

American strike in Iraq prompts anti-war protests in U.S. cities

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People march as they take part in an anti-war protest amid increased tensions between the United States and Iran at Times Square in New York, U.S., January 4, 2020. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Groups of protesters took to the streets in Washington and other U.S. cities on Saturday to condemn the air strike in Iraq ordered by President Donald Trump that killed Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani and Trump’s decision to send about 3,000 more troops to the Middle East.

“No justice, no peace. U.S. out of the Middle East,” hundreds of demonstrators chanted outside the White House before marching to the Trump International Hotel a few blocks away.

Similar protests were held in New York, Chicago and other cities. Organizers at Code Pink, a women-led anti-war group, said protests were scheduled on Saturday in numerous U.S. cities and towns.

Protesters in Washington held signs that read “No war or sanctions on Iran!” and “U.S. troops out of Iraq!”

Speakers at the Washington event included actress and activist Jane Fonda, who last year was arrested at a climate change protest on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

“The younger people here should know that all of the wars fought since you were born have been fought over oil,” Fonda, 82, told the crowd, adding that “we can’t anymore lose lives and kill people and ruin an environment because of oil.”

“Going to a march doesn’t do a lot, but at least I can come out and say something: that I’m opposed to this stuff,” said protestor Steve Lane of Bethesda, Maryland. “And maybe if enough people do the same thing, he (Trump) will listen.”

Soleimani, regarded as the second most powerful figure in Iran, was killed in the U.S. strike on his convoy at Baghdad airport on Friday in a dramatic escalation of hostilities in the Middle East between Iran and the United States and its allies.

Public opinion polls show Americans in general have been opposed to U.S. military interventions overseas. A survey last year by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found 27% of Americans believe military interventions make the United States safer, and nearly half said they make the country less safe.