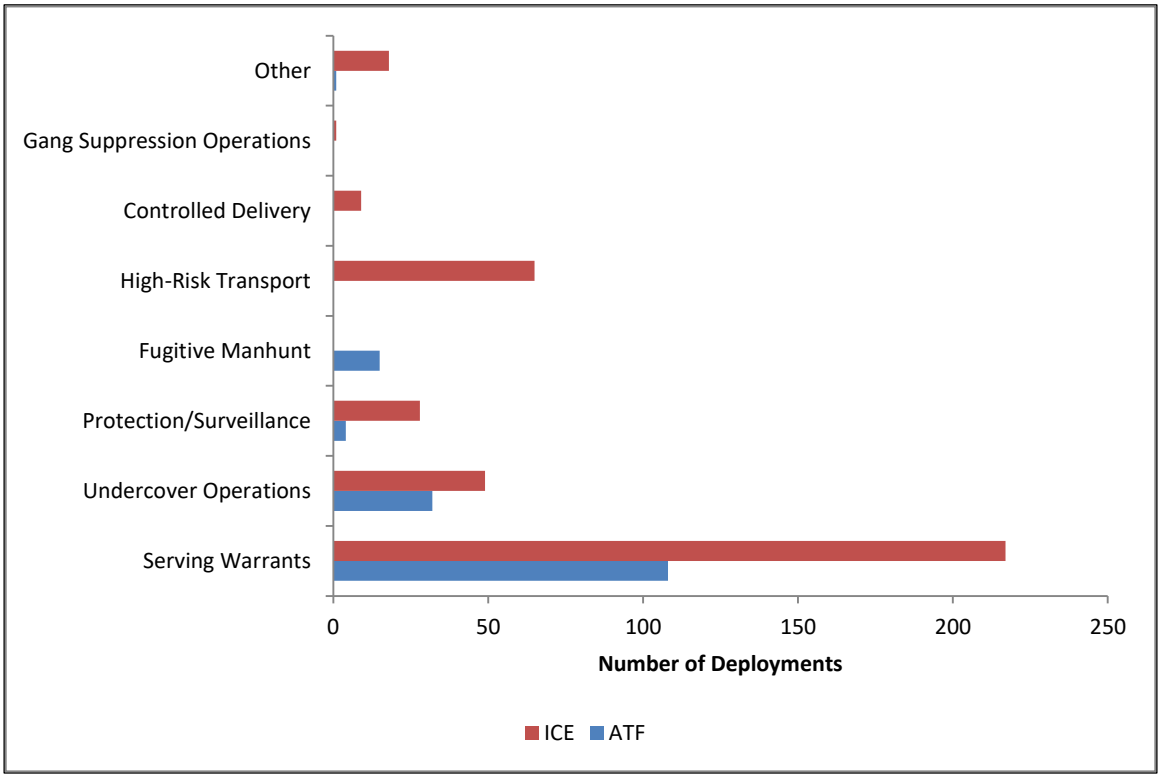
Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Notes: The USMS and the NASA police only reported the average annual number of deployments over the entire time period for their tactical teams. The average number of deployments was used each fiscal year when calculating the total number of deployments. For example, the USMS reported that on average its Special Operations Group (SOG) deployed 28 times each fiscal year, so when calculating the total of tactical team deployments each fiscal year it was assumed that the USMS SOG deployed 28 times each fiscal year.

Overall, the number of federal tactical team deployments appears to be increasing. The total number of reported deployments increased 90% between FY2005 and FY2014. Five agencies—the FBI, ATF, ICE, CBP, and Pentagon Force Protection Agency—accounted for more than 90% of the annual number of tactical team deployments during this period. The FBI accounted for the highest *number* of deployments each year, though their proportion of the total number of deployments steadily decreased from 72% in FY2005 to 48% in FY2014. This was largely the result of the ATF, CBP, ICE, and the Pentagon Force Protection Agency deploying their tactical teams with greater frequency. FBI deployments increased from 840 to 1,065 between FY2005 and FY2014. During the same period the number of deployments by the Pentagon Force Protection Agency increased from 144 to 255. ICE deployments increased from 134 in FY2006 to 398 in FY2014, while CBP deployments increased from 2 in FY2007 to 225 in FY2014.

