

Free case study on the ftaa

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Analysis of the FTAA Case Study and FTAA After-Action Reports

Introduction

On 17th to 21st, November, the Miami town of Florida experienced widespread demonstrations during the Free Trade Area of the America's Summit (FTAA) held there. The demonstrations caused two departments of police in Miami to collaborate in a special way that saw them working together so as to ensure that peace was restored in the area (Driscoll, 2005). These two departments were the City of Miami Police Department and the Dade County Public Safety Department which now goes by the name Miami-Dade Police Department.

This paper will interrogate the case study and all that transpired that material with a special focus on the FTAA After-Action reviews conducted by various bodies. Focus will also be on a special report on the FTAA Summit that was conducted by the City of Miami Civilian Investigative Panel in 2006 which also made a number of recommendations in dealing with mass demonstrations in the future. A lot more will be discussed for comparative and analytical purposes.

For this reason therefore, this paper will adopt the approach of raising the key issues in the case study, address the root causes of the issues so raised, suggest viable solutions that are capable of resolving the issues, make a case for a risk and cost-benefit approach for each of the viable solutions and finally recommend a final policy to the board of county commissioners and also the county manager.

The key Issues

As stated earlier in the introduction, the week of 17th to 21st November 2003 was a violent week in the city of Miami in Florida. The FTAA was an initiative between the US and the Latin American and Caribbean Nations which were aimed at discussing global economic issues between those states (Driscoll, 2005) (Driscoll, 2005). The FTAA conference in question was a result of the meeting of the Heads of States and governments from these countries that were held during the Summit of the America's Conference in Miami-Dade in 1984.

The conferences preceding Miami Conference had experienced violent protests from anti-globalization "fair trade" crowds who held demonstrations in the host cities forcing the police to find a way of intervening and protecting demonstrators rights to do so. In Miami, therefore, the MPD and the MDPD expected the demonstrations to be taken a notch higher and, therefore, made a number of arrangements to see to it that this does not get out of control.

The measures included the fact that the police had to emphasize on the offensive rather than being defensive alone and, therefore, passive in a way. This was to be taken because the crowd would grow too violent to be controlled by a passive troop of the police. The police were also to be deployed to many parts of the city and exercise unit mobility rather than being static as was experienced in the past in other cities where the demonstrations were experienced. Moreover, the police had to have adequate intelligence of the protestors and also proactive in the enforcement of the intelligence information so-obtained (Vitale, 2007).

Lastly, the police were to match up in a coordinated manner against the adversary and by doing so observe high levels of discipline.

Before the due date of the conference, there was a tug-of-war between the operational commander of the forces and the overall operational commander of the county task forces concerning which approach to control the crowds in a good way. It was later agreed upon the two departments that there was need to place undercover police within the crowds. The undercover police would provide the necessary intelligence to the other officers on the ground and also to the command base to take the necessary action whenever such action was required. All this was placed in order, and the FTAA conference proceeded without unnecessary disruptions. At the same time, the thousands of lawful protestors exercised their rights to free speech successfully and without interruption by the police.

The Likely root causes of the issues

Recent history showed that there had been numerous protests by some coalition groups and masked criminal offenders whose groups and criminal gangs have hitherto been referred to as “anarchists.” Their agenda was to oppose any global economic campaigns, and corporate conferences conducted by the states (Vitale, 2007). The first such riot was during the 1999 World Trade organization Summit held in Seattle where police had deal with violent protests of armed and masked criminals who claimed to voice their concerns against the global economic integration agenda. Other protests were later to be witnessed in such big cities as New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC.

The anti-globalization and anarchist groups had only one way to voice their

grievances to the authorities. It was through protests and organized criminal activities which sometimes culminated into violent attacks against the police and at times was hijacked by criminal gangs who committed untold criminal activities on innocent civilians and also the police (Driscoll, 2005). After infiltrating the innocent and lawful demonstrations by civilians, the anarchists camouflage within the civilians, and it is then that they attack the police and commit other atrocities. These are the groups that cause disharmony and mayhem during these FTAA conferences.

Report compiled by CIP indicates that the MPD received adequate support from state and federal security agencies and that the media over the preceding weeks had relayed information regarding protests in other FTAA conferences and how the police in those other cities were able to deal with the violence and demonstrations. This enabled the Miami MPD to work on an operational plan that would ensure that there was adequate security during the Miami conference.

There has however been allegations that the police misconduct and violation of constitutional rights of the people during the demonstrations and in fact, these accusations precipitated a court action in which the CIP was not given an opportunity to see the relevant court documents (Rohter, 2005). A number of people were also incarcerated over such misdemeanors as unlawful assembly and failure to obey the law, among others. The manner in which the police made use of their weaponry was also questionable as it was against the manufacturers' wishes (Vitale, 2007). The overall assessment by the CIP however showed that the police conducted themselves in a professional manner and that except for a few individuals; all other

protestors and demonstrators conducted themselves in a civilized manner (Driscoll, 2005).

Some viable solutions to the issues raised by the CIP Report

The Civilian Investigative Panel, CIP, makes a number of recommendations that are aimed at serving as viable solutions to resolve the impasse. This section will outline a few such solutions that, in the opinion of the paper, are viable towards solving the issues raised herein. The first such viable solutions are for the MPD to ensure that all the Florida people obey the command of the Incident Command System, which will act as a central command for all people and forces in Florida. As such, it will be easy for the forces to bring order whenever an impasse arises.

The second solution that will be viable in a scenario like this is for the MPD to come up with a strategy that will ensure a free flow of information during such times of protests. This will enable intelligence personnel to relay information regarding possible infiltration of lawful demonstrations by criminal gangs whose agenda is to cause mayhem by attacking law enforcement officials and also innocent civilians. Free flow of information will also enable civilians to communicate with the security personnel, in a way, that ensures that all suspected gangs are apprehended before they commit their intended atrocities.

Thirdly, an arbitration committee should be formed to address the grievances of the masses regarding the global economic emancipation and awareness. This is because not all disputes should be addresses by law enforcement institutions or even courts. A neutral arbiter can help resolve this misunderstanding by hearing both sides of the divide and suggesting

long-lasting solutions. This will help reduce the chances of masses having to demonstrate whenever a high profile conference like the one concerning the FTAA is held in any of the big cities either in the US or anywhere in the world.

Fourthly, it was evident that police officers involved in bringing normalcy at the center of the mayhem were not adequately prepared for the protests. There is a need for the MPD to adequately train its officers to be able to deal with protests and demonstrations without having to violate the rights of innocent civilians since the right to demonstrate is protected under the constitution. When this happens, the use of force should only be applied when the protestors have gone beyond the constitutionally recognized demonstrations.

The likely ramifications of the chosen solutions

The solutions discussed herein above are all cost effective. It is because they involve the constitutional duties of the MPD forces and the rights and obligations of the civilians. As such, they can be viably applied to create a long lasting solution to the protests and the duties of the police forces to deal with the civilians during such demonstrations. It will put into consideration both the rights of the civilians and the obligations of the MPD forces.

Policy Recommendations

This paper, therefore, recommends to the County Manager and the Board of the County Commissioners to adopt the solutions suggested herein above which shall serve as long lasting and also binding on each and every person

in Florida and its environs. Where possible, the County Board and the Manager should finance the suggested reforms and measures because it is for the good of the County in general.

Bibliography

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