Thousands protest in D.C., demand immediate end to war

'Largest gathering in protest history' assaults war policy

WASHINGTON—Several hundred thousand anti-war protestors converged on the Capitol building yesterday to demand an immediate end to the war in Indochina. The demonstration, the fourth in Washington, D.C. in 18 months, was described by one speaker as "opposition to dishonest politicians and war-profiting monopolies."

The crowd, called "the largest in the history of anti-war protests" by its organizers, assembled to take part in the scheduled three week assault on the government's war policy. Civil disobedience is planned for May 3-7.

While the demonstrations were progressing in the Capitol, President Nixon, the person to whom most of the protests were aimed, was spending the day at Camp David in Maryland.

The Washington demonstration yesterday received significantly less support from the Duke campus than the two protests in the nation's capital last year.

One possible explanation for the lack of Duke participation was the scheduling yesterday of the annual Joe College concert. The concert featured the Grateful Dead, the Beach Boys, Mountain and the Butterfield Blues Band, and was attended by over 8000 college students from across the state.

Another possible explanation is that many students at Duke are presently planning to travel to Washington for the May demonstrations and civil disobedience, and were not able to attend both rallies.

Coretta King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., called for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Indochina by Aug. 28 of this year, which would be the eighth anniversary of the civil rights march in Washington. At that time King delivered his now famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

"We have come to the Capitol building this time to appear to the Congress," said David Livingston, a union leader who is co-chairman of the rally. "We have given up on the President."

The crowd marched from the Ellipse behind the White House to the Capitol, starting at 10 a.m. At the rally, while listening to speeches they chanted, "Peace Now," "All we are saying is give Peace a chance," "Power to the People," and "1, 2, 3, 4, we don't want your fucking war."

The demonstration was unusual in that it received support from union leaders, businessmen and several Congressmen, as well as youthful anti-war groups. The most visible group at the rally, however, was Vietnam Veterans Against the War. After a week of anti-war action, the veterans received vocal support (Continued on Page 4)
By Peter Kazanjy  
Special to the Chronicle

WASHINGTON—Vietnam was protest, SedGW anti-war demonstration, FARGS citizens present and carrying their views to the nation's capital. The protest was held in front of the White House on Tuesday, April 29, 1971.

The protest was one of the largest in recent history, with an estimated crowd of more than 300,000 people. The demonstrators were expressing their opposition to the Vietnam War and demanding an end to the conflict.

As the crowd gathered, they chanted and held signs protesting the war. The police presence was felt, as officers blocked off certain areas to prevent the demonstrators from entering the White House. However, the demonstrators continued to march and chant, determined to make their voices heard.

Throughout the day, the protest continued, with speakers addressing the crowd and calling for an end to the war. The protest ended peacefully, with the police presence remaining calm and professional.

The Vietnam War was a major issue during this time, with many people feeling strongly about their views. The protest showed the level of opposition to the war and the determination of those who were fighting for peace.

In conclusion, the Vietnam War protest of April 29, 1971, was a significant moment in American history, with many people coming together to demand an end to the conflict. The protest was a call to action, and it continued to impact the course of the war and the future of the nation.
Despite the relative non-participation of Duke students, those who were in Washington yesterday witnessed what they thought would prove to be a turning point for the anti-war movement.

Questions of exact numbers aside—since crowd estimates always grow smaller as numbers become less sympathetic—yesterday's Washington rally was significant because it involved many, many more people than the expected 50,000. Estimates of attendance ranged up to as much as 20 or 25,000. It is becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy that the American people are saying "no" to the government's war in Indochina.

With 78% of the American people advocating total U.S. withdrawal by the end of this year, it becomes more apparent that President Nixon's supposed strength of support, the alliterate working class, is turning against him.

