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peace is patriotic" and "Only Congress can declare war."

Bo Adan, University English graduate teaching fellow and vigil co-organizer, said he would like to see Congress first discuss the issue of war before letting President Bush make that decision. Adan said he wants leaders to "stop the madness and return to the negotiating tables."

"We feel the executive branch, which are our representatives, are in fact not representing the American people." he said

Randy Prince, Eugene Peaceworks member and another vigil co-organizer, said, "We want to show our determination... We are not going to take lightly...the option to pursue war.... Negotiation is the answer and not ultimatums."

Gary Bredeweg said he drove post the vigil attendees several times during the day and finally stopped to offer his support for a peaceful solution when he heard of the failed negotiation talks between Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. "I don't think the administration is really trying their hardest with diplomatic measures," Bredeweg said. "(They) need to try and solve this without people dying."

Another person attending the vigil, Joe Roberts, said he was at the vigil because he loves America and believes it is the greatest country on earth, but that America should not be involved in other countries' business

"This is another example of America getting involved in matters that are not our matters," he said.

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The Red Cross service is confined mainly to emergency communications, McElroy said.

"The military relies on us to verify birth, death or family illness," he said. "Mainly, that's the limit of our connection with Desert Shield. But we can also provide information and assistance with financial resources.

"At the meetings, we usually discuss the Red Cross services we can provide to the family." McElroy said. "At the upcoming meeting Jan. 17 we're going to put together items that their sons and daughters don't yet

have access to. We've made a list and we're going to go out and try to get those items donated or bought enough in bulk to send those items to individual units.

"One item, for instance, is cat flea collars," he said. "They put them around the top of their boots to keep off the sand fleas."

Support for the troops — regardless of political differences over whether the troops should even be in Saudi Arabia — is a common concern of family and friends in the group. Pentecost said he is afraid the public will not support the military personnel because they disagree with the war. In his view, forgetting the troops overseas repeats the mistakes of Vietnam.

"We're concerned about Congress not backing the president and it becoming another Vietnam," Pentecost said. "I'm not a right-winger. I'm not against the right to protest or free speech. But I don't agree with a senator who can stand up and say he'll cut the pursestrings of our troops because he doesn't agree with the war.

"We need to make sure our

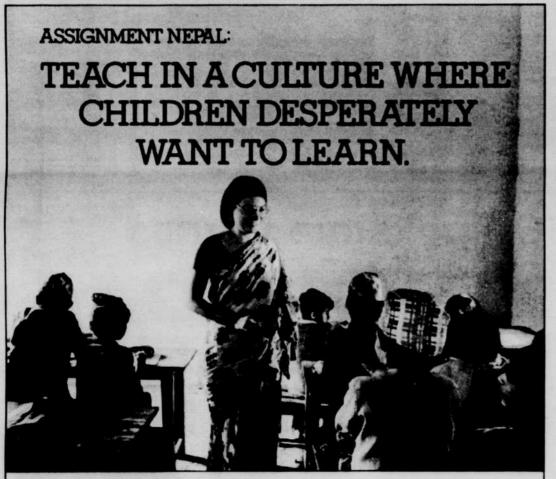
troops have the equipment they need to defend themselves. We need to present a unified front," Pentecost said.

"I know there are a lot of people protesting what's going on, but I don't know of anyone in the support group who agrees with them," Grossman added. "We're the last ones who want a shot to be fired, but we do want support for 'those troops over there."

As the Jan. 15 deadline approaches, the group will continue to offer support to each other and send needed items to the military personnel in the desert. If the need arises, Pentecost said, they will organize without the Red Cross to stage demonstrations to remind people of the troops overseas.

"Those are still our guys over there, whether we agree with the politics or not, and they need our support," Pentecost said. "We want to make certain they're not forgotten. I don't want this to become another Vietnam.

Meetings are held at the Red Cross office at 150 E. 18th Ave. For more information, call 344-5244.



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