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EXAM BREAK ISSUE Inside

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Several hundred march, 14 arrested in Middle East protest

By BEAU DURE

"One, two, three, four, we don't want this bloody war." Chanting this and other slogans, several hundred students and Durham residents marched into downtown Durham from East Campus Friday to protest U.S. military involvement in the Middle East.

Fourteen students were later arrested in front of the Post Office for remaining in the street

after police had asked them to disperse. The students were charged with impeding traffic and released late Friday afternoon after bail had been reduced from \$400 to \$100.

The students will appear in court on Jan. 15, which is also the deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face military force.

"We wanted to make as strong a statement as we could," said Trinity senior Lesley McCullough, one of the fourteen students arrested at the demonstration.

"We want Congress to know that not every American is behind this war, and we want to stop one before it starts," said Trinity sophomore Jackie McKisson, of the Duke Coalition for

Peace in the Middle East.

"We don't want another Vietnam, and we don't want our soldiers coming home in body bags."

McKisson said she was "very pleased" with the number of people who participated in the march. "Everyone was pleasantly surprised that it went so well," she said, noting that the march had only been planned five days prior to its occurrence.

The group gathered at 11 a.m. at the East Campus bus stop, as several people handed out armbands, yellow ribbons, and postcards to mail to President Bush upon arrival at the Post Office.

Rick Roderick, an assistant professor of philosophy, told the group before the march began that the Pentagon has ordered

See MARCH on page 2 ►

■ MARCH from page 1

50,000-100,000 body bags. "We're here today to make the strongest and most uncompromising statement that we can make not to fill those body bags.

"Let's remember that the region of the world we're in, we understand very poorly. And that is perhaps one of the most significant analogies with Vietnam: We love to get involved in places where we don't know a damn thing about what's going on, and you start hearing all kinds

of rationales about why we should do it, and they change from day to day. That is not a set of arguments worth dying over. I'm a philosopher and I can tell you this, there aren't a set of arguments worth dying over."

The group, escorted by Durham police motorcycles, marched down Main Street and chanted several slogans from a list that the group had distributed before the march.

Many protestors carried posters with slogans such as "I Regret That I Have But One Life To Give For Texaco," "Silence = Death" and "Give Sanctions Time."

Upon reaching the Post Office, the group laid down in the street to stage a "die-in." The group passed postcards to several people on the sidewalk to be mailed from the Post Office. The postcards included statements that ranged from long arguments against the military

effort to simple messages such as "No War!"

The group remained silent for several minutes. Shortly after noon, a camera crew from local television station WTVD broadcast live from the street and interviewed Roderick. Roderick told the camera crew that he questioned the sincerity of Bush's negotiation efforts, particularly the decision to send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.