

Worldwide war protests bring millions to streets

Fawn Vrazo

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

LONDON — By the millions, peace marchers in cities around the world united Saturday behind a single demand: No war with Iraq.

In Rome, between 1 million and 3 million people turned out, according to police officials and protest organizers; in London, between a half-million and 1 million; in Berlin, a half-million.

On a global scale, the demonstrations were among the largest in decades. They began with the arrival of the day in New Zealand and spread time zone by time zone around the globe, culminating with 100,000 people flooding the streets near the United Nations in New York. More than a million marched in Barcelona, Spain, while more than half a million took to the streets of Madrid.

The larger than expected marches, coming a day after the U.N. Security Council debate on whether to give weapons inspectors more time in Iraq, will make it harder for the Bush administration to win support for any war effort in Iraq.

"Peace! Peace! Peace! Let America listen to the rest of the world — and the rest of the world is saying: 'Give the inspectors time,'" Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa told

an inter-religious throng at a church near the United Nations.

In many places, the marches equaled or surpassed the scope of the anti-globalization demonstrations in recent years. In other places, they rivaled or topped the anti-nuclear protests of the early 1980s or the Vietnam War protests of the '60s and '70s.

"People are getting organized to a degree I have never seen in my lifetime," said Henry Schwarz, director of the Program on Peace and Justice, located at Georgetown University. "It does seem to have far-reaching impact."

In London, a seemingly endless throng of flag-waving marchers flowed down the wide avenues of Piccadilly. The march took five hours before the end of it finally caught up with the front at the speaker's stage on the muddy grounds of Hyde Park.

Shaggy-haired left-wing protest veterans teamed up with families who had never marched before. Demonstrators wore diamond rings and nose rings, fur coats and jean jackets. Babies and children were plentiful.

"It's not Americans, it's your government," Santino Russomanna, 46, told an American reporter in Rome. "George Bush, he's a rich man who is worried about his

own interests."

In Rome, as in London, demonstrators also attacked their own leaders for siding with Bush on the war.


Berlin's large protest was aimed at the Bush administration, not the German government, since Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has been firmly against an Iraq war.

Berlin had not seen a rally so large since Nov. 4, 1989, when a half-million East Germans demonstrated against their government five days before the fall of The Wall.

Theodor Seidel, a retired Berlin judge, found himself marching in the first demonstration of his 71 years. He carried a sign that read "Bush to Nuremberg," the site of the Nazi war crimes trials.


In New York, protestors' efforts to march directly in front of the United Nations were thwarted by city officials, who denied them a permit for security reasons. But their rally became a de facto march when the sheer numbers overwhelmed police on many streets leading to the rally site, at 51st Street and First Avenue.

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U.N. report deals setback to U.S. calls for war in Iraq

Diego Ibarguen, Tim Johnson and Martin Merzer

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

UNITED NATIONS — U.N. inspectors have not found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and are slowly gaining Baghdad's grudging cooperation, top weapons inspectors said Friday in a measured report that derailed U.S. efforts to broaden support for war.

The inspectors also said they still cannot account for 1,000 tons of chemical weapons, and an exasperated Secretary of State Colin Powell warned members of the U.N. Security Council that Saddam Hussein was playing "tricks" on them.

But the chief inspectors' dispassionate report rallied anti-war forces on the council and deepened fractures between the United States and several close allies, led by France, on the eve of weekend anti-war protests across Europe.

"In this temple of the United Nations, we are the guardians of an ideal, the guardians of a conscience," said French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, who led the Russians, Chinese and others in opposing military action so long as inspections hold promise of disarming Iraq peacefully.

A majority of the 15-member council called for more inspections,

and criticism of the U.S.-British position produced several bursts of applause, a rare event in the council chamber that violated protocol but revealed the depth of sentiment.

Only the British and Spanish supported the U.S. view that Saddam's failure to comply with U.N. disarmament mandates will soon require a U.N. decision on whether to disarm him by military invasion.

By the end of the busy and discordant day, which also included a late two-hour closed Security Council session, Powell said he would not immediately press for a new U.N. resolution authorizing military action.

Arms inspectors are scheduled to report again to the Security Council in early March.

At about the same time, the United States and Britain will be ready to launch an attack on Iraq, with or without new U.N. authorization. Together both nations are assembling about 200,000 troops and massive war equipment in the Persian Gulf region.

Powell told Knight Ridder late Friday that U.N. diplomacy must come to a conclusion soon. "I don't think that point is too far off in the distance," he said.

During the Security Council ses-

sion, one of the most weighty in recent history, chief inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei said that 115 inspectors have examined more than 300 sites and found no evidence of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

"The results to date have been consistent with Iraqi declarations," Blix said.

Representatives of France, Russia and China said war at this time was not justified. All three hold veto power on the council.

"The onerous responsibility and immense honor we have must lead us to give priority to disarmament through peace," said de Villepin, the French foreign minister.

Said Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov:

"There is movement, movement in the right direction, and we cannot ignore that. Force can be resorted to, but only when all other remedies have been exhausted. As the debate shows today, we have not yet reached that point."

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