



action in Iraq. But last fall the Bush administration seemed determined to take military action anyway. "This is supposed to be a democracy, and the folks in Washington are supposed to represent us. There is such a groundswell of opposition that there needs to be some way in which it can be forced into the consciousness of the congressmen," Dolan said.

The Institute for Policy Studies helped create a peace resolution for Washington, D.C. Afterward, the institute created a Web site that offered a tool kit to help other cities pass their own resolutions. "It seemed like a terrific idea for people who were feeling frustrated and powerless to take action in their own communities," Dolan said. She recalls that during the apartheid era 800 cities passed resolutions and that during the nuclear freeze in the 1970s a few hundred cities passed nuclear-free zone resolutions.

In the last four months many antiwar resolutions have passed in liberal bastions like Boulder, Colo., Santa Fe, N.M., Cambridge, Mass., and Berkeley, Calif., where opposition to government policy is a tradition. But places known for less radical politics have also acted, from big cities like Chicago and Tampa to smaller ones like Fairbanks, Alaska, and Grants Pass, Ore.

Responding to critics who argue that antiwar resolutions were largely symbolic, Dolan said: "It's truly participatory democracy in action. I think it's terrific that folks are making the case that war is not a foreign policy issue. It directly touches all of us. The bodies that present us most directly are our City Council."

Some resolutions have had a sharper tone, like the one passed by Amherst, Mass., which goes so far as to direct city employees not to help federal or state officials in any activities that could be considered in violation of civil rights or liberties. The Amherst measure, states, "To the extent legally possible, no town employee shall officially assist or voluntarily cooperate with investigations, interrogations or arrest procedures that may be judged to violate civil rights or liberties."

The resolution proposed by the Greater Lansing Network Against War in Iraq is similar to the one recently approved by the Ingham County Democratic Party. Both texts argue the cost of a war with Iraq would be at least \$100 billion and that at a time when the national deficit is growing and many states and local governments are in dire financial straits, such a war would be economically disastrous.

According to the National Priorities Project, a nonprofit organization that cooperates with the Cities for Peace project, in 2002 Lansing residents paid \$96 million in federal taxes for the military budget. The tax money is being used for military construction, defense, and nuclear weapons. NPP Research Director Anita Dancs estimates if the United States decided to go to war, Lansing residents would pay an additional \$27 million. This year, Michiganders paid roughly \$10.3 billion in taxes to the Pentagon. A war against Iraq would cost Michigan taxpayers an additional \$2.9 billion, with an estimated total national spending of \$100 billion.

The local resolution also considers the humanitarian costs of war, arguing that 10,000 soldiers died in the first Gulf War and over 198,000 Gulf War veterans have filed disability claims. The resolution states, moreover, that 320 tons of toxic and radioactive uranium were dropped on Iraq and Kuwait in 1991, contributing to environmental contamination, the Gulf War syndrome, and many thousands of Iraqi civilian deaths and illnesses.

Asked why their state seems to be such a hot bed for peacemaking activities, Michigan residents often point to Ann Arbor, where activists' agendas flourish at the progressively minded University of Michigan campus. Lansing residents may draw ideas from Ann Arbor, as they face the possibility of their own proposal being turned down by a City Council that doesn't have a reputation for pushing progressive agendas.

When at the Ann Arbor City Council meeting in December 2002 voices argued against America's move in the direction of war, they found a sympathetic audience. Joining 21 other cities at the time, which already included Washington and Detroit, the Ann Arbor City Council voted 7-1 in favor of a resolution against war. Councilwoman Heidi Cowing Herrell pitched the proposed resolution as a means to support local representatives in higher government who oppose the war. "This is a question that concerns the whole nation," she said. "If we go to war there will be economic impacts on our community. There will be members of our community who will serve in the armed forces."

In retrospect, Herrell said one could see that elected city representatives had quickly embraced the idea of an antiwar resolution. "So many activists contacted me and other City Council members, that there was no question we would

take action rather quickly," she said. In the past, Ann Arbor has often been one to comment on national politics. In 2000 the city passed a resolution urging the immediate lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq. Responding to the new USA Patriot Act in January 2002, Ann Arbor passed a resolution for due process and the rejection of the racial profiling of any group within the community. Herrell, who's been a City Council member for the last seven years, said they certainly wouldn't comment on every national policy issue, "but a declaration of war is different, because it effects all residents, and primarily people on the lower level."

Last fall Barry Romo, a national coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War headquartered in Chicago, said he expected antiwar protests to be strong in Michigan. Regions with a higher rate of working-class people, such as Michigan, sent more soldiers to the Vietnam war and are consequently more opposed to the idea of war today.

Peter Dougherty, director of the Michigan Peace Team, said that the large Michigan groundswell against the war in Iraq was probably due to highly committed activists such as the adjunct Cooley Law Professor Anabel Dwyer, or the non-violence trainer Tom Shea in Traverse City. But Dougherty, who got involved in direct action and non-violent civil resistance in the 1960s, said there was no single avenue for success. "Every aspect counts" vigils, demonstrations, e-mailing, phone calls, faxes, passing city resolutions, networking of organizations, and supporting countries like France and Germany that have spoken out against the war. It's an exciting process, and it is possible to prevent the escalation of war."

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