The American people are seeing the cost of this war for themselves. They are also beginning to see that there are many more ways than they have heretofore realized that they have the means to make this war intolerable, and that the purpose for which they sent their children to Vietnam is to align behind liberal politicians who would find success. And, most of all, the American people want the significant fact that we have gone as far as we have as an organized coalition movement. As long as we are often in these last few years, are not above selling anyone out by our corporate liberal friends in such places as the Democratic Party and the New York Times, is to align behind liberal Democratic leadership, with the goal of ending American involvement in Indochina through legislation or the 1972 elections.

People who care about themselves as political people are coming to understand that they are oppressed by the rulers of this nation. The women's liberation movement is gaining followers in places that political organizers had never dreamed they would find them. But the hopes of Americans are tinged with the realization that their children are dying in Vietnam for reasons that change by the year and never seem to amount to much. Moreover, the consequences of the American people are being aroused to the point where the majority is beginning to see that their government represents some other group besides them.

For those of us in the anti-war movement for the last few years, these additions to our ranks are most welcome and provide signs for encouragement. And while our strength grows among the American people, we continue to gather young Americans to our side.

As we said, the movement is at a turning point dictated by the overwhelming support that has been organized on the issue of Indochina.

One option open to the movement, the one recommended by our corporate liberal allies in such places as the Democratic Party and the New York Times, is to align behind liberal Democratic leadership, with the goal of ending American involvement in Indochina through legislation or the 1972 elections.

That road is perilous, for it makes a transference of leadership to establishment politicians who, if we have learned anything in the last few years, are not above selling anyone out for their own selfish ends. Furthermore, such a course ignores the significant fact that we have gone as far as we can have an independent, coalition movement. As long as we are independent, the Washington politicians will court our favor, once we are in their back pockets, we are lost.

Another alternative, which does not exclude support of politicians who have a clear cut stand for immediate withdrawal, is to continue to build a broad-based movement to end the war and to try to organize that movement to the point where it will have a much deeper understanding of why we have Vietnam, Panama, and Appalachia.

That road seems the most difficult, the goal seems far away but over the proverbial hill at the end of the tunnel. Yet such a course of protracted, organized struggle is needed if the movement is not to lose its vision.

As long as we remain independent, that vision cannot be taken away by anyone in the establishment who claims we are frivolous and immediate that we are committed to our goals and to anti-violence, we will show the American people that we are sincere and will not rest.

On to Washington!

The chronicle

A letter from Nguyen Thi Binh

Editor's note: Nguyen Thi Binh is a negociatrice for the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam at the Paris talks. The following letter was distributed by the Chronicle by Liberation News Service.

Dear American friends,

I am writing to express my greetings to all American friends of all social classes, political tendencies, and religious beliefs participating in this Anti-war Offensive (Apr.-May 1971)

It is with joy that I welcome and provide signs for encouragement. And while our goals and to non-violence, we will show the American people that we are sincere and will not rest.

Sunday, April 25, 1971

To the American friends

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To the American friends
Coretta King yesterday calling for the withdrawal of all American troops before Aug. 29. (Photo by Mike McCabe)

-Massive support-

(Continued from Page 1)

From the crowd.

John Kerzy, leader of the veterans said, "The grounds have the most powerful army in the world. There is only one problem with it, it depends on soldiers who can think." He said he wished soldiers did not have to serve in Vietnam and come back with their wounded before people would realize the truth about the war.

"But in 30 years," he said, "some of our brothers are struggling to walk on one leg and small boys ask why, we can say Vietnam and we know why we acted by telling the truth."

Funk.

Another former service man to speak at the rally was former lieutenant, Louis Funk, the first West Point graduate to receive Conscientious Objector status. He said, "Instead of the war is completed and is coming to an end."

Congressman John Murrin of Michigan called for withdrawal by Oct. 4, the day after the South Vietnamese have national elections. He said, "Our last elections didn't work out so well and nobody came in to dehumanize us."

At the rally, citing the failure of past demonstrations, called for continuing action to end the war. "We're going to stay on the streets until the war is ended," Jerry Guttman, of the National Peace Action Coalition, said.

