

Ohioans take part in anti-war rally in Washington

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Washington - The custom-made neon yellow T-shirt that Barbara Davis of Tallmadge wore to an Iraq war protest in Washington on Saturday said it all.

The front bore a photo of her grandson, 22-year-old Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Nathan Deyarmin Jr., who was killed in Iraq on Aug. 1. The back had a picture of President Bush, labeled "International Terrorist."

The retired elementary school teacher said she kept her longtime opposition to the war quiet while her grandson was in Iraq, but decided to speak out after he died "because I don't want the same thing happening to his friends."

"Patriotism means to be behind your country and troops; it doesn't mean you have to be behind your president," said Davis.

Davis attended the march in matching T-shirts with her daughter and granddaughter, Edie and Erica Deyarmin, the deceased soldier's mother and sister.

Hundreds of Ohioans joined tens of thousands of demonstrators for a rally and march outside the White House that its organizers billed as the largest demonstration yet against the Iraq war. They claimed protesters came from 250 cities in all 50 states. Anti-war protests were also planned in other U.S. and European cities, including London.

Polls released over the summer show diminished public support for the war in Iraq, and peace activists hoped that a demonstration would gel political pressure for withdrawal of U.S. troops. Although many of Saturday's events occurred within view of the White House, its chief occupant was out of town monitoring U.S. response to Hurricane Rita.

Featured speakers in Washington included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, actress Jessica Lange, former presidential candidate Ralph Nader and Cindy Sheehan, the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq who protested the war for several weeks outside President Bush's Texas ranch.

"How many more of other people's children are you willing to sacrifice to the lies?" Sheehan asked, leading the crowd in a chant of "Not one more."

Protesters wearing T-shirts with messages like "Make levees not war" jammed streets around the Ellipse and waved signs with messages like "Stop Mad Cowboy Disease" and "You Can Bomb a Country to Pieces, But You Can't Bomb a Country to Peace."

"I don't want my kids, or anyone else's kids, out in harm's way for an unnecessary war," said Kim Baragry, 45, of Cuyahoga Falls, who has two children in the Army.

She said her son, William Doerfer, 24, served in Iraq at the beginning of the war and her daughter, Natalee, will probably be sent there in March.

Walter Nicholes, 81, of Cleveland Heights, a retired public relations executive who served in World War II, compared the current conflict to the Vietnam War, and said both were unjustified.

"The Vietnam War came to an end only when Congress finally began to cut off its money," said Nicholes.

"This is a wake-up call to Congress that they have to stop subsidizing the president's little imperialistic venture."

Joy Kiser of Anderson Township, outside Cincinnati, had expressed a different view of the upcoming protest after visiting Capitol Hill on Thursday with her mother and sister for an event to honor families of soldiers killed in Iraq.

Her brother, Staff Sgt. Charles "Chuck" Kiser, was an Army police officer who died on June 24, 2004, while trying to stop a suicide bomber.

On their way out of Washington, the family visited a field of grave-like crosses near the Washington Monument where protest organizers had posted photos of the more than 1,000 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. Joy Kiser demanded that her brother's picture be removed from the display because "he would totally disagree with what these people are doing."

"Having a demonstration like this sends a negative message to the troops," Kiser said as she awaited her flight home.

"We don't agree with pulling our troops out of Iraq. They need to complete their mission."

Chuck Larson, an Iraq war veteran and Iowa state legislator who organized a "Families United for our Troops and Mission" rally in Washington for today, estimated that 95 percent of Iraqis are delighted by Saddam Hussein's overthrow because he was a tyrant who murdered his own people.

He called Saturday's rally "incredibly disappointing while we have men and women in the combat zone."

"You cannot say you support the troops if you don't support their mission," said Larson, who serves in a Des Moines-based Army engineering unit.

"I spent a year in Iraq, and the fact that our nation was behind us 100 percent is what kept us going."

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