

Panel criticizes gulf involvement



Rep. Peter DeFazio

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Reporter

A panel of experts at a Eugene town meeting criticized the United State's military involvement in the Persian Gulf and warned that a war against Iraq could bring a reinstatement of the draft.

Decision Research executive Steve Johnson said the selective service system, although it has not been used since 1972, "is in place, and it is ready to go," should Congress decide its use is necessary.

Johnson, a member of the Eugene draft board, also said there are no draft deferments for male college students, except for those who will be graduating within one term of draft notification. In that case, military service would be deferred until after graduation.

In addition, Johnson said the government now allows draft appeals only 15 days after notification, greatly limiting the time period draftees can apply for deferment.

Rep. Peter DeFazio criticized the government's speedy decision to deploy U.S. troops in the gulf and questioned President Bush's long term goals for the area.

"It makes absolutely no sense to deploy massive U.S. troops in that area," DeFazio said. "The president has yet to communicate any of his goals in the gulf."

DeFazio strongly advocated the continuation of economic sanctions against Iraq and said he would continue to lobby in Congress for a peaceful end to the crisis.

"The sanctions can work if we give them time to work, but the president doesn't seem willing to do that," he said. "I think we would win as a people, and we would win as peacemakers, not as war-makers. And that's not a bad way to win."

Rev. Joe Wood, Eugene vicar of the Roman Catholic Church, said bishops from throughout the country have expressed their anti-war views in a letter to the president.

"It is a question whether any war can be moral because of its human losses," Wood said.

Alice Kinberg said American Jews have "deep concerns about the Middle East," and

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