Midland Simulation
A Table-Top Exercise on Leadership During Community Division and Civil Unrest

A Project of the Divided Community Project
The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law
Other publications by the Divided Community Project are available at http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/dividedcommunityproject.

- Divided Communities and Social Media: Strategies for Community Leaders (2017)
- Planning in Advance of Civil Unrest (2016)
- Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest: Effective Problems-Solving Strategies that have been used in Other Communities (2016)

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The Midland Simulation is designed to test the preparation of participants to lead during a crisis involving community division and to help them appreciate the value of preparing ahead of a crisis. Prepared by Jackie Fisher and the Divided Community Project, it raises issues regarding use of outside experts, identification of stakeholders, communication strategies in traditional and social media, setting the groundwork for collaborative processes, framing the issues facing the community, and planning ahead of civil unrest.

Participation in the simulation will be useful for:

- Leaders of a community to test their preparation for community protests and civil unrest
- Students to increase awareness and analysis of the challenges of communities and community leaders facing protests and unrest
- Professional school students to enhance skill in providing support and assistance to such communities
- Community members to understand their community’s challenges in building resilience in terms of dealing with differences and preparation for community protests and civil unrest

The simulation materials for facilitators include confidential instructions for participants and those who will be running the simulation, bulletins indicating new events to challenge participants, photos to post, references to materials to help facilitators consider what other communities have done successfully, a stress test to gauge a community’s resiliency, an extra simulation for public information officers, and questions for the discussion period.

Those seeking the facilitator’s version of the Midland Immigration Simulation for community leaders and students should email Bill Froehlich, Associate Director of the Divided Community Project, Froehlich.28@osu.edu, for a no-cost facilitator’s version of the materials.
General Instructions for All Participants

The federal government has recently adopted a stricter policy on illegal immigration enforcement and is pressuring cities through threatened elimination of federal funds to move more resources toward enforcing immigration laws. Many cities are grappling with what will be required to comply with the federal policy. Cities in this state have had various reactions, some withholding all funds and some allocating very few funds.

The city of Midland has a population of 600,000, with a total of 900,000 in the metropolitan area. A large immigrant population (23% of Midland proper's total population) lives mostly in the central area of Midland proper. Midland is located in Danburg County. In addition to Midland there are four other cities in Danburg County: Northville, Southville, Eastville, and Westville. The Midland Police Department currently reports to federal immigration officials whenever an undocumented immigrant is convicted of a violent crime against a person, but otherwise leaves enforcement of federal immigration laws to federal officials.

During the past week, the following events have occurred:

1. Sunday night, Joey Rich, a local celebrity and host of a popular local morning radio show – The Scoop – claimed on air that “illegal immigrants” are responsible for 45% of violent crime in Midland and, per person, cost the city $40,000 a year to house and support through public aid programs. Many groups that support the federal policy have latched on to these statements as a centerpiece for their argument. The Mayor’s staff researcher says that these figures are grossly exaggerated.

2. Sunday night, state Senator Smith, who is introducing several pieces of legislation designed to punish municipalities that refuse to fully comply with the federal policy, held a press conference. During the press conference, the legislator blamed "radical Islamic terrorists" and their "culture" for committing crimes, including assaults and rape, and bringing in "sexually transmitted diseases." She also condemned any municipality that refused to enforce the federal policy, saying that "any city that illegally refuses to comply with the policy is carelessly
disregarding the safety of our families and should be held legally accountable."

3. On Facebook, a group of students from a Midland high school posted early this week a video making fun of Muslim immigrants. In the video a handheld camera captures a group of students taunting a young female student wearing a hijab. In the video they call her a “camel jockey” and a “towel head” before removing her hijab. Once the students have taken her hijab they play keep-away with it, making the Muslim student cry. This video has gone viral and has garnered national attention.