ATF and ICE provided data on how their tactical teams were deployed in FY2014 (**Figure 2**). The data show that the tactical teams for these two agencies were primarily used to serve warrants. Seven out of every eight deployments for the ATF SRT were to execute a warrant or to support undercover operations. Approximately 85% of the ICE SRT deployments were for serving warrants, supporting undercover operations, and conducting high-risk transports. These data suggest that like PPUs maintained by state and local law enforcement, federal tactical teams are being "normalized" in regular law enforcement operations. That is to say, they are being used for operations beyond those for which PPUs were originally established: responding to active shooters, barricaded suspects, or hostage situations.

Figure 2. Type of Deployments for ATF and ICE Tactical Teams, FY2014



Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

It is not exactly clear why there may have been an increase in the number of tactical team deployments. One explanation could be that there are more tactical teams, given that DHS has established many of its teams since 2005. Another could be that federal agencies have gotten better at tracking the number of times their tactical teams deploy. Yet another could be that the missions of the teams have expanded or federal agencies have chosen to use the teams in more expansive ways under existing missions. Data presented above suggest this might be part of the explanation. Though they are only for two agencies in one fiscal year, it appears that federal tactical teams are being used in ways other than responding to high-risk situations. The data available for FY2014 deployments suggest that serving warrants is an important role for federal tactical teams. While the FBI did not provide data on how their SWAT teams and the HRT were deployed in FY2014, it reported to CRS that the vast majority of SWAT team deployments are in support of FBI investigations serving high-risk arrest and search warrants.

Issues for Congress

There are several issues related to federal tactical teams Congress might consider. Some of the issues are legislative, some are related to oversight.

Potential Legislative Issues

Potential legislative issues might include the following:

- Is there a need to collect data on federal tactical teams? If so, what data should be collected, who should collect it, and how frequently should it be disseminated?
- Should Congress place limits on when tactical teams can be deployed?
- Should federal tactical team operations be centralized in one agency?
- Should federal tactical officers be required to participate in a basic training course that focuses on the skills necessary for participating on a tactical team? Should there be standards for the ongoing training for tactical officers?

Collecting Data on Federal Tactical Teams

As discussed at the beginning of this report, there does not appear to be any single source for a list of federal agencies that maintain tactical teams, let alone a source for more detailed data such as how many officers serve on those teams, how frequently they are deployed, the type of missions they undertake, and the result of those missions. One issue policymakers might consider is whether a federal agency should be designated to collect and disseminate data on federal tactical teams. For example, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts a quadrennial survey of federal agencies to collect data on federal law enforcement personnel.[45] It might be that BJS could expand its efforts to collect data on federal tactical teams.

Policymakers might also consider how frequently the data should be reported and collected relative to the effort required to collect the data. For example, Congress might want data on federal tactical teams more frequently than once every four years. However, if an agency like BJS were required to collect and report data annually, it might have to dedicate more resources toward those efforts.

Another issue Congress might consider is what type of data should be collected, especially if they were made public. While collecting and reporting data on federal tactical team operations could promote more transparency—and there have been calls for more transparency related to tactical teams[46]—law enforcement might not want to make all details about tactical team deployments public.

Limits on Deployments

Some policymakers might consider whether Congress should place limits on when federal agencies can deploy their tactical teams. As noted earlier, the literature on PPUs operated by state and local law enforcement agencies indicates that their missions have expanded to include operations outside of the original intent for the formation of these teams, namely to respond to extraordinarily violent or dangerous situations. Data collected by CRS suggests that federal

[45] The most recent BJS report on federal law enforcement officers was released in June 2012 and presents data for 2008. It is available online at http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fleo08.pdf.

[46] See, for example, pp. 27-31 of *War Comes Home.*

tactical teams are engaging in some of the same kind of operations (e.g., serving warrants or supporting undercover operations). The expansion of tactical team operations into more traditional policing responsibilities is sometimes referred to as "mission creep." Passing legislation that requires federal agencies to deploy their teams only in certain circumstances could be one way for Congress to limit "mission creep."

While it might be justifiable to try to place legislative limits on when a tactical team could be deployed, this could limit the discretion of law enforcement agencies to deploy their teams in situations where it might be appropriate to do so. It might be that law enforcement personnel on the scene are the best suited to make determinations about whether a tactical team should be deployed. There might be questions about whether policymakers could legislate all of the situations under which federal agencies would be allowed to deploy their teams. Also, if Congress wishes to restrict when federal agencies can deploy their tactical teams, it would probably require legislators to define "tactical team." If Congress were to do so, federal agencies may see an incentive to reorganize their teams to avoid restrictions on how and when they are used.

