

Expert at Controlling

Protests

Jerry Vernon Wilso.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 4 —

Jerry Vernon Wilson does not see his position as chief of this city's police as a desk job. This afternoon, Chief Wilson walked ahead of young demonstrators marching to the Justice Department and directed his men through a megaphone. Yesterday, the

43-year-old chief Man did not depend in the on second-hand News reports of the day's developments. He was on

the streets at 4:30 A.M., traveling first in a cruiser, then in a motorcycle sidecar and finally on foot. According to his aides, he went indoors only briefly during his 20-hour day and then only for meetings with city and Federal officials.

The Washington Patrolmen's Association criticized him last year for apologizing to George Washington University students about what he felt was overreaction by the police to a minor disruption. The association contended he was not standing behind his men.

"I don't stand behind my men," Mr. Wilson replied in a scorching seven-page letter. "I stand in front of them. You know very well that I have had as many invectives and rocks thrown in my proximity as any 20 of those 200 men who unanimously voted to deplore my actions."

Because of his vast experience, Mr. Wilson has become recognized as the national expert on how to control demonstrations. When Federal officials briefed police departments around the country last year on riot control, they used as a text a description of Mr. Wilson's methods.

His tactics vary, but two precepts stand out, according to his associates. He believes that the police should take the offensive but that injuries should be kept to a minimum.

At times, he has had policemen use their cars and motorcycles the way a cowboy uses his horse—to herd protesters the way he wants them to go. To keep other demonstrations under control, Mr. Wilson has ordered saturation tear-gassing.



A firm believer in d.
(Mr. Wilson at the Justi

This week, Chief Wilson changed strategies. He ordered mass arrests — nearly 10,000 over two days — and told his policemen that they need not worry about filling out arrest records on the spot.

This tactic has been criticized as a violation of civil liberties, but the chief believes he had no alternative.

"My goal was to see that the Federal Government was able to do business," he said at a news conference. He said he would "leave it to the judgement of the American people" whether he had acted properly.

His associates said today that he was proud that the city had not been overly disrupted and that no one had been badly hurt.

Mr. Wilson has the public appearance of a jovial giant. He is 6 feet 4 inches tall and is trim at around 200 pounds. He has lost most of his hair, and his large ears seem to flop beneath his uniform cap, which he always wears on duty.

He was born in South Hill, Va., on March 24, 1928, and his family moved shortly thereafter to Gaston County, N.C., where his father was a baker. At 14, Mr. Wilson dropped out of school, about his age and enlisted in the Navy. He served years in the Mediterranean and the Pacific.