

Scenario

In a show of unusual bipartisanship and political maneuvering, the two major political parties agreed to hold their national conventions to elect the presidential candidates in the same city at the same time. The two main factors that contributed to this unprecedented decision are security and politics. Regarding security, all agencies agreed that, with the current budget restrictions, they could not guarantee security for politicians at two separate locations at different times. Various national security agencies suggested that security could be enhanced and become more cost effective if the two national parties agreed to the same location. The financial savings from avoiding redundancy of infrastructure, planning, and training of personnel would ensure a secure environment for attendees within the current fiscal constraints.

Reluctantly, the political parties recognized the reality of the situation and began to consider using the same location. The national parties realized that during a time when people have been asked to tighten their fiscal belts, it would appear hypocritical for the parties to hold national conventions that cost donors and taxpayers well over \$200 million for a four-day event. For example, one convention currently costs over \$100 million, with \$50 million from the federal government and \$55 million from donors. If the conventions are held at the same location, the parties would be able to share the costs of security and taxpayer expenses would be limited.

However, the issue regarding the timing of the conventions was contentious. There were pros and cons for each party if either went first or second. A rather unusual compromise was that the conventions would run simultaneously, with the nominations of the presidential and vice presidential candidates occurring on the same night. Each party would be allotted a one-hour prime time television slot and the order of which party goes first or second on television would be decided by the flip of a coin, introducing a bit of gamesmanship into the equation.

The second issue to be decided was the location of the conventions. Security requirements were considered but were secondary to the political issues. The parties wanted to enhance their chances of success in the national election and felt that the conventions should be held in a state that has a large number of electoral votes and is currently up for grabs—a swing state. Although several swing states were identified in negotiations, both parties agreed that Florida was a key swing state necessary for either side to capture the White House.

Florida and its delegates have always played a key role in the outcome of the presidential elections. Indeed, the Republican Party of Florida moved up its primary elections despite being penalized by the national organization so that it would have an even stronger voice in the election of the party's nominee. Historically, Florida has reliably been a Republican state, due in part to its large population of retirees. However, in a surprising turn of events, the Democratic nominee won in the state in several recent national elections. But the Democrats realized that the demographics of the state do not make it a reliable partner and noted that the state has a history of Republican governors. Due to these political considerations, both parties agreed to hold their national conventions simultaneously in Florida.

The parties identified the city of Tampa as a suitable location. Further stressing the parties' newfound frugality to the taxpayers, Tampa fit nicely since it had already hosted the Republican Party's national convention in 2010. The parties noted that some of the infrastructure (surveillance cameras, etc.), as well as planning and training, was already in place.

Security agencies, including the police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Guard, expressed concerns regarding a simultaneous event, feeling that they would be stretched thin in trying to protect all attendees and the public. A national convention attracts approximately three thousand delegates, along with two thousand five hundred alternate delegates and nearly fifteen thousand personnel from the media. On top of that, there are thousands of additional party faithful, protesters, and support staff who swell the location's population

during a convention. However, security agencies argued that a simultaneous event would encourage more protestors than usual and discussed the possibility of clashes between hard-liners from both parties. Unable to agree to a sequential approach, the two parties insisted on the simultaneous convention schedules. The ultimate authorities for security were the Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security.

Following a previous convention format, the Democratic Party opted to hold its nomination ceremony in the Raymond James Stadium, in the heart of the business district in Tampa. The stadium is home to a national football league team, the Buccaneers, and seats approximately a hundred thousand people. Most of the seating is uncovered. Not to be outdone, the Republican Party selected the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds as the venue for the nomination ceremony. The venue is home to an outdoor amphitheater that can accommodate nearly a hundred thousand people, though most of the seating is uncovered. The venue is situated within Tampa City limits and at the start of the busy Interstate 4 Corridor to Orlando as well as adjacent to Seminole Tribe's Hard Rock Café and Casino. Both venues, with their easy access to major traffic arteries and open staging, pose unique security hazards. For events leading up to the nomination, ceremonies will be held in the Tampa Bay Times Forum and the Tampa Convention Center for the Democratic Party and Republican Party, respectively. These two venues are indoors and can accommodate approximately twenty-five thousand attendees. These venues will be used as alternate sites for the nomination ceremony in case of inclement weather, since August is the middle of the hurricane season and the most active time for the Gulf of Mexico.

Two days prior to the start of the convention, three gunmen overrun a Starbucks coffee shop and take five customers hostage. The gunmen claim to be part of a domestic antigovernment terrorist group and submit several demands, including a demand for the cancellation of the convention. The gunmen claim that no political party has authority over the people and that citizens are "sovereign onto themselves." This incident has already captured the attention of a disaster-hungry news media and has the potential to disrupt the political process. The gunmen threaten to kill all the hostages and as many bystanders as possible if their demands are not met.

Due to your reputation as a forensic psychology professional with experience in operational psychology, you are called on by the president's chief of staff to assist in resolving this problem. The chief of staff emphasizes the importance of a peaceful yet expedient resolution of the problem. Your role is to act as a consultant to the hostage negotiators, a consultant to the interrogators (should any of the gunmen be taken alive), and a debriefer to personnel involved in the crisis as well as possible victims. As you journey to Florida, you have several hours to prepare for the mission.