

War & Politics

Public Poll:

Are downtown Portland anti-war protests worthwhile or an unnecessary inconvenience and cost to the city?



Shel' Meka Newman, Fed Ex Courier

"There is freedom of speech in America but these people need to get out the Book of Revelations and realize this war was a long time coming."



Danielle Hampton, Student

"It's good that protesters are down there but the signs don't say the right thing. They should say, 'The war is stupid, but we support our troops.'"



Dee Smith, Retired

"I think most people who are protesting just don't have anything else to do."



Marlon Jackson, Caregiver

"These protests, I don't like them. There should be love and peace for everyone."

How Much is Too Much?

continued ▲ from Front

stoically, some waving peace signs in the direction of the incoming cops.

"The police shouldn't be attacking them," Marshall said.

Police made repeated warnings then moved mechanically forward.

"Back. Back. Back," they repeated in unison, taking ground from the protesters.

"Peaceful protest. Peaceful protest," demonstrators chanted.

Some still held peace signs as the shielded and baton-wielding officers moved forward.

Protesters on the peripheral and those standing were pushed back, some with deft jabs from the baton.

As the retreating mass of protesters fled across Burnside Street, some officers used bursts of pepper spray to break up clusters of demonstrators.

The confrontation cooled but was far from over as police at the intersection dealt with interlocked protesters one by one, pulling them from the crowd and zip-tying their hands before loading them into the police wagon.

That protest was just the beginning of a series of actions that have been closely monitored by Portland Police since the start of the war.

Brian Schmutz, public information officer for the Portland Police said the response is in accordance with operation plans that seek to keep downtown safe and accessible.

"We said all along our mission is to keep Portland safe and the streets open to everyone," Schmutz said.

Portland Police have made over 160 arrests at the downtown rallies. Most protesters, Schmutz said, were cited for disorderly conduct.

Another march last Tuesday departed from Pioneer Square at noon with protesters determined to follow the law to the tee, moving in parallel groups on downtown sidewalks.

Intern Minister Brent Was, of the First Unitarian Church, joined the protest for most of the afternoon as it snaked through downtown followed closely by dozens of riot-clad cops and officers on bike.

"We're making a lot of bad decisions that will have consequences for us," Was said of US foreign policy, as he moved from block to block with as many as a hundred other protesters.

A former Marine Corp officer, Was still has friends in the armed forces.

"I know a lot of people there. And I'm scared for them," he said.

Was said the church does not have an official position on the war but he added that Christianity recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

"War is inherently contradicting to that," he said.

Despite the heavy police presence and the cost of additional police patrols, Was plans to keep marching in his flowing white cassock.

"I'm sad. I'm scared, and I'm getting angry," he said.



I don't want to see these kids get beat up. The police shouldn't be attacking them.

—Aldona L. Marshall, a woman who found herself caught between protesters and a wall of Rapid Response Officers

A protestor (left) is arrested during an anti-war protest Tuesday afternoon downtown. Gulf War veteran Sean Lewis (below center) demonstrated with over a thousand protesters at Terry Schunk Plaza downtown the day after the bombing of Baghdad began.

PHOTOS BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



My daughter is doing the job she's supposed to do. I'm proud of her.

—Lindsey Jackson, father of Celeste Jackson who was deployed to Kuwait months ago



Lindsey Jackson, center, is pictured with daughters Celeste, left, and Dannielle in a 1996 family portrait. Jackson said he is proud that his daughter Celeste is fighting the war in Iraq.

A Daughter at War

continued ▲ from Front

Saddam needs to go. I think we're doing the right thing."

Jackson said Hussein has a track record as a repressive and sometimes brutal leader.

"People here in the United States have never lived under a threat like that," he said. "We're doing what we have to do."

With a daughter thousands of miles away at war, Jackson takes the Portland protests on the home front in stride. He champions the

right to free speech, but detests flag burning. He supports protesters right to demonstrate so long as their actions are neither disruptive nor dangerous.

"When you start to impede other people's lives or endanger others, you don't get any sympathy from me," he said.

Jackson believes the straightforward approach of the US military plan to unseat Saddam is the right one.

"I believe he has weapons of mass destruction," he said. "They want to get

him out of there, and hopefully get someone in there that's better."

Although he supports the war, Jackson thinks US Generals may have surged into the conflict over optimistically.

He said the American public should expect an entrenched conflict that could last longer than most expected.

"The loss of life will happen. It's going to be long. It's not going to be a short one," he said. "When you're going to go fight a war, you don't presume anything."