Rather than placing statutory restrictions on when tactical teams could be deployed, legislators might consider whether excessive deployment of federal tactical teams could be limited through more oversight of how agencies use their teams. Additional oversight might provide federal agencies with an indication of when Congress believes it is acceptable for tactical teams to be deployed without establishing rigid rules for their deployment.

Centralizing Federal Tactical Operations

Some policymakers might consider if it would be more efficient to have one agency be responsible for conducting tactical operations for all federal agencies. This option might make it easier for Congress to conduct oversight of federal tactical operations because all tactical teams would be the responsibility of one federal agency instead of more than a dozen. It might also help promote more effective tactical team operations. It is possible that if one agency were responsible for conducting all tactical operations, the teams would have enough operations to justify officers serving on them full-time. This could potentially mean that officers would receive more training, and the training would be more consistent because it would be overseen by one agency. Also, operations might be conducted in a more consistent manner if they were carried out by one agency.

There are potential drawbacks to a centralized approach, however. There could be questions about whether one agency's tactical teams would be able to conduct the variety of operations for which federal teams are currently used. Would one agency be able to respond in a timely manner to all of the potential calls for service, especially in remote areas? There have been problems in the past with agencies cooperating on criminal investigations, so it is possible that there could be tensions between an agency requesting tactical support and the sending agency providing it.

The centralized approach might also require Congress to provide additional resources to the agency that would be responsible for conducting tactical operations. If the officers serving on the tactical team were full-time, and since the agency would be conducting all tactical operations, it is probable that the agency would have to either replace officers who were assigned to work on the tactical team or hire new officers to serve on the team. However, additional funding for the dedicated agency might not be offset by savings from shuttering other agencies' tactical teams. Data show that most officers serve on tactical teams part-time. As such, if an agency no longer had a tactical team, it would probably not lay off the officer; rather, the officer would probably dedicate his or her time to non-tactical law enforcement responsibilities. Therefore, the agency would probably not reduce its budget by cutting law enforcement officer positions.

Training Requirements

Research on tactical teams at the state and local levels shows the importance of regular training for their members. There are two issues policymakers might consider related to training. First, should all tactical officers who serve on teams be required to participate in a basic tactical team training course provided by the same agency? The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) does not provide a mandatory training course for tactical officers.[47] FLETC does, however, have active shooter, basic tactical medicine, law enforcement rifle, and use of force in service training programs.[48] The concept of all tactical officers receiving basic training from one agency could raise another issue: would this requirement apply to agencies like the FBI, DEA, and Secret Service that currently have their own training academies?

A second issue might be whether there should be any standards for the amount of continuing training tactical officers receive. For example, should there be a minimum number of hours tactical officers should train each month? Should there be requirements for who can provide the training? The literature on tactical teams at the state and local levels raised concerns about tactical teams not training frequently enough and tactical officers receiving training from private organizations or groups of individuals that promote a more militaristic approach to tactical operations (such as receiving training from military special operations personnel).[49]

Potential Issues for Oversight

There are several issues policymakers could consider should Congress hold hearings on how the federal government is using tactical teams. These issues might include the following:

- What types of operations are federal agencies conducting with their tactical teams?
- Where are tactical officers receiving their training? What type of training are they receiving?
- How are decisions made about when to deploy a tactical team?
- What are the results of tactical operations?
- Do agencies have a procedure in place to review operations that were conducted incorrectly (e.g., if a search warrant is served on the wrong residence)? Is there a way for citizens to submit a formal complaint if they feel that they were targeted by an improper tactical operation?

[47] Telephone conversation with FLETC on July 22, 2015.

[48] FLETC is the "Nation's primary provider of law enforcement training." FLETC provides training in areas common to all law enforcement officers, such as firearms, driving, tactics, investigations, and legal training. Department of Homeland Security, *Budget-in-Brief, Fiscal Year* 2016, pp. 99-102, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FY_2016_DHS_Budget_in_Brief.pdf.

[49] Peter B. Kraska, "Questioning the Militarization of U.S. Police: Critical Versus Advocacy Scholarship," *Policing and Society*, vol. 9, 1999, pp. 141-155.

