

Editorial

War Powers lawsuit forces accountability

On Friday, U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., and Mike Lowry, D-Wash., along with 112 other legislators, filed suit in U.S. District Court in Washington D.C. against President Reagan. The lawsuit regards the administration's Persian Gulf policy of escorting Kuwaiti tankers with U.S. naval ships.

Specifically, the lawsuit aims to force compliance with the War Powers Act, which requires the president to report to Congress within 48 hours anytime U.S. military forces are introduced into imminently hostile regions.

The Reagan administration has argued that hostilities are not imminent in the region, and therefore, the War Powers Act does not apply.

However, considering the volatile nature of the gulf, the continued assault on oil tankers by Iran and Iraq, the almost daily threats from the Iranian government of military and terrorist action against U.S. forces, the hitting of a mine by a U.S. flagship, and an attack on a U.S. naval vessel, the Persian Gulf is a region where hostilities are not only imminent, but manifest.

Thus for the Reagan administration to claim hostilities are not present in the Persian Gulf is absurd.

The Reagan administration also has argued that because the United States is officially neutral in the war, the War Powers Act does not apply in this case. But, because Kuwait is aligned with Iraq in the war, the United States is in effect supporting Iraq.

Because the Persian Gulf presently is a hostile region and the United States is supporting Iraq indirectly in the war, Congress has the right to advise and consent, possibly helping the Reagan administration to avoid a political embarrassment in the future.

The lawsuit is appropriate action, and DeFazio and Lowry should be commended for their efforts in forcing the administration to uphold its constitutional responsibility of informing Congress when U.S. forces venture into dangerous areas.

Search for official home can benefit legislature

The search for a house in Salem for Gov. Neil Goldschmidt has been a hot topic, especially with spokespeople for the homeless. But while their concerns are appropriate, the issue should not be boiled down to a home for social events vs. money for the homeless.

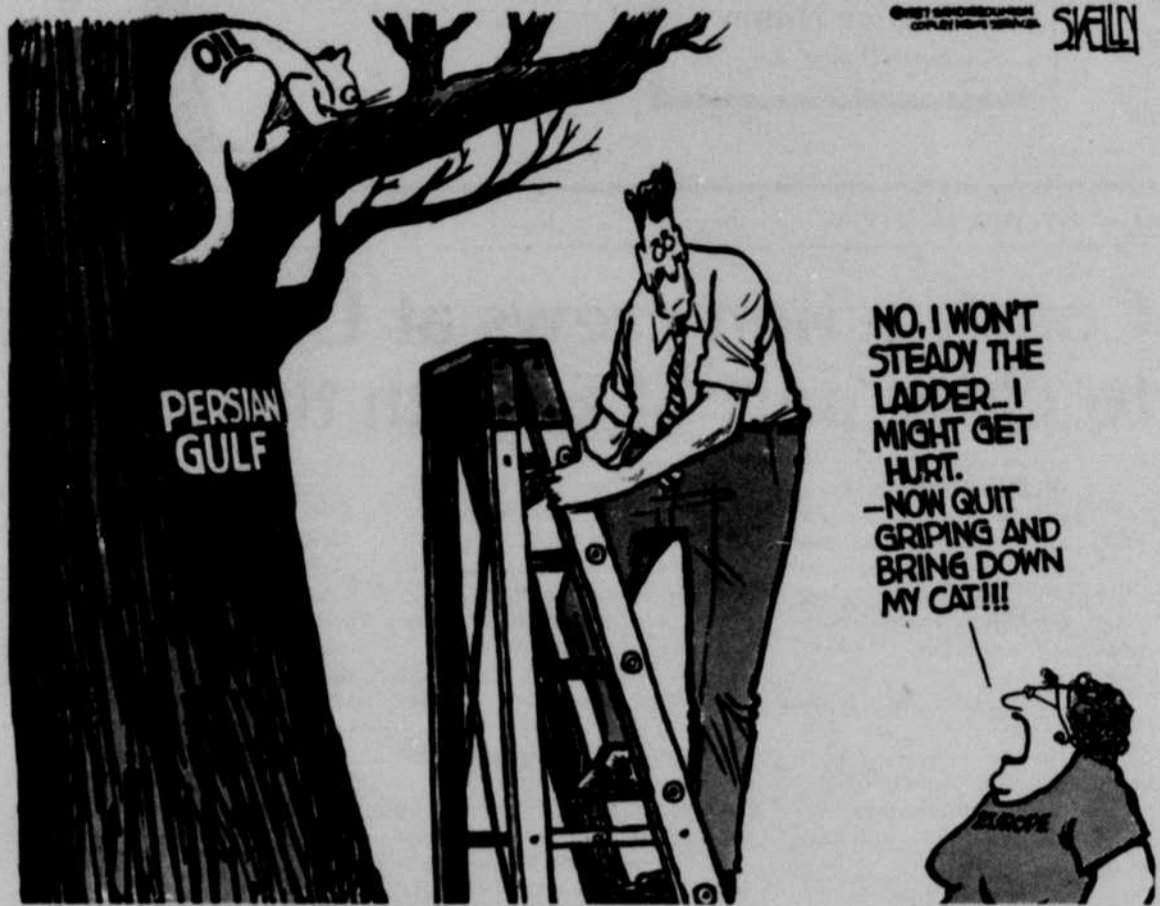
Historically, Oregon never has had an official governor's residence. Previous governors have lived in state-owned homes near the capitol or in their own houses. Goldschmidt currently lives in Portland and commutes to Salem.

