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Emanuel admits he erred on describing G8, NATO parade rules as temporary

By Hal Dardick and Kristen Mack

Clout Street

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Mayor Rahm Emanuel today said he erred last month when he said tighter protest rules and higher fines for thwarting police would be temporary measures designed just for a pair of spring meetings of international leaders in Chicago.

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"I misspoke, and I take responsibility for the confusion," Emanuel said at an unrelated news conference. The mayor meant to say that only the blanket spending authority for the G-8 and NATO conferences, which he is seeking along with the other measures, would be temporary.

The mayor's description of his errant statement came after protest leader Andy Thayer, noting today's [Tribune story](#) that explained how the measures were permanent, accused the mayor of lying.

"Mayor Emanuel has frankly lied when he said that these ordinance changes would be temporary," Thayer said. "He knew what it was about."

Thayer and other members of the Coalition Against the NATO/G-8 War and Poverty Agenda this morning filed a permit application for a mass march on May 19 that would start at Daley Plaza and end at McCormick Place, where the NATO and G-8 summits are to be held.

Before filing the application, Thayer stood before a throng of television cameras, calling on Emanuel to reverse course on the proposed protest changes and aldermen to reject them before the Jan. 18 City Council meeting.

Don Rose, a political consultant who was an anti-Vietnam War spokesman during the troubled 1968 Democratic National Convention that led to riots, also spoke. He said tougher protest restrictions could trigger "acting out" by frustrated protestors seeking to peaceably demonstrate.

"I was one of the organizers when the whole world was watching, and I see some unfortunate parallels here," Rose added, saying the "Battle of Michigan Avenue" was touched off in 1968 after marchers took to the sidewalks after being unable to get permits. "If they are serious about protecting first amendment rights, they will expedite and cooperate in giving the parade permits."

Emanuel's proposed new rules would double the maximum fine to \$1,000 for protestors charged with resisting or obstructing a police officer, as well as those helping protestors escape custody. The minimum fine would soar to \$200 — a \$175 increase.

The duration of demonstrations would be reduced by 15 minutes to exactly two hours. Public parks and beaches would be closed until 6 a.m., two hours later than now. Loud noise, amplified sound and music at parades and public assemblies would be allowed only between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m.

“Every piece of sound equipment would need to be registered with the city a week in advance,” Thayer said, citing one of the proposed revisions he believes is unworkable. “You can't predict who's going to show up with a bullhorn, who's going to show up with a megaphone or what have you.”

Emanuel, meanwhile, again said his intent is to allow world leaders to meet and conduct their business while also protecting protestors rights to free speech.

“Our fee structure hadn't been updated in 20 years,” he said of the proposed fine increases. “We're bringing it more in line.”

The NATO and G-8 summits are scheduled for May 19-21 at McCormick Place. Emanuel has stressed that the event in President Barack Obama's hometown is a chance to showcase the city, while some observers note riots have resulted in other cities where those groups have met.

Emanuel was back on the job today with a tan after spending much of the last two weeks vacationing with his family in South America. The mayor, his wife, Amy Rule, and his three school-aged children went to Chile and Argentina on a 70-mile white water rafting trip. They also spent their time outdoors fly fishing and hiking, the mayor said. And the Emanuels brought in the New Year in Buenos Aires.

“Every year we try to take the kids to a different part of the world to see,” Emanuel said. “When you grow up again, you want to be an Emanuel child at some point.”

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