

Tens of thousands march in Dublin

Patrick Walsh
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The Dublin antiwar protest was a massive affair, with a rough estimate at over 200,000 participating. The march initially proceeded along O'Connell Street, a broad boulevard in the city centre. It took just over one and a half hours to pass.

RTE, the state television channel, announced the attendance at 80,000, based on Gardai (police) figures. Their chief news correspondent lied directly into the camera on location, stating that the march took "well over half an hour" to cross O'Connell Bridge, when it was really twice or three times that long.

The great majority of the banners and placards on the march raised the issue of oil and the use of Ireland's west coast Shannon airport as a refuelling stopover for American military transport aircraft en route to the Gulf and the Middle East. Bush, Blair and Bertie Ahern, Ireland's *Taoiseach* (prime minister) were also lambasted.

The marchers covered all ages, and carried prominent homemade banners identifying workplaces, working-class communities, colleges and youth groups. The two main revisionist groups in Ireland, the Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Party (formerly Militant) along with the bourgeois Labour Party were the most prominent of the protest's contingents by virtue of their placards and banners; but the great mass of marches were politically unaffiliated.

Yesterday's march was one of the largest in Ireland's tumultuous history, yet Ireland's main Sunday paper, the *Sunday Independent*, relegated its coverage of the march to a two-thirds page spread on page 5; again repeating the 80,000 figure provided by the police. The bizarre front page of the *Sunday Independent* was given over to a manufactured spat over the religious proclivities of the country's president. There was not a single reference to the march on the front page. The *Sunday Independent* is owned by Tony O'Reilly a multi-millionaire business and media tycoon. Irishman

O'Reilly was formerly the chairman of the Heinz corporation and has been knighted by the British monarchy.



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