Appendix A. Methodology and Survey Questions

Methodology

CRS developed a brief questionnaire (see below) that was sent to federal agencies with law enforcement personnel. The questionnaire was developed based on a review of the literature on the "militarization" of law enforcement and the proliferation of SWAT teams. Agencies with law enforcement personnel were identified using the most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report on federal law enforcement officers.[50] CRS attempted to contact the 71 agencies identified in the BJS report.[51]

CRS conducted the survey between October 2014 and January 2015. CRS attempted to establish a point of contact (POC) through a congressional or legislative affairs office. When the agency did not have a listed congressional or legislative affairs office, CRS established contact with the agency by calling the number listed on the agency's website. The questionnaire was emailed to the POC on official CRS letterhead. The questionnaire also included a brief introduction that explained the reason for conducting the survey and how the collected data would be used. CRS requested that a response be provided three weeks after the questionnaire was emailed to the POC. CRS followed up with the POC three times at two-week intervals if the agency did not submit a response within the stated deadline. During the week of January 12 CRS sent a final email to POCs at agencies that had not submitted a response asking them to reply to the questionnaire by January 30. Agencies that did not respond by the final deadline were considered to be non-responders.

Response Rate

CRS established contact with 70 agencies that employ law enforcement personnel. The National Archives and Records Administration's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) did not return several voicemail messages left by CRS. CRS received an official response from 68 of the 70 agencies contacted. The U.S. Capitol Police Department and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division did not respond to the questionnaire. The Department of the Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security responded on behalf of the National Parks Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation (the other agencies with law enforcement personnel within the Department of the Interior responded directly). The response received from the Office of Law Enforcement and Security did not directly address any of the questions in the questionnaire.

[50] Brian A. Reaves, *Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 2008*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 238250, Washington, DC, June 2012, http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fleo08.pdf.

[51] The BJS report lists 73 agencies with law enforcement personnel. However, the report lists the Library of Congress as having law enforcement personnel. The U.S. Capitol Police Department assumed the duties of the Library of Congress Police Department on October 1, 2009. Also, the report lists two law enforcement agencies for the National Parks Service: The U.S. Park Rangers and the U.S. Park Police. CRS only contacted the National Parks Service to inquire about their tactical teams.

Questions

The following questions were sent to the POC for each of the 70 federal agencies CRS asked to respond to the survey:

(1) Does your agency have any designated tactical teams? Members of these teams are recruited, selected, trained, equipped, and assigned to resolve critical incidents involving a threat to public safety which would otherwise exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement, first responders, and/or investigative units. These teams might go by a variety of names, including Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, tactical response teams, special response teams, emergency response unit, or active shooter teams. These teams can be comprised of officers or agents who participate on the team on a part-time basis. (If your agency does not have any tactical teams, please provide data on the number of law enforcement officers your agency currently employs, and there is no need to answer any further questions.)

(2) How many tactical teams does your agency have?

(3) How many law enforcement officers does your agency currently employ, and of those, how many serve on tactical teams?

(4) Do law enforcement officers in your agency who serve on a tactical team serve on a full-time or part-time basis? If the tactical teams are staffed with both full-time and part-time members, what proportion of the law enforcement officers who serve on the tactical teams serve part-time?

(5) In which year were the tactical teams identified in question (1) established?

(6) Please provide a brief description of the tactical teams identified in question (1). Such descriptions can include the mission of the teams and the specialized equipment they carry and use.

(7) Does your agency have any regulations or written policies about when or under what circumstances the tactical teams identified in question (1) are deployed?

(8) Under what circumstances does your agency deploy the tactical team(s) identified in question (1) (e.g., barricaded suspect, active shooter, or hostage situations; serving a “high risk” warrant)?

(9) How many times have the tactical teams identified in question (1) been deployed in each of the past 10 fiscal years?

(10) Where do the members of the tactical teams identified in question (1) receive the training required to serve on a tactical team?

(11) On average, in FY2014, how many hours per month did law enforcement officers who serve on tactical teams spend on training for tactical operations?

Appendix B. Survey Data

The following tables provide data collected by CRS through its survey of federal tactical teams.

Table B-1. Federal Agencies with Tactical Teams, Reported Number of Law Enforcement Officers, and Number of Officers Serving on Tactical Teams

