

opinion

War Powers Act can't allay doubt

Last week, after a bitter partisan struggle, Congress finally voted passage of the War Powers Act and sent the measure to Pres. Ronald Reagan. But this serves to only allay and not silence doubts over United States involvement in the war in Lebanon.

The War Powers Act authorizes Reagan to keep 1,600 U.S. Marines in Lebanon for up to 18 months. Reagan said he would sign the measure — but with reservations.

This is the first time the War Powers Act has been invoked since its passage in 1973. The act was intended to give Congress more say about how the president deploys U.S. troops overseas.

The War Powers Act was the result of wholesale abuses in the deploying of U.S. troops during the Vietnam War by the Nixon administration.

The debate surrounding the recent passage of the act was heated. Various segments of the Congress sought amendments to shorten the time-limit from 18 months to six months or even 60 to 90 days.

Senate Majority leader Howard Baker Jr., usually a staunch Reagan supporter, urged approval of the act with its original 18-month limitation. Baker said he had "grave doubts" about sending U.S. Marines to Lebanon. However, Baker added, "They are committed, they are under fire and it would be a tragic mistake if the Congress were to withdraw them."

Whether shortening the time limit or keeping it the same we share in Baker's "grave doubts" concerning deploying U.S. Marines in Lebanon. The presence of U.S. Marines is intended to keep the peace. It's difficult to keep the peace when caught in a fatal cross-fire.

Invoking the War Powers Act is a good move on the part of Congress. The act is another check in a system whose strengths lie in checks and balances.

The act will certainly have diplomatic significance. Putting a time limit on the presence of U.S. Marines in Lebanon reaffirms to an ever-suspicious world they are there temporarily.

Enforcing a time-limit is only second-best to bringing the U.S. Marines home.

Another Democrat jumps into ring

George McGovern announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination for president. George who?

Meanwhile, down in Lynchburg, Virginia, one of the few unannounced Democrats Edward Kennedy ventured into the bastion of fundamentalism Monday at the invitation of Moral Majority prophet Rev. Jerry Falwell. Needless to say Kennedy, probably one of the most articulate spokesmen for the liberal cause, was nothing short of "boffo" playing to a room of 7,000 people at Falwell's Liberty Baptist College.

McGovern is trying again. He was unsuccessful when he ran against Richard Nixon in 1972. As a matter of fact, he ran very, very unsuccessfully.

But Kennedy was magnificent telling the devoutly conservative Falwellites "people of conscience should be careful how they deal in the word of the Lord." That's giving them their comeuppance.

McGovern is hoping to shoulder his way through the throng of Democratic presidential hopefuls. He doesn't really have the shoulders to carry the nomination.

And Kennedy, staring into the very teeth of the Fundamentalist pack, bluntly stated his opposition to a school prayer amendment, his support for the nuclear freeze, his opposition to a constitutional ban on abortions. People have probably been lynched in Lynchburg for less.

One of the unforgettable moments of McGovern's forgettable '72 campaign was the time he told a heckler to "kiss my (his) ass." Maybe this time he won't select a running mate who's gone through electro-shock therapy.

Kennedy bearding the lions of fundamentalism makes us wonder if he might be cleaning up his image.

McGovern will need a lot of luck in his bid. So, good luck Teddy... er George.



The boys of summer — 'Betty-Ball'

Her name was Betty. And she worked in a bar. No, this isn't one of those turbulent stories of a summer passion that flickered in June, flamed in August and burnt out by September. Well, maybe it is, if your passion happens to be softball.

Without malice Harry Esteve

It was your basic motley crew. The right center fielder was approaching 40 and prayed when a fly ball came his way. The third baseman spent as much time in the hospital as he did playing.

The starting pitcher was heavily into cannabis and often began a game by walking the first seven batters. "Just finding my zone, man," he would mutter. When he was at bat and they yelled at him to get a hit, he would reach in his pocket for a match. Eminently casual.

It was a team of college kids, wanting to retain what was left of their youth, trying their luck in the big times — city league softball. They pooled their money for the \$200 registration fee and were placed in Eugene's A-League, the city's best.

But they were ready — ready to take on the loggers, mechanics and tavern patrons of the city. They even wore color coordinated jerseys.

The coach's name was John. The money for the jerseys came from the John's mother. Her name was Betty. Trying to be regular guys, they called themselves Betty's Bar and had the name printed in large white letters on their deep blue shirts, in deference to a mother who would fork out the money so her son's team would be well-dressed on the diamond.

And that's when fate took a hand.

It was the first game of the season. Betty's Bar was playing a team from a West Eugene watering hole.

"Never heard of Betty's Bar," said their first baseman. "Where is it?" He stood well over six feet tall and resembled Ken Kesey's description of Chief Bromden, the mammoth Indian in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." His mitt could have fielded a line-drive pumpkin.

John told him about his mother. Chief Bromden wasn't impressed.

The tavern team had better, bigger hitters than Betty's Bar. They also had better, bigger infielders, outfielders, pitchers, catchers, etc. But Betty's played with heart. They scrapped on the field, dove for short flies, tried to stretch singles into doubles.

They lost 19-0.

It was immediately apparent that the season would be a long one. The chances were good that their right center fielder wouldn't get any younger or any more pious, the third baseman would probably keep getting injured, and the pitcher would remain convinced that weed helped him relax before each game.

So to Betty's it became not a question of how to improve, but a question of where to drink after each game.

Someone suggested the Vet's Club where the drinks were cheap and wicked, and the atmosphere conducive to post mortem celebrations.

When they strode into the club, there was a commotion around the bar. Buzzes, murmurs, exclamations. Someone was buying the team a round of drinks.

"It's from the woman behind the bar," someone said. Everyone looked up. "Her name is Betty."

It seems that Betty, a tall woman in her early 30s, with curly hair and laughing eyes, had always wanted a softball team of her own. Now one had drifted into her bar, dusty and defeated, an orphan of the dugout and diamond, and she adopted it. She bought the first three rounds.

There were many losses and much drinking to follow. The team convinced Betty to watch them play one evening, so she took time off from tending bar, wore her complimentary Betty's Bar jersey, and watched her team suffer a 22-2 drubbing. Drinks at the Vets' Club again.

Betty's Bar completed the season with a perfect 0-10 record.

Last weekend the team gathered at the Vets' Club for what was to be their final meeting. Betty had arranged a small banquet in the dining area adjacent to the bar.

They told jokes, handed out awards, drank, of course. Most would not be back next year, as they were graduating or moving on in search of a better life somewhere else.

The jokes were waning, everyone had won at least two awards each, conversation was drifting toward baseball trivia. The right center fielder stood up and commanded silence. There was silence. He raised his glass.

"To Betty," he said, and sat down.

To Betty, they all echoed to themselves, in their own way. For in her own way, Betty had become the one for whom they played, lost, struck out, made errors, hit into double plays, threw the ball away. They had endured 10 humiliations, in 10 summer weekends and had walked away satisfied. And now the summer meant something to them, a meaning that comes from failing week after week and knowing that someone — besides themselves — cared.

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