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Saturday, 15 February, 2003, 18:01 GMT



Millions join anti-war protests worldwide

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London protesters criticised Bush and Blair
Millions of people worldwide are marching in demonstrations against a possible US-led war against Iraq.

Hundreds of peace rallies are taking place in up to 60 countries this weekend.

The demonstration in London was the capital's biggest in peacetime. The



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"There are people here from all walks of life"



Your war demo images



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organisers put the turnout at nearly two million, while police said it was more than 750,000.



“ If Mr Blair will hear his people he can alter the direction of the rush to war ”

Jesse Jackson

Protests are now getting under way in the United

States, with the main rally taking place outside the UN headquarters in New York.

Hundreds of thousands of anti-war protesters thronged the streets of Paris, Rome and Berlin.

The demonstrations come a day after UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix issued a largely positive assessment of the UN's disarmament process in Iraq.

'War about oil'

Along with France, Germany has been one of the most vociferous opponents of war with Iraq.

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Addressing a massive crowd in Hyde Park, London mayor Ken Livingstone

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said "this is all Britain standing together regardless of age, race or sex".

"This war is solely about oil. (US President) George Bush has never given a damn about human rights," he said.

Veteran US civil rights activist Jesse Jackson told the Hyde Park rally that "it is not too late to stop this war".

“ It was a wonderful feeling to be with over 150,000 people all opposed to our government's stance on the war. ”

Ann de Hugard,
Melbourne, Australia

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The protesters marched under a sea of multi-coloured banners and slogans such as "No War On Iraq" and "Make Tea, Not War".

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has suffered a fall in popularity following his staunch support of US plans to launch military action against Saddam Hussein.

Global activism

Demonstrations have also been held in cities across the Middle East, including Israel, and in East Asia.

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In a rare sign of unity, 3,000 Jews and Arabs marched together in Tel Aviv.

In New York, celebrities and activists such as Susan Sarandon, Danny Glover, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and black activist Angela Davis are expected at the peace rally.

They will be joined by some families of the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center, marching as "9/11 Families for Peace."

Some of the first protests on Saturday were seen in New Zealand, as environmental pressure group Greenpeace flew a plane over Auckland harbour trailing a banner reading "No War, Peace Now".

About 5,000 marched through Auckland and a similar number in the capital Wellington.

Rallies were held in several cities in Australia, where a protest in Melbourne on Friday drew a crowd estimated by organisers at 150,000 - the largest there since anti-Vietnam War marches 30 years ago.

In Seoul - capital of South Korea, one

of the staunchest US allies in Asia - hundreds of demonstrators rallied, shouting chants such as "Bush, Terrorist!" and carrying banners urging "Drop Bush, not bombs".

Anti-war activists in Turkey called on fellow citizens to simultaneously turn off all lights at 2000 local time (1800 GMT) as a novel sign of support for anti-war sentiment.

In Malaysia - a predominantly Muslim state - hundreds demonstrated outside the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur bearing banners and placards with slogans such as: "No war. Stop US aggression" and "No more blood for oil".

And in Thailand about 2,000 people - mostly Muslims - rallied in front of the US and UK embassies in the capital on Saturday.

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