

City's Iraq resolution draws big-time publicity

Most responses positive, though one pundit advises 'Smoke Saddam, don't smoke pot'

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The entire nation now knows how the City Council feels about a U.S. military strike against Iraq. Some critics have told the council to butt out of foreign affairs and start patching potholes. But the council's 6-0 vote Tuesday to pass a resolution criticizing war with Iraq has drawn

massive publicity including coverage on National Public Radio, CNN and NBC.

CNN's Greta Van Susteren and Wolf Blitzer quizzed Mayor Christopher Krohn on their shows while millions tuned in. On NBC, one pundit grumbled, "Smoke Saddam, don't smoke pot," a double-barreled response to the resolution and the council's recent local-federal standoff over medical

marijuana.

The coverage has prompted dozens of phone calls, e-mails and letters to City Hall, voicing praise, ridicule, rapture and disgust. Responses have been floating in from as far as Germany and Japan.

"Thank you sincerely for leading the nation toward rationality and common sense," John Kaminski of Englewood, Fla. wrote in an e-mail.

Brenda of Sparks, Nev. had a different take.

"Can't you at least support the president in his quest to safeguard this country?" she wrote. "What's wrong

with you people? Your city is a disgrace. Let me guess, Santa Cruz is mostly Democrats, right?"

Vice Mayor Emily Reilly said the council had a right, and an obligation, to take a strong stand for peace.

"The people who represent us want to know what we're thinking," she said. "They know the City Council doesn't speak for everybody. They're not stupid."

The positives slightly outweighed the negatives in the City Council's shared e-mail box this week.

The council made a fan of Yukiko Hirai, a housekeeper in Japan, who

wrote, "You are a good example all over the world," and from "Miss Sweet," no address given, who applauded the city's "courage in speaking out about (President Bush's) relentless desire to strike with full force a country that we have devastated for the last 10 years."

Nathanael Robertson of Washington state said he will boycott Santa Cruz, and that "at least (pacifists) knew when to be quiet after Pearl Harbor. Your policies have already caused America enough damage and grief."

"The correct approach is to pressure Please see **RESOLUTION** on **Page A15**

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and lobby your representatives," wrote a "non-Santa Cruz" resident. "Surely the folks in Santa Cruz have more important problems to address."

Steve Reavis, a non-Santa Cruzan, called the vote "pitiful and putrid," adding, "you and your mayor can rot in hell."

To some, all this publicity is an indication that thinking globally and acting locally really works.

Councilman Tim Fitzmaurice said he's surprised the resolution is getting so much airtime, but happy the city helped advance "a debate that needed to go forward."

The e-mails started pouring in after Krohn was invited on CNN, Fox and National Public Radio.

Van Susteren asked what impact the council thought it might have on the issue.

In response, Krohn remarked on "the

fact that we are having this conversation" on live national TV.

Laurie McWhorter, staff coordinator for the city's Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, asked the council to pass a resolution. City administrative assistant Anna Brooks, activist Ruth Hunter and former mayor Celia Scott also played essential roles in drafting and distributing the resolution.

Before the council's decision, residents had collected more than 500 signatures.

Hunter said the national publicity is "absolutely fantastic. If more cities have the courage to take it up now, it will create a boomerang against the war."

The city's actions prompted inquiries about the actual resolution from residents, council members or government aides in Ventura, Sebastopol, San Fernando, Seattle and Minneapolis.

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