Agency	Responded?	Tactical Teams?	Number of Law Enforcement Officers	Number of Teams	Number of Tactical Officers	Number of Full-Time Tactical Officers
Bureau of Prisons	Yes	Yes	38,251	145	2,592	0
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Yes	Yes	11,750	57	1,250	100
Drug Enforcement Administration	Yes	Yes	5,247	5	48	48
U.S. Marshals Service	Yes	Yes	3,500	1	100	18
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives	Yes	Yes	2,400	5	258	46
Department of Justice OIG	Yes	No	116	—	—	—
Customs and Border Protection	Yes	Yes	43,300	10	415	395
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Yes	Yes	12,800	25	480	10
U.S. Secret Service	Yes	Yes	4,600	4	—[a]	—
Federal Emergency Management Administration	Yes	No	88	—	—	—
Department of Homeland Security OIG	Yes	No	211	—	—	—
National Park Service	No	—	—	—	—	—
Fish and Wildlife Service	No	—	—	—	—	—
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Yes	No	520	—	—	—
Bureau of Land Management	Yes	No	270	—	—	—
Bureau of Reclamation	No	—	—	—	—	—
Department of the Interior OIG	Yes	No	68	—	—	—
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Yes	Yes	801	1	25	25
Department of Defense OIG	Yes	No	335	—	—	—
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	Yes	Yes	2,024	11	94	94
Department of State OIG	Yes	No	41	—	—	—
National Institute of Standards and Technology	Yes	No	32	—	—	—
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Yes	No	160	—	—	—
Bureau of Industry and Security	Yes	No	110	—	—	—
Department of Commerce OIG	Yes	No	11	—	—	—
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Yes	No	114	—	—	—
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations	No	—	—	—	—	—
U.S. Mint Police	Yes	No	297	—	—	—
Department of the Treasury, Tax Administration	Yes	No	272	—	—	—

Agency	Responded?	Tactical Teams?	Number of Law Enforcement Officers	Number of Teams	Number of Tactical Officers	Number of Full-Time Tactical Officers
Department of the Treasury OIG	Yes	No	24	—	—	—
U.S. Forest Service	Yes	No	640	—	—	—
Department of Agriculture OIG	Yes	No	142	—	—	—
National Institutes of Health	Yes	Yes	98	1	19	0
Food and Drug Administration	Yes	No	233	—	—	—
Health and Human Services OIG	Yes	No	430	—	—	—
Veterans Health Administration	Yes	No	3,590	—	—	—
Department of Veterans Affairs OIG	Yes	No	157	—	—	—
National Nuclear Security Administration	Yes	Yes	1,750	4	170	170
Department of Energy OIG	Yes	No	63	—	—	—
Social Security Administration OIG	Yes	No	287	—	—	—
Department of Housing and Urban Development OIG	Yes	No	199	—	—	—
Department of Labor OIG	Yes	No	166	—	—	—
Department of Transportation OIG	Yes	No	108	—	—	—
Department of Education OIG	Yes	No	78	—	—	—
Amtrak Police	Yes	No	485	—	—	—
U.S. Capitol Police	No	—	—	—	—	—
U.S. Postal Inspection Service	Yes	No	2,100	—	—	—
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts	Yes	No	4,789	—	—	—
Tennessee Valley Authority	Yes	No	44	—	—	—
Tennessee Valley Authority OIG	Yes	No	21	—	—	—
Federal Reserve Board	Yes	No	143	—	—	—
U.S. Supreme Court	Yes	No	153	—	—	—
National Aeronautic and Space Administration	Yes	Yes	848	2	29	0
National Aeronautic and Space Administration OIG	Yes	No	57	—	—	—
Environmental Protection Agency	Yes	No	183	—	—	—
Environmental Protection Agency OIG	Yes	No	46	—	—	—
Government Publishing Office	Yes	No	33	—	—	—
Smithsonian National Zoological Park	Yes	No	33	—	—	—
U.S. Postal Service OIG	Yes	No	550	—	—	—
General Services Administration OIG	Yes	No	67	—	—	—
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation OIG	Yes	No	55	—	—	—
Small Business Administration OIG	Yes	No	34	—	—	—
Office of Personnel Management OIG	Yes	No	34	—	—	—
U.S. Railroad Retirement Board OIG	Yes	No	19	—	—	—

Agency	Responded?	Tactical Teams?	Number of Law Enforcement Officers	Number of Teams	Number of Tactical Officers	Number of Full-Time Tactical Officers
Agency for International Development OIG	Yes	No	31	—	—	—
Nuclear Regulatory Commission OIG	Yes	No	15	—	—	—
Corporation for National and Community Service OIG	Yes	No	5	—	—	—
National Science Foundation OIG	Yes	No	6	—	—	—
National Archives and Records Administration OIG	No	—	—	—	—	—
Government Printing Office OIG	Yes	No	8	—	—	—
Library of Congress OIG	Yes	No	3	—	—	—
Total	**65**	**13**	**145,045**	**271**	**2,888**	**906**

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Notes: "OIG" stands for "Office of the Inspector General."

a. The U.S. Secret Service reported that the number of agents and officers serving on their tactical teams was "law enforcement sensitive."