4. There was a volatile student-led demonstration in Northville - the separately-incorporated suburb where the University of Midland is located. The student demonstrators were concerned about immigration but were joined by a group of Midland folks raising awareness of racial profiling regarding police in the suburb. There has been a history of complaints that the police stop persons of color disproportionately in that predominately white and wealthy suburb.

5. On Monday morning, several activist groups opposing the federal policy – namely Immigrant Rights Advocates (IGA), Students for a Free Society (SFS), and The Children’s Justice Project (CJP) – made plans to organize a mass protest on Monday night. The protest attracted about 2,000 people and culminated in a march on City Hall that was so disruptive that it "shut down" the city council meeting.
6. During the protest which “shut down” the city council meeting, several members of Outspoken – a progressive agitator group – who were in attendance began verbally harassing the special duty officers by calling them “hateful pigs” and “closet skinheads.”

7. The Governor tweeted yesterday, “@POTUS actions will protect our border from these people who came here illegally and don't contribute to our community.” This statement generated high social media traffic in Midland, most opposed to the federal policy. Later yesterday the Mayor of Midland responded to the Governor’s tweet by issuing a media release that few funds can be allocated to enforce federal immigration laws unless the state or federal government provides more resources.

These events have caused multiple hostile fights on social media. Many said that it is important to respect the diverse fabric of the community. Others said that the state and city needed the federal funds and our immigrant population is only causing a rise in unemployment and crime anyway. The posts contain insulting, even hateful comments about immigrants and law enforcement.

It is now Friday afternoon and the Mayor has called together the city leaders to strategize for next Monday's city council meeting. The people in attendance include: the City Council Members, the Police Department - represented by the Chief of Police, two Special Duty Officers who cover City Council Meetings, and a Public Information Officer, the City Attorney, the City Treasurer, the City Hall facilities team, the City Public Information Office, the Mayor’s Chief of Staff, and the Danburg County Prosecutor. The Mayor sent an agenda to those who were invited to attend the meeting asking the group to address several issues including how to address the media, how to dispel misinformation on social media, and how to conduct street-level policing of these protests.

The Mayor has scheduled a press conference two and a half hours from now. He has requested that the group work together to create the message that will be delivered at the press conference (see attached email from the Mayor). He would like the group’s suggestions in 45 minutes, so he has time to prepare.

- **The Mayor [and Mayor’s Representative]**, wants to refuse publicly to use any municipal funding to further federal immigration
enforcement. The Mayor does not use email, let alone social media and will send the Chief of Staff.

- **The City Council President** has developed a rapport with one of the activist groups and doesn't want to do anything to damage their relationship (especially considering his/her political ambitions, which may be hampered if he/she appears to be playing both sides of the debate). He/she is a part of the same political party as the Mayor.

- **The City Councilman/Councilwoman** has had a tense relationship with the City Council President over the past three years. He/she has been on City Council for seven years now and her main priority is representing the interests of the comparatively higher-income district of Midland that he/she was elected by. He/she believes that it is important to comply with the federal policy as quickly as possible for both legal and financial reasons.

- **The Midland Police Department**: The *Special Duty Officers* who were covering the shut down last week want to see Midland use more resources to enforce immigration violations. This is also the dominant view of MPD and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). So they are inclined to resolve any threats of protest by arresting those being disruptive. The problem for them is that they need a complainant (most likely a city council member) to charge the protestors criminally. They have been told by the City Attorney that they as police officers may not be complainants because they are held to a higher standard and must tolerate “coarse criticism.” Some police officers are still angry about the new requirement that they wear and use cameras – body-cams. These officers see the body-cam requirement as an attempt by the Chief to mollify residents who were upset by a bystander’s phone video of a white police officer slapping an African-American woman when arresting her for shoplifting last year.

  The *Chief of Police* is much less inclined to support the federal policy and sees increased immigration enforcement as undermining the community policing model he/she has worked so hard to develop.

