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**U.S. Considers Abolition  
Of Crime Strike Forces**

By NICHOLAS GAGE

The Justice Department is considering restructuring, or possibly dissolving, the 18 special Federal strike forces set up during the last seven years to combat organized crime, according to department sources.

They said that the department was evaluating the effectiveness of the strike forces at the request of Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson.

Believed to be behind the evaluation were some of the United States Attorneys in metropolitan areas where strike forces operate.

Justice Department sources said in interviews with The New York Times that the Attorneys had told Mr. Richardson that a number of strike forces had failed to make meaningful organized-crime cases and that their offices could do the job better and at less cost.

The United States Attorneys met with Mr. Richardson last

Friday and, at his request, formed a 16-member committee to advise him on Justice Department policies and programs.

The addition, several subcommittees were created, one of which was assigned to evaluate the strike forces.

Richard L. Thornburgh, the United States Attorney for Western Pennsylvania and chairman

of the strike forces subcommittee, said this week that Mr. Richardson had given his group a "very broad mandate" to examine the strike forces, including the option to recommend their abolition.

He said that the subcommittee had not been fully set up yet and that it was not possible to assess what direction it was likely to follow.

In 1969 a commission set up to examine government institutions recommended the phasing

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out of the strike forces. The commission was headed by Roy Ash, then a special assistant to the President.

High Justice Department officials are known to be pleased with the accomplishments of about half of the strike forces and to share varying degrees of disappointment with the rest.

Among the strike forces that are considered successful are those based in Brooklyn, Newark, Boston, Chicago and New Orleans, according to Justice Department sources.

The Brooklyn strike force has been among the most consistently active in the country, and last year it led the 17 others with indictments against 229 people and the conviction of 116.

Since it was set up in 1969, the Newark strike force has helped develop cases against some of the most important organized-crime figures in New Jersey, although it has had trouble moving cases in the courts.

The third strike force in the

area, which covers the Southern District of New York, has had several important cases, but has not yet fully lived up to expectations, according to Justice Department officials.

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 1972, the last period for which figures are available, the 18 strike forces obtained indictments against 1,969 persons and won 777 convictions.

However, only a small percentage of these were against "made" or fully initiated members of organized crime. The majority were against minor figures in organized-crime rackets.

In some cities strike-force chiefs have clashed with the local United States Attorneys and with Federal agents. The Attorneys objected on the ground that the strike forces were taking away important criminal cases, and the Federal agents opposed strike-force intervention in the investigative phases of cases.

In New York, for example, Federal agents have complained that Edward Shaw, chief of the

Southern District strike force, has tried to assert himself at the early stages of investigations and had hurt them as a result.

Mr. Shaw has denied the charge, saying his relations with agents are excellent and have resulted in major cases against organized-crime figures.

"The whole strike-force concept is to plug into cases early, and I believe in that concept," Mr. Shaw said. "But I've had no real problems with agents."

The strike-force idea was conceived in 1966 by Henry Peterson, now an assistant attorney general, according to Robert Peloquin, who headed

the first strike force set up in Buffalo, N. Y. He said Mr. Peterson took the idea to Ramsey Clark, then Attorney General, who decided to implement it.

"The original concept was to have strike forces be hit-and-run operations that would go into a city, do a job and move on to someplace else," said Mr. Peloquin, who now runs a private investigative agency.

"By setting them up on a permanent basis, all kinds of pressures and expectations are created. So, in essence, strike forces wind up competing for criminal cases with United States Attorneys."

Justice Department officials said yesterday that they were reluctant to predict the fate of the strike forces.

"It's too early to tell what Mr. Richardson's decision on the strike forces will be," said a lawyer in the department's criminal division. "I think he's keeping an open mind."

"My guess is that there will be changes but the strike forces won't be abolished. Organized crime is a national problem and has to be fought in a concentrated way. That is not always possible to do through U.S. Attorney, who have a variety of responsibilities."