Table B-2. Names of Federal Tactical Teams

Agency	Name of Team(s)
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	Special Weapons and Tactics (56), and Hostage Rescue Team (1)
Bureau of Prisons (BOP)	Special Operations Response Teams (36), and Disturbance Control Teams (109)
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)	Foreign Deployed Advisory and Support Teams
U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)	Special Operations Group
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)	Special Response Teams
Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Office of Field Operations Special Response Team (1), and Border Patrol Tactical Unit (1 national, 8 regional)
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	Homeland Security Investigations Special Response Teams (17), and Enforcement and Removal Operations Special Response Teams (8)
U.S. Secret Service	Counter Assault Team (1), Counter Sniper Branch (1), Emergency Response Team (1), and Hazardous Agent Mitigation Medical Emergency Response (1)
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	Mobile Security Deployments
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Emergency Response Team
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Police	Special Response Team
National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA)	Special Response Teams
National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) Police	Emergency Response Teams

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Table B-3. Description of the Role of Federal Tactical Teams

Agency	Description of Tactical Team
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	**Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT):** SWAT teams are specially trained FBI Special Agents who participate in arrests and investigative actions that pose a higher level for potential violence to law enforcement and civilian personnel. **Hostage Rescue Team (HRT):** HRT is the U.S. government's civilian full-time counterterrorist tactical team. HRT provides enhanced manpower, training, and resources to confront the most complex criminal and terrorism threats faced by the FBI. The team performs a number of national security and law enforcement tactical functions in almost any environment or conditions.
Bureau of Prisons (BOP)	**Special Operations Response Teams (SORT):** SORT has the responsibility to maintain an effective crisis management program. Crisis management involves the combined effort of several highly trained elements, one of which is the tactical element. While the negotiation process is the primary response, tactical elements are trained and prepared to perform a variety of tactical functions. SORT provides each designated institution with a flexible response to unconventional and high-risk situations. **Disturbance Control Teams (DCT):** These teams have the responsibility of maintaining effective emergency response procedures and contingency plans for most situations (e.g., fire, work strike, institution disturbance, hostage situation, escape, adverse weather). The specific mission of DCTs is to disperse crowds, move participants, and gain and maintain control of a situation.
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)	**Foreign Deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST):** The mission of FAST is to enable DEA to conduct intelligence-driven interdiction operations in support of the U.S. Government's foreign drug policy and enhance U.S. Embassy Country Teams by strengthening the host-nation counterparts' capabilities and expertise through advising, training, and mentorship. FAST personnel perform complex international criminal drug investigations targeting high-level drug trafficking organizations.
U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)	**Special Operations Group (SOG):** SOG is a specially trained and equipped tactical unit deployed in high risk/sensitive law enforcement situations, national emergencies, civil disorders, and natural disasters in support of USMS core missions in all districts and headquarters divisions or as ordered by the U.S. Attorney General.

Agency	Description of Tactical Team
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)	**Special Response Team (SRT):** The ATF formed the SRT to manage the risks associated with the investigation and apprehension of violent criminals. The crisis negotiator program has 38 crisis negotiators trained and available to support all SRT operations.
Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	**Special Response Team (SRT):** SRT was developed to respond to national security incidents, threats to ports of entry, and other significant border security threats. The SRT is trained to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous and complex, or unusual, that they exceed the capabilities of traditional CBP officers. **Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC):** The team provides a trained and highly specialized rapid response unit in order to conduct a wide spectrum of special operations, including counter-drug and other missions with a national security nexus.
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	**Special Response Teams (SRT):** The mission of the ICE SRTs is to conduct high-risk enforcement operations and other specialized duties within the scope of the training and capabilities of its members.
U.S. Secret Service	**The Counter Assault Team (CAT):** The team provides full-time tactical support for the Presidential Protective Division to protect the President of the United States from significant or organized threats. CAT also provides tactical support to other designated protectees, venues, and National Special Security Events. **The Emergency Response Team (ERT):** ERT provides the White House and other authorized locations with middle perimeter compound security by initiating a coordinated, tactical response to external penetrations. **The Counter Sniper Team (CS):** CS is responsible for providing protection from a long-range single threat and/or a coordinated assault. CS is responsible for providing long-range observation and real-time intelligence information in support of protective details, counter assault teams, and other law enforcement personnel. Counter Sniper Technicians also assist in the identification of aircraft, watercraft, and individuals who are in violation of secure areas. **Hazardous Agent Mitigation Medical Emergency Response (HAMMER):** The team assists in quickly and safely removing protectees from unsafe, contaminated environments. HAMMER provides appropriate decontamination procedures and emergency medical treatment as required to assist the White House Medical Unit (WHMU), Contingency Medical Officer (CMO), or other higher-level medical providers.

