

Violent acts for peace taint the end with the means

Anthony Kuipers/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Across the country, people in major U.S. cities are taking to the streets to protest the deaths of black Americans at the hands of police officers, spurred on by the recent killings of black men in Louisiana and Minnesota.

It has caused headaches for city officials, as the protestors blocked major roadways and bridges to take a stand against violence toward minorities. Hundreds have been arrested.

These events haven't been devoid of violence. The worst, of course, was the sniper shooting of police officers at a demonstration in Dallas, that left five officers and the shooter dead and several more officers wounded.

But police and protesters in Louisiana and Minnesota also clashed in incidents involving thrown projectiles - including one report of a Molotov cocktail - and injuries to officers. Police in Arizona used pepper spray and bean bags to get demonstrators off the street.

Other protests have been worse.

In Baltimore in April 2015 after Freddie Gray died from injuries sustained while being transported by a police vehicle, the protests turned destructive. Demonstrators destroyed city property, looted businesses and set fires. Smoke filled the streets, and police in riot gear fought with citizens.

The Baltimore riots demonstrate what can happen when you combine the pent up anger of frustrated citizens with a police force on edge.

Cities will likely take blocked highways and a limited number of violent incidents over all out street warfare.

For the most part, demonstrators have chosen the peaceful route to get their point across. Those people should be applauded. And the police should respond accordingly.

Causing more destruction and perpetrating more violence will not mend the tense relations between the men and women in uniform and the often-targeted and mistreated minority populations.

It will only create more distrust. More pain.

The goal of this wave of demonstrations must be improved relations between police and those they are supposed to serve.

Violence only hinders progress.