

Keep the Peace: How to prepare for and manage Protests

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Emergency Field Force (EFF)

- 2005 the West Palm Beach Police Department established an EFF Team
- There were few occasions our EFF Team was needed
- Assisted Tampa PD during the 2012 Republican National Convention
- After the 2016 election, there were weekly deployments.....



Protests in WPB and Mar-a-Lago

- November 2016 protests at Trump Plaza - Increased each week
- January 2017 “Women’s March” 6,000 attendees
- February 2017 “March to Mar-a-Lago” 3000 marchers, 1000 at location
- March 2017 Numerous Presidential visits



Protests in WPB and Mar-a-Lago

- April 2017 Chinese Presidential visit. Opposition and supporters of both leaders
- April 15 “Show me your taxes”
- April 29 “Climate march”



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Safety of protest depends on prior planning

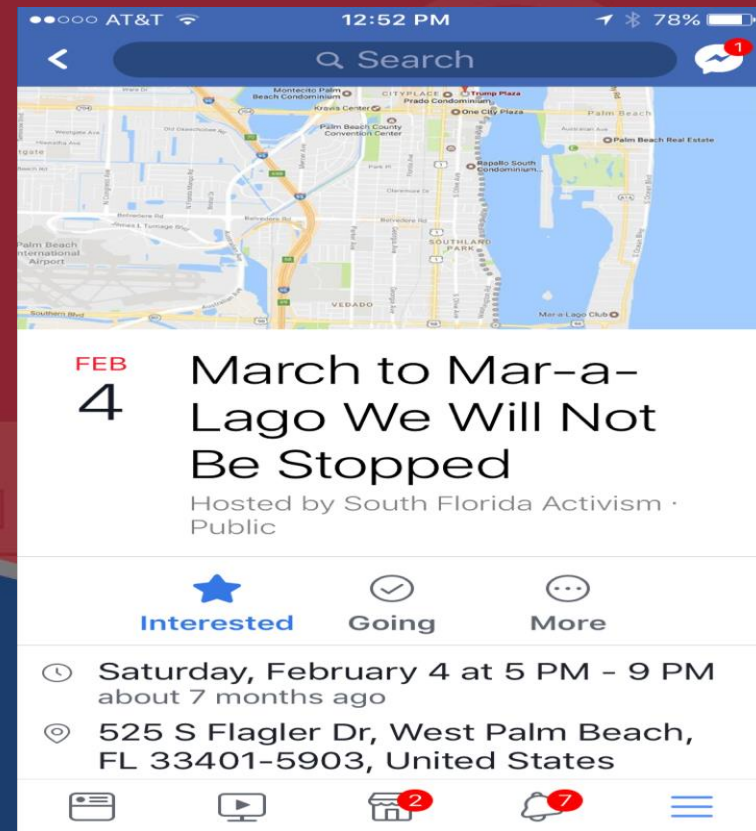
- 1) Selection of personnel; self control/restraint
- 2) Select best person for each assignment (Tactics)
- 3) Eight training sessions
- 4) Mutual aid



Awareness of a Protest

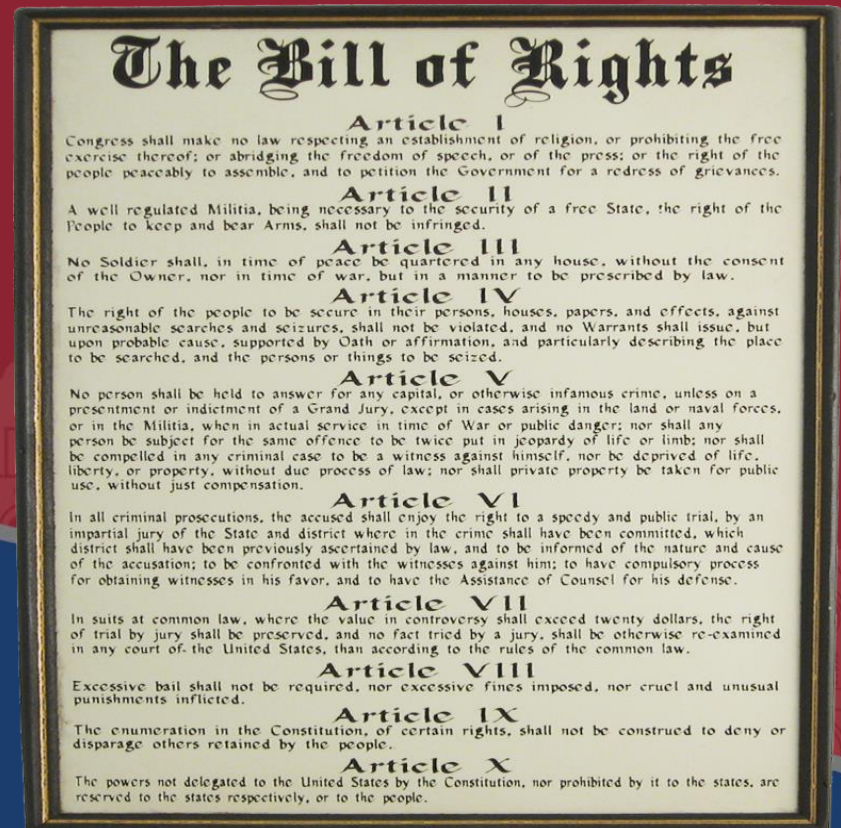
How police become aware of a protest

- a) Request for permit (City Special Events)
- b) Social media announcement
- c) Fusion Center & Intelligence Community
- d) Organizer contacts police
- e) Officer discovers demonstration



Four Considerations for Protests

- 1) Prior Community Involvement
- 2) Police have to be apolitical
- 3) First Amendment Rights
- 4) Safety for all involved



Determining Level of Involvement

- Identify Leader/Organizer
- Determine approximate number of attendees
- Less than 100 participants, monitor unless it is a controversial topic Example; Charlottesville.
- More than 100 participants, set up a meeting with organizer(s).



Requests and Expectations

Requests (Organizers)

- Location
- Safety



Expectations (Police)

- Can't block street/sidewalk unless permitted
- No objects considered weapons
- Discourage use of bullhorns
- Marshalls/Monitors
- Identify subversives

Operational Priorities

- 1) Life Safety – Separate protestors / counter protestors
- 2) Incident Stabilization – Maintain the peace
- 3) Property Protection – Be aware of anarchists
- 4) Primary Goal is Crowd Management



Deciding to take action

- Passive protestors equals measured response
- Should be last option
- Attempt to gain voluntary compliance
- Quick removal of agitator(s)
- Fire / gas equals flash point – Ensure ample routes of egress
- Have resources in place before taking action

Questions?



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