

Puppets tout other uses for war money

By SARAH KINGSBURY - Staff Writer

Article Launched: 03/16/2008 12:00:00 AM PDT
Giant puppets representing alternative uses for war spending paraded around City Plaza Saturday in observance of the fifth anniversary of the Iraq war.

In July, the Congressional Budget Office forecast spending on the war to reach \$1 trillion after calculating long-term costs like health care and rehabilitation for soldiers.

The puppets' creators advocated funding for solar energy, endangered species protection, Farm Bill reform, alternative railways, cleaner oceans, universal health care, Native American rights, education and numerous other issues.

Led by a small band playing "Amazing Grace," four "pallbearers" carried a black coffin in front of the puppet line. When all the participants had placed flowers on the coffin, the band began playing "When the Saints Go Marching In," and the puppeteers took to the middle of the plaza to dance.

"What we're doing here today is we're marking our opposition, but we're also imagining what we can do next," said Sue Hilderbrand, director of the Peace and Justice Center, which sponsored the peace rally.

Guest speakers included Ali Sarsour, a Sunni Muslim originally from Palestine; Jim Reis, a Persian Gulf War veteran; and Sgt. Alexandra Trent, an Army reservist who served in the medical corps in Germany receiving wounded soldiers from Iraq.

A popular model in economics divides a

nation's gross domestic product into civilian goods and defense spending, using butter to illustrate the former and guns for the latter.

"It's hard to think of all the butter that's not being purchased because the guns are," Hilderbrand said.

A puppet in the form of a giant check was created by Campus Involvement and Awareness, a student organization. The group said the check was written to the students of America and advocated for improved education from kindergarten through university level.

Other puppets ranged in height from a tiny cardboard fish on a stick (advocating cleaner oceans) to a 20-foot heron (wetlands protection).

"I feel we need to spend our resources here at home and stop invading countries," said Connie Fisher. Her puppet, "Ecotopia," was designed to look like the Statue of Liberty, but she decided early on that the national landmark's traditional name wouldn't be proper for the peace rally. "I don't feel Lady Liberty is liberty for all anymore."

Most of the puppets were environmentally friendly, made from recycled cardboard and paper-mache.

The crowd observed two moments of silence during the event — one for Americans and Iraqis killed in the war and one for families displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Staff writer Sarah Kingsbury can be reached at skingsbury@chicoer.com.

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.
PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™