The one-hour commute from Portland to Salem is time-consuming and inconvenient. Because Salem is the center of legislative activity, it is important that the governor is nearby and available.

The Governor's Residence Advocacy Committee has taken the initiative to find an official house for the governor independent from the Goldschmidt administration. It also has solicited funds from the private sector to pay for the house. No tax money will be used.

Advocates for helping the homeless have criticized the search, but the house will be beneficial to the workings of the government. However, the homeless issue should not be ignored. If there is extra money, it should be donated to community programs.

Moving Goldschmidt to Salem is a worthwhile idea, but it should not overshadow more important issues or become too extravagant.



Commentary

Deregulation: not only problem

The same day the Oregon Daily Emerald printed its editorial on airline deregulation, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association President John Baker spoke to the Associated Press about why he was in Washington, D.C., lobbying Congress.

"There's been a national dialogue of escalating tone and vehemence going on," he said, "Unfortunately, the one voice not being heard is (that of) the experts on the system, the users."

Commentary by David Atman

I am no air industry expert, but as a "user" with roughly 75,000 miles flown the last 18 months I do have a few comments about the Emerald's July 30 editorial.

First, though the editorial accurately describes the theory of free enterprise providing greater route selection and keeping prices down, it judges that, "Unfortunately, it hasn't met this ideal."

Results have been ambiguous with regard to greater route selection (some areas better, some worse). But as anyone who flew commercially before the airline industry was

deregulated in 1978 realizes, prices today are regularly less than half of what they were then.

Evidence of this was in the editorial's next line, "More people did start to fly as a result of the new companies." Nation's Business Today reports at least 64 percent more travelers last year than in any year before deregulation.

Then, adding the greater number of planes in the skies with President Reagan's firing of the striking air traffic controllers in 1981, the editorial properly sums up, "Unless something is done soon, somebody will get hurt."

It is debatable if the president's decision to fire PATCO members was in the public's interest. But it is inexcusable that his administration did not then train and hire enough qualified replacements to handle the nation's growing use of air flight.

Like the Emerald, I take vigorous exception to the, at best, shaky assurances from the airline industry and the Federal Aviation Administration paid assuagement. But let's lay the blame at the feet of the truly culpable!

The FAA collects a flight tax on every ticket sold in the United States. This money feeds a fund that originally was intended to enlarge and upgrade airports, to improve controller computer and airport security systems, to install existing equipment to detect and prevent deadly phenomena like wind shear and to seed research to develop other safety devices,

to establish tougher instrument requirements for small planes, and to provide adequate FAA staff to implement and enforce these improvements.

Instead, the Reagan administration raised its rhetoric on the need for "greater safety in the skies," while hypocritically keeping more than \$4 billion raised by this tax in the Federal Treasury's coffers simply to give the illusion that the federal deficit is \$4 billion less than it otherwise would be.

As the Emerald said, some stricter regulations on air safety and maintenance are needed. But what good are new laws if the FAA refuses to use already available funds to employ enough agents to enforce existing laws?

These problems were not caused by deregulation. They are the result of the lobotomized priorities of White House policies.

It should also be remembered that, statistically, flying is still the safest mode of travel. Even with all the problems Delta Airlines recently has had, not one death occurred due to these mistakes. Can you think of any other transportation system that would get this amount of adverse press without a single fatality?

I disagree with the editorial's conclusion that, "Deregulating the airlines was a noble goal. But no matter how good it looked on paper, it hasn't and won't work in reality."

Deregulating the airlines is not a goal, it is a system. A system that gives more Americans the freedom to fly farther, cheaper, and more often than ever before. It works as a system that allows the best good for the most people when given a wise discipline of federal oversight.

It will never work when the president condemns the FAA to mask various blunders and political sins of his too often irresponsible leadership.

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