

# DC antiwar protesters: Democrats and Republicans are “two sides of same coin”

A reporting team  
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The majority of the protesters at Saturday’s antiwar demonstration in Washington, DC were students and young people. However, there were people from all walks of life, including many elderly couples and entire families that walked together. The march began on the north side of the White House, at Lafayette Park, with a rally and speakers, followed by a march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol building, where 190 were arrested in a civil disobedience protest.

A group of more than two dozen US veterans of the Iraq war were at the head as the protesters marched down Pennsylvania Avenue. They carried a coffin signifying the war’s thousands of dead and wounded. Marchers came from as far a way as California, Minnesota, Georgia, Florida, Vermont and Maine. There were large delegations from North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia, with the largest contingents coming from Washington D.C., Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts.

At Saturday’s rally, a number of veterans of the Iraq war spoke, as well as family members of soldiers injured and killed in the war. Tina Richards, the mother of Iraq war veteran Cloy Richards read a moving poem from her son, which described six US marines in Fallujah and the fate that befell each of them. One was killed, one was injured, one had turned to drugs, one is in jail for assaulting his wife and children when he returned, one had a breakdown, and Cloy is dealing with his own mental health problems.

Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in 2004 and who became well known after she camped out outside President Bush’s vacation home in Crawford, Texas, spoke, mentioning her decision to run for Congress against Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The WSWS spoke with participants on why they

attended Saturday’s rally and what they thought of the Democratic Party.

Russ McSpadden and Ana Rodrigues traveled from Florida. “I came to protest the war and to protest the Bush administration,” he said. “We tried to bring as many people as we could.”

Russ was carrying a hand-made sign asking how many Iraqis have been killed. “They are the people who everyone leaves out,” Russ added. “Nobody wants to discuss those who have been killed by this war. The Iraqis are getting it from all sides. Nationalism sucks, we have to start thinking about dead people.

“At the university where I work, whenever the military recruiters come on campus, they always target blacks, Hispanics and other minorities. I don’t think that is right.

“I don’t have a whole lot of faith in the Democratic Party, they are two sides of the same coin, two sides of the same party,” said Russ.

Ana added, “I believe the United States is inciting violence in the Middle East, inciting violence among people all over the world and reinforcing negative stereotypes about the United States.

“This war is about oil. They said they were concerned about women’s rights. This is another lie. There are a lot of places in the world where women have it a lot worse than they did in Iraq. They are there for the oil and to control that area of the world.

“I think the Democratic Party will use whatever it can to win the elections, but they are going to keep supporting the war. It is the economic processes in the United States that are the root of the problem.”

Nick Tabor and Holly Pedneau, both students from West Virginia, spoke about why they are opposed to the war and came to the demonstration.

“I think our government and administration have lied to the American people,” said Nick. “The government said that this war is to defend our freedom, when in fact it is a war to impose our ideals on other nations. I think the money we are using on this war could be better used for education, healthcare and other causes to improve our society.

“I am disappointed in the Democratic Party—locally there are politicians who oppose the war, but in general they have voted to fund the war when they should have brought the troops home. I feel that I am trapped, forced to vote for the lesser of two evils to keep Bush from claiming that he has a mandate for this war.”

“I see the humanitarian aspect of this war,” said Holly. “Retribution is not the answer in this war or for anything. We have killed a million people in Iraq, which has not solved anything. I think that all that money that is being used for the war should be used instead to make people’s lives better all over the world.”



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