Journalist F. E. Steiner was the final speaker to call for the election defeat of President Nixon, saying, "We'll get rid of Richard Nixon just like we got rid of Lyndon Johnson. And we'll get rid of militarism and imperialism and free Vietnam. Then we'll free more Vietnam in the future."

As the demonstrators left the Capitol, the barrier that had been set up earlier this week and over which the Vietnamese veterans had thrown their service medals, were torn down. It was the only incident incident reported during the day, and the police took no action.

Although those interviewed yesterday who were interviewed yesterday who were unaware of the activities May 2-5 are characterized as "very impressive" by some, and as an added impetus to yesterday's actions.

The veterans culminated that activities Friday by depositing war medals on the Capitol steps, according to one veteran.

Veterans.

The veterans who left the week throughout the Senate Subcommittee hearings on war activity "were the setting of the subliminal and demonstrating effect of the power of war," one Washington resident said.

"However emotionally overpowering their effect was, this was called to be felt on a political basis, not on an issue of morality," the resident added.

Vendor.

A vendor, selling assorted peace buttons and flags to small children, said, "It was hard to knock the action of the vets because, although I went into the army and served in 1966, these may have changed now."

The rally, continuing "will put pressure on future inductions and may lead to a reinstatement of their draft," the vendor commented.

Another veteran, who was going well and that he would sell 500 peace flags if he had them.

Disfavor.

Disfavor of yesterday's events was caused by a GI who said, "The march itself was not an effective way of achieving peace." Peace can only be achieved between individuals, he added.

Honor.

The GI explained that peace among the people of Vietnam is not attainable if the U.S. withdrawals. He did not say what this peace was possible, given the current position of the United States in Indochina. A D.C. policeman, on duty for twelve hours, said although he was impressed that the march united the same, the amount of litter and damage and the potential violence of such a protest does not make the best way to achieve his goal.

-Rally reaction-

By Richard McFadden

WASHINGTON—Surprise at the large turnout of all Vietnam veterans and marches, and general support of the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Indochina was the overwhelming sentiment of several eyewitnesses interviewed yesterday who were not involved in the march in Washington.

Those interviewed ranged from a tourist to a continent's student organizer, all of whom said they were generally unfamiliar with the logistics of the march itself and unaware of the activities May 25 centering on massive civil disobedience.

Uncertainty.

Although those interviewed expressed uncertainty as to the ultimate effect of this year's march, most felt that the broad-based movement, which included not only students but also labor officials and religious leaders, was characterized as "very impressive" by some, and as an added impetus to yesterday's activities by others.

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Active duty GI's carrying their banners as they follow the lead of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War in yesterday's protest march. (Photo by Mike McCabe)

-Marchers-

(Continued from Page 2)

organizations. Some of the groups were united by colleges or geographical areas, while others represented such diverse movements as students, and Gay Liberation.

It appeared that the only common denominator of the crowd was its opposition to the war.

Quint.

As they moved along Pennsylvania Ave., the protection was generally quiet, almost speaking only among themselves. At times, the groups broke out in chanting or noise, particularly when passing the Justice Department when chants such as "Hanoi must go!" and "Free Angola, free Laos, stop killing on our soil!" were sung. It was the only incident incident reported during the day, and the police took no action.

The rally at the Capitol had been so well-organized over an hour that it was the last marchers moved down Pennsylvania Ave. There was not enough room on the grassy area around the Capitol for all the people to hear many in the streets and well out of the range of the loud speaker systems which had been set up for the rally. The people who could not hear what was being said on the platform either sat in small groups and talked or wandered through the streets, many in search of food.

As the groups dispersed from the Capitol area, some groups of young protesters carrying Vietnamese and flags sought access to the parking area at Dupont Circle. The police on hand told them that the park was closed, in which time the youths tried to enter it, until the police left.

Many speakers to them that there was an open space area to a few blocks further down Connecticut Ave.

Barriers.

At the rally site, on the west front of the Capitol, the barrier that had been set up earlier this week and over which the Vietnamese veterans had thrown their service medals, were torn down. It was the only incident incident reported during the day, and the police took no action.

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