  The *Public Information Officer* is young and highly experienced with social media and frequently uses MPD’s social media platforms to disseminate information to the residents.
The City Attorney [and Assistant City Attorneys] are concerned about First Amendment litigation if the media portrays the police as using excessive force in order to silence protected speech and believes the law to be unsettled whether federal funds could be cut off for insufficient enforcement by Midland.

The City Treasurer [and staff] believes that the Midland metropolitan area will be able to remain economically stable without federal funds only if additional taxes are levied. He/she believes it is best to comply with the federal policy and not risk losing important federal funds.

The City Public Information Officer and Assistant Public Information Officer is not as social media savvy as the police department’s Public Information Officer and often errs on the side of withholding sensitive information whenever possible.

The City’s Assistant Public Information Officer is a young college student who is fairly familiar with most social media platforms.

The City Hall Facilities and Security Team needs to know ahead of time if any new signage or security procedures will need to be added before the next City Council Meeting.

The Danburg County Prosecutor [and Assistant County Prosecutors] will be in charge of prosecuting any persons charged with a felony related to the protests.

The Northville Mayor, Chief of Police, and University of Midland Police Chief were present at the violent student-led protest last week at the University of Midland. They will want to know how the suburban concerns will be heard in this planning process.

The Mayor knows that it will be difficult to hear from all of the interested parties in this situation, so he has suggested that the City Council President break the meeting up into task forces or bring in members of the community to speak to the group once they finish giving their initial recommendations to the Mayor.

The Midland Community Relations Commission convened a group of leaders of community organizations who have been meeting regularly about division within Midland. This group includes:
• The Director of the Midland Community Relations Commission.
• The Midland Urban League President.
• The Executive Director of the Midland Bar Association.
• The Chair of the Midland Inter-Faith Coalition.
• The Midland United Way Executive Director.

If you would like to talk with persons not listed here, please ask the control group and the control group will provide a role player any person requested.

This is only a simulation, of course, but everyone will learn more if you can stay in role, as if it were real. To facilitate this, when you need more facts, make up facts that they are likely to be accurate in a circumstance such as this. Please treat this simulation as you would “improv” (improvisational comedy): go with what is being said and say things that would be consistent with the situation even if you do not have the specific facts in your background information. To help people remain in role, please do not break your role or refer to the simulation directions. If another person breaks role, please stay in yours.
Mayor, City of Midland

From: Mayor, City of Midland
Sent: [Monday, 9:15 AM]
To: <City Leaders Group>
Subject: Strategy Meeting for Immigration Protests – Proposed Agenda

Hello All,

Good morning. I know the past few days have imposed a lot of pressure and coordination challenges on your offices. I would like to give everyone a chance to speak to each other before our press conference later this afternoon. Here is a proposed agenda:

1. What statement should the City issue at the press conference? Who/what agencies should be present at the press conference?

*I know there are important differences in opinion about the federal policy present in the meeting. These issues do not need to be decided today. Instead, we need to decide as a city what our unified response will be while we consider what we will do.

2. How can we correct the misinformation that is being circulated by radio and social media?

In order to prepare for the press conference, I would like to have your thoughts (in bullet-point form) on these first two issues within [75 minutes]. While I consider your suggestions, you may want to address these issues as well:

3. Whether to call in additional experts and/or stakeholders to help Midland officials in this crisis.
4. Street policing decisions – how should our officers respond to the current climate in Midland? Especially during protests.
5. Based on experience in other cities, we can expect public records request for the police body-cam videos from all of the demonstrations. How should we handle these requests?
6. How to hold next week’s city council meeting and preserve the peace.

Also, I would like to have several of you join me in the press conference. Please discuss among yourselves who you think should attend and whether they should give a statement.

I have recently learned that the city’s Community Relations Commission has convened a group of leaders of community organizations – constructive individuals who care about Midland and want to help the members of the Midland community work together in an atmosphere of trust. I hope that you will find out what they can do to help.

Thank you all for your help and dedication to the City. We appreciate all you do. Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached via cell phone.
Sincerely,

Mayor, City of Midland