

# Peace rejection surprises few

By JOHN ROBINSON  
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SANTA CRUZ — As urgent rumors of an impending ground war spread across news networks Saturday, a group of peace marchers gathered in Santa Cruz.

Heading for downtown the marchers shouted for peace, waved placards and blocked traffic. But unlike the protests of last month when thousands of demonstrators shut down freeways and traffic arteries, Saturday's peace rally drew less than 200 people — barely enough to slow traffic on Mission Street.

"After the initial shock of the U.S. going to war, a lot of people have come to accept it as a status quo — it's old news," Joseph Palermo, a U.S. history teacher at Hartnell College said as he viewed the rally at San Lorenzo Park. "It's disappointing, but there is the potential (for mass protests) to come back if U.S. casualties reach a certain level."

The failure to reach a diplomatic end to the Persian Gulf war and the rejection of peace proposals appeared to surprise few at the rally.

Suzie Kriz, a student and mother who has a brother serving on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf and a brother-in-law in the Army who is on his way to the conflict, saw the recent peace maneuvers as little more than false hope.

"I think (President) Bush is ready to push his march forward and never intended to accept anything," Kriz said. "People who were hopeful had a false hope that he would obtain a peace initiative and sit back and wait. People thought it would just be an air war but we'll see a ground war and when (casualties are) totalled a lot of people will say 'I told you so,' but it won't do any good."

Part of the seemingly inescapable escalation of the conflict into a ground war is due to a lack of public knowledge about what is happening, and a military bureaucratic inertia, according to Palermo.

"There is a bureaucratic inertia for the Army to enter the war so that the Air Force doesn't get all of the credit," Palermo said. "That way when they go before the Congress for their budget they can point out their role."

Palermo said he also believes some of the pressure for a ground war, and the entry of the Army into combat, comes from the desire of junior officers to gain combat experience and a fast track to promotions.

If the public was well informed about the true and brutal nature of the war it might not be so quick to support Bush, Palermo said. And for that he blames the world press corps who he says have been too quick to abide by Pentagon restrictions on coverage.

One speaker at the rally, Vietnam veteran Ruben Gomez, attacked the Pentagon reporting of the war.

"This precision bombing is bull," Gomez said. "When you're a pilot

you're not playing Nintendo. You want to get the hell out of there so you don't get shot. Don't let them fool you ... While we're sitting here on this nice day — maybe it's too nice. In Kuwait and Iraq they are dying. They are in pain."