

By BARRY GOLDWATER

WASHINGTON—There are currently pending in both Houses of Congress legislative proposals of a kind which I believe would do immense damage to the security of this nation and to the cause of world order. These measures are known collectively as the war power bills.

Each would seek to tie the President's hands in defending the vital interests of this country and its people. Each would lay down a set of rules which supposedly will govern the situations when the President may or may not use United States military forces in protecting America's freedoms. Each in its own way will attempt to specify where, or for how long, or for what reason, the Commander in Chief of our military forces can deploy, transport, or send these forces into action.

Unless I am badly mistaken, there is at the bottom of much of the interest in the war power bills a feeling, an emotional belief that they will restore Congress to its "proper" position in the political heavens and rescue the world from the abyss of nuclear destruction.

At the very core of this belief is the oft-expressed charge that the executive has led this nation blindfolded and solely on his own authority into an ever-widening expansion of the Vietnam conflict.

I want to declare right here and now that this belief is wrong. It is totally and firmly contradicted by the facts of history. It is erroneously founded on a bedrock of pass-the-buckism, convenient forgetfulness, and downright falsehood.

The fact is, Congress is and has been involved up to its ears with wars in Southeast Asia. It has known what has been going on from the start and has given its approval in advance to almost everything that has occurred there. Far from being the innocent dupes of a conspiring executive, Congress has been wholly involved in the policy decisions concerning Vietnam during the entire span of American commitment there.

The opening page of the 1955 Senate Committee report on the SEATO Treaty makes it very clear what is involved. Under the heading "Main Purpose of the Treaty and Protocol," the committee unabashedly threatens American intervention by declaring "the treaty is intended to deter aggression in that area (Southeast Asia) by warning potential aggressors that an open armed attack upon the territory of any of the parties will be re-

Correction

In an article headed, "This Is John Doe, Unknown Soldier," The Times inadvertently dropped an acknowledgment to John Dos Passos with which the writer of the article, Benjamin Kluger, had prefaced his manuscript.

garded by each of them as dangerous to its own peace and safety."

Senator Walter F. George, the distinguished chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee at that time, made absolutely clear what was expected. In speaking of the determination of the Asian treaty nations to preserve their freedom and independence, Senator George resolutely announced, "The preservation of that freedom is a primary objective of the treaty."

I believe it is established beyond any chance of a doubt that there was an obligation to act in the case of armed attack, as distinguished from an obligation to merely consult. The United States Senate knew it.

For those intellectuals and skeptics who think not one American soldier can lift his bayonet without a declaration of war, the Foreign Relations Committee report shows the committee expressly rejected the suggestion that a reservation be attached to the SEATO pact which would prohibit the use of United States forces in any defense action unless Congress, by a declaration of war, consented to their use.

This is not to say that the Chief Executive has acted by his own authority alone during the course of American participation in Southeast Asia. Quite to the contrary, there is evidence of Congressional participation clinging to each step of the way along the path to deeper and deeper involvement by our nation in the Vietnam struggle.

This brings us to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Those of us who were here at the time can remember that Section Two of this resolution depended in no way upon the purpose of meeting attacks on our own armed forces. Rather this provision was enacted in response to President Johnson's plea to Congress for a declaration of its resolve and support for action to "preserve peace in Southeast Asia in accordance with the obligations of the United States under the Southeast Asia Treaty."

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution firmly triggers the SEATO machinery. If any supporting legislation was ever required by that treaty, the Tonkin Resolution fits the bill.

The real truth is past Presidents and their high Cabinet officials have spent an enormous amount of time working with Congress and trying to get the two branches moving in unison, rather than let an impasse develop. It would be folly to seek to alter this constitutional arrangement by a simple act of Congress. It would be a malicious falsehood to use the tragedy of Vietnam as the fulcrum of a war against the executive by a Congress which was wholly involved in the policies it now questions.

These are excerpts from a recent Senate speech by Senator Barry Goldwater who was the 1964 Republican candidate for the Presidency.