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Nude protest held in Central Park

Anti-war demonstrators strip in the snow

Friday, February 7, 2003 Posted: 2:04 PM EST (1904 GMT)

NEW YORK (Reuters) -- Protesters are trying a nude way to stir interest in the anti-war movement.

When U.S. demonstrators hit the streets to rally against a military conflict in Iraq, they often grumble that too few Americans take notice.

So one group opted for an eye-catching alternative.

Just after dawn on Friday, roughly 30 women scurried into the heart of Central Park, splitting up into groups to avoid arousing police suspicion. Once they reached their destination, the Bethesda Fountain, they displayed their deep misgivings about war by disrobing amid a steady snowfall.

Lying down in shivering temperatures, the group of women -- students, executives and artists among them -- used their stark naked bodies to spell out the words "No Bush."

"I have never done anything remotely like this before, but I think it's incredibly cool," said Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, a 40-year-old activist housewife. "We're totally vulnerable out here, yet we're making a wonderful statement."

It didn't take long for a flock of nude women to attract attention. Central Park workers scrambled to break up the gathering, but by the time they arrived, the women were fully clothed.

'People don't realize it's about to happen'

Women have staged similar nude protests in this country, as well as in Europe and South Africa in recent months, said the event's organizer, Wendy Tremayne.

The women said they are frustrated that too many Americans have passively accepted war with Iraq as inevitable and unavoidable.

"Part of it is apathy," said Kate Heim, 25. "The other part is that people don't realize it's about to happen. It doesn't seem real."

Tremayne expressed disgust with what she called a high-handed, go-it-alone U.S. approach in foreign policy.

"For me, it's been a growing embarrassment about being American that started before Bush," Tremayne said. "This event derives from the belief that people can do things,

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“ We're totally vulnerable out here, yet we're making a wonderful statement. ”
-- Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, 40

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that people still care and can make a difference."

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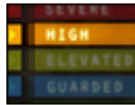
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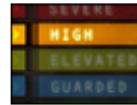
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