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The protesters were students from a Islamic seminary

Thousands of protesters have staged a rally in the Pakistani city of Karachi in protest at possible military action by the United States against Afghanistan.

Hundreds of police and paramilitary troops were deployed to prevent the demonstrators from marching on the US consulate.

The protesters were mainly students from one of the largest Islamic seminaries in Karachi.

They waved banners with slogans critical of Pakistan's President, General Pervez Musharraf, and the US.

"America, don't hunt what you can't kill" and "Pakistan will be the graveyard of the US army" they chanted.

Reports say this was one of the largest demonstrations in Pakistan since Islamabad pledged complete support to US action against the Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Anger

Radical Islamic leaders in Pakistan have been sharply critical of the move.

"Today we have been able to control our students, but in case of any attack on Afghanistan, they could get out of control," the AFP news agency quoted Karim Abid of the radical Jamiat

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In case of any attack on Afghanistan, they could get out of control
”
Karim Abid, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam

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Ulema-e-Islam party as saying.

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On Monday an alliance of radical Islamist parties called for nationwide protests and strikes starting after prayers on Friday, the Muslim holy day.

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Islamic clerics and scholars in India have demanded that the United States provide concrete proof of Osama Bin Laden's involvement in last week's attacks in New York and Washington, before launching an assault on Afghanistan.

"If America attacks Afghanistan without showing the world solid proof of Osama Bin Laden's involvement in the attacks on it or the Afghanistan Government's involvement, it would also be terrorism," the chief cleric of Delhi's Jama mosque, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, said.

In Bangladesh, Islamic clerics and activists from some left-wing organisations have condemned US reaction to the attacks.

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