Agency	Description of Tactical Team
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	**Mobile Security Deployments (MSD):** MSD provides a secure environment for conducting U.S. foreign policy by providing rapid operational responses to emergency situations. MSD teams operate primarily overseas with limited responsibilities within the United States. Teams are deployed to conduct one of MSD's three primary mission sets: • Security Support Teams (SST) are deployed to posts abroad during periods of immediate threat of terrorist attack, critical levels of violent criminal activity, political crisis, natural disaster, or other unusual events. • Tactical Support Teams (TST), both domestically and abroad, provide support for high-threat protective missions. • Integrated Mobile Training Teams (IMTT) are deployed to provide specialized training at overseas posts. The IMTT provides refresher training for all security elements at posts.
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	**Emergency Response Team (ERT):** The ERT responds when force protection requires unusual displays of public deterrence, when a threat situation requires law enforcement tactical capabilities, or when deadly force may be required. The ERT is trained to isolate high-risk situations and bring them under control quickly, focus on life safety, systematize decisions, and use force only to the extent required to protect the public and the officers involved.
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Police	**Special Response Team (SRT):** The SRT's mission is to protect the NIH community from internal threats, such as active shooters, and external threats from domestic or foreign terrorists. The SRT is trained in tactics optimized to neutralize threats to Select Agent storage areas, irradiators, patient clinics, and laboratories. The SRT also provides dignitary protection during presidential, congressional, and foreign heads of state visits.
National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA)	**Special Response Team (SRT):** The mission of the SRT is to resolve incidents that require force options that exceed the capability of regular security personnel and/or existing physical security systems. The SRT is trained and equipped to conduct interdiction, interruption, and neutralization operations and containment, denial, recapture, recovery, and pursuit strategies.
National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) Police	**Emergency Response Team (ERT):** ERT's primary duties consist of a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to, mobile security patrols, investigations, traffic enforcement, and physical security duties/responsibilities. The specialized teams constitute and operate in the event of a high-risk situation.

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Table B-4. Average Number of Training Hours Per Month

Tactical Team	Average Per Month Training Hours
Federal Bureau of Investigation HRT	80
Federal Bureau of Investigation SWAT	32
Drug Enforcement Administration FAST	160
Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives SRT	13
Pentagon Force Protection Agency ERT	16
Customs and Border Protection SRT	32
U.S. Marshals Service SOG	16
National Aeronautic and Space Administration Police ERT	25
National Nuclear Security Administration SRT	14
National Institutes of Health Police SRT	24
Bureau of Diplomatic Security MSD	55
Immigration and Customs Enforcement SRT	20[a]
Bureau of Prisons SORT	8
Bureau of Prisons DCT	3

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Notes: The U.S. Secret Service did not provide an average number of training hours per month. They reported that the number of training hours varies per month based on operational requirements. Customs and Border Protection did not submit data on the average number of training hours for BORTAC.

a. Immigration and Customs Enforcement reported that their SRTs train between 8 and 32 hours per month. The amount reported in **Table B-4** is the median for this range.

Table B-5. Year That Federal Tactical Teams Were Established

Tactical Team	Number of Teams	Year Established
U.S. Secret Service CS	1	1971
U.S. Marshals Service SOG	1	1971
Federal Bureau of Investigation SWAT	56	1973
U.S. Secret Service CAT	1	1979
National Aeronautic and Space Administration Police Kennedy Space Center ERT	1	1979
Bureau of Prisons DCT	109	1982
National Nuclear Security Administration SRT	4	1982
Federal Bureau of Investigation HRT	1	1983
Customs and Border Protection BORTAC	9	1984
U.S. Secret Service ERT	1	1985

