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NEWS STORY  
20030330

2,500 Japanese students in Osaka protest against Iraq war

TOKYO, March 30 (AFP)

Some 2,500 mainly university students formed a human chain in Japanese characters spelling out "No War" in Osaka on Sunday to protest against the ongoing US-led military campaign in Iraq.

"We cannot forgive this war," Miyako Fuji, 20, one of the rally's organisers told Jiji news agency. "I want to join together the feelings of each of us as individuals who oppose the war."

Protesters, who exceeded the 2,000 expected to show up at the park at Osaka Castle in the city's downtown neighbourhood, carried placards that read "Stop war" and "Love and Peace" while forming the human chain after 3:00 pm (0600 GMT), Jiji said.

The protest follows a string of others involving tens of thousands of peace activists across Japan since January.

According to a poll by Kyodo news agency released Saturday, 78 of 100 people surveyed opposed the military action in Iraq.

A separate poll of 1,846 adults by the leading Yomiuri newspaper published Tuesday showed 64 percent felt Japan had "no choice" but to back the United States, with only 12 percent saying Japan had "every reason" to back the war.