

# War Powers Bill Passed By House

## Washington

The House, over the threat of a veto by President Nixon, passed landmark legislation last night to limit a president's powers to wage war.

The bill was approved after all amendments to satisfy Mr. Nixon's objections were turned back. But the margin of victory—244 to 170—was far short of the two-thirds majority it will take to override Mr. Nixon's now certain veto.

The Senate may vote on its own war power bill tomorrow.

The war powers bill was a product of the long, furious debate between war critics in Congress and two U.S. Presidents over their authority to involve the U.S. in the Indochina war.

The bill would require a President to obtain congressional approval within 120 days if he sends combat troops to a foreign country without a declaration of war, or if he "substantially enlarges" any U.S. combat force on foreign soil. If Congress failed to approve the troop commitment within the 120-day period, the American forces would have to return immediately.

## TELEGRAM

The action came just hours after House members were read a telegram from Mr. Nixon threatening to veto the measure.

In addition to the 120-day limitation, the bill would require immediate termination of unauthorized U.S. involvement in overseas hostilities if Congress so votes at any time by a veto-proof concurrent resolution.

This means that a simple majority of both houses could terminate a war that Congress had not authorized in advance, and members would be spared the necessity

## From Page 1

of mustering a two-thirds majority in both the Senate and House to override the President.

## KEY

The key vote during the long afternoon and evening of debate was the 211 to 201 rejection of an amendment by Representative Charles W. Whalen Jr. (Rep-Ohio) to permit combat troops to be kept overseas if Congress fails to act one way or another during the 120-day period.

Whalen argued that the

bill as it is written, would allow Congress to wash its hand of its responsibilities—and make major foreign policy decisions by doing nothing.

But the bill, sponsored by Representative Clement Zablocki (Dem-Ill.) does require both the Senate and House to take up any war-authorizing bill on a priority basis. And it contains safeguards to prevent a filibuster or other delaying tactics.

The June confrontation between the President and Congress over the bombing of Cambodia was largely re-

sponsible for the heavy majority in favor of the bill.

## CAMBODIA

Both the Senate and the House had voted to cut off funds for the war, but Mr. Nixon vetoed the appropriations bill containing the restriction on bombing. The House was unable to muster the two-thirds majority to override the veto, and finally a compromise was arranged to permit the bombing to continue until August 15.

In moving to veto the war powers' bill, Mr. Nixon

said he supported the desire of Congress to participate in major foreign policy and defense decisions.

In a telegram to House Republican leader Gerald Ford, Mr. Nixon denounced the bill as "dangerous and unconstitutional."

"However, I fully support the desire of members to assure Congress its proper role in national decisions of war and peace, and I would welcome appropriate legislation providing for an effective contribution by the Congress," the President said.

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