Tactical Team	Number of Teams	Year Established
Bureau of Prisons SORT	36	1985
Bureau of Diplomatic Security MSD	11	1985
Pentagon Force Protection Agency ERT	1	1989
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives SRT	5	1996
Immigration and Customs Enforcement SRT	6	1998[a]
National Institutes of Health Police SRT	1	2002
National Aeronautic and Space Administration Police Johnson Space Center ERT	1	2003
U.S. Secret Service HAMMER	1	2004
Drug Enforcement Administration FAST	5	2005
Customs and Border Protection SRT	1	2007
Immigration and Customs Enforcement SRT	11	2005-2013[b]
Immigration and Customs Enforcement ERO	8	2005-2013[c]

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

a. ICE reported that its first six ERTs were legacy teams from the U.S. Customs Department (referred to as Warrant Entry Tactical Teams, or WETT) and they were renamed SRT when the program was formalized in 1998.

b. ICE reported that it established 11 of its 17 SRTs between 2005 and 2013. The agency did not provide a year of establishment for each team.

c. ICE reported that it established its eight EROs between 2005 and 2013. The agency did not provide a year of establishment for each team.

Table B-6. Reasons for Deploying Tactical Teams

Agency	Reasons Why a Tactical Team Might Deploy
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	**HRT:** Supporting high-risk investigations, hostage rescue, barricaded suspects, undercover operations, high-risk arrests, high-risk surveillance, natural disaster response, protection of personnel or dignitaries. **SWAT:** Serving warrants, supporting high-risk investigations, active shooters, barricaded suspects, protection of personnel or dignitaries.
Bureau of Prisons (BOP)	Hostage rescue, barricaded inmates, institutional disturbances, inmate escapes.
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)	Counter-drug operations, assisting foreign drug enforcement agencies with developing their capacity to target drug trafficking organizations.
U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)	Apprehending fugitives, protection of personnel or dignitaries, providing court security, transporting high-risk prisoners, providing witness security, seizing assets, natural disaster response.

Agency	Reasons Why a Tactical Team Might Deploy
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)	Serving warrants, active shooter, hostage rescue, undercover operations, high-risk surveillance, home barricaded suspects, natural disaster response, protection of personnel or dignitaries.
Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	**SRT:** Active shooter; high-risk surveillance; protection for personnel or dignitaries; security for special events; motorcade operations; serving warrants; responding to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) incident; natural disaster response. **BORTAC:** High-risk apprehensions, counter-drug operations, security for special events, high-risk surveillance.
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	High-risk apprehensions, entering fortified structures.
U.S. Secret Service	The Secret Service did not provide examples of when its teams might be deployed. The agency specified that its teams are always available to respond to a variety of threats in the course of their protective responsibilities.
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	Response to a terrorist incident or an immediate threat of terrorist or criminal activity, natural disaster response.
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Hostage rescue, high-risk apprehensions, barricaded suspects; protection of personnel or dignitaries, active shooter, security for special events.
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Police	High-risk apprehensions, active shooter, barricaded suspect, hostage rescue, protection of personnel or dignitaries, security during the transportation of select agents and radioactive materials.
National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA)	Attacks against any NNSA facilities containing Category I (weapons grade) special nuclear material.
National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) Police	Hostage rescue, terrorist attack, active shooter, barricaded suspect, bus distress alarms.

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Table B-7. Number of Reported Deployments of Federal Tactical Teams, FY2005-FY2014

	Fiscal Year									
Agency	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Bureau of Prisons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Federal Bureau of Investigation	840	853	843	954	932	1,004	985	1,009	1,056	1,065
Drug Enforcement Administration	2	5	5	7	9	9	9	10	9	7

Agency	Fiscal Year									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
U.S. Marshals Service	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives	107	125	196	230	210	250	195	201	193	182
Customs and Border Protection	—	—	2	6	35	167	55	29	83	225
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	—	134	142	150	198	171	253	252	339	398
U.S. Secret Service	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	144	154	165	180	297	240	243	267	201	255
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	30	29	33	58	35	36	36	44	53	40
National Institutes of Health	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
National Nuclear Security Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Aeronautic and Space Administration	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total	**1,171**	**1,348**	**1,434**	**1,633**	**1,764**	**1,925**	**1,824**	**1,860**	**1,982**	**2,227**

Source: Data collected as a part of CRS's survey of federal tactical teams.

Notes: The Bureau of Prisons and the U.S. Secret Service were not able to provide data on the number of times their tactical teams were deployed each fiscal year. Also, Customs and Border Protection only provided deployment data for their SRTs, not BORTAC. The U.S. Marshals and the National Aeronautic and Space Administration were only able to provide an average annual number of deployments.

Author Information

Nathan James
Analyst in Crime Policy

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