

Session to discuss budget cuts

GOP senators, Reagan talk

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans were set to press President Reagan on across-the-board budget changes including cuts in military spending at a rare presidential visit to Capitol Hill, assistant Senate GOP leader Ted Stevens said Tuesday.

Stevens described the closed-door noon session as "sort of a bring-the-wagons-together visit" that would serve as a forum for frank discussion of the president's embattled proposals and help stem a tide of GOP dissent over his 1983 budget.

"It is sort of a family occasion and I think he's going to have an overwhelmingly fine reception," Stevens said on the CBS Morning News.

However, the meeting came at a time of growing division between the White House and Congress over Reagan's \$757.6 billion budget — especially because of a projected \$96.4 billion

deficit widely viewed as politically unacceptable.

Despite the president's staunch defense of his proposals — most recently during a political

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al trip to the West last week — Stevens, an Alaska Republican, said compromise is inevitable,

even in previously protected areas.

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Stevens, chairman of the defense appropriations subcommittee, said he hoped to minimize the cutback in Reagan's defense request. "It's a very serious matter," he said, "but I do think that we all realize that something must come out of the defense budget. I think the president realizes that, too."

Senate GOP leaders, hopeful of fashioning a formal alternative to Reagan's budget, studied a 12-page document Monday listing their options for reducing the deficit.

Presidential counselor Edwin Meese said the administration expects a bona fide Republican

alternative in about two weeks and the budget battle then should climax in the next 60 days.

As Reagan returned to Washington from California

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Monday, deputy press secretary Larry Speakes and Meese sounded far more conciliatory about an eventual compromise than Reagan did last week.

Reagan told audiences in Cheyenne, Wyo., Albuquerque,

N.M., and Los Angeles he envisioned "no retreat" on his defense and tax proposals and huge budget deficits were a "necessary evil."

But the president's tone evidently changed during the weekend.

Both Speakes and Meese found time to pointedly praise Senate Budget Chairman Domenici for his comments on

television Sunday about seeking an alternative agreeable to both sides, and the president called Domenici Sunday to praise him for his views, Meese said.

Meese also indicated compromise is no longer a dirty word at the White House.

"What's a compromise?" he asked. "Everybody knows the final budget that is signed will not be the same budget item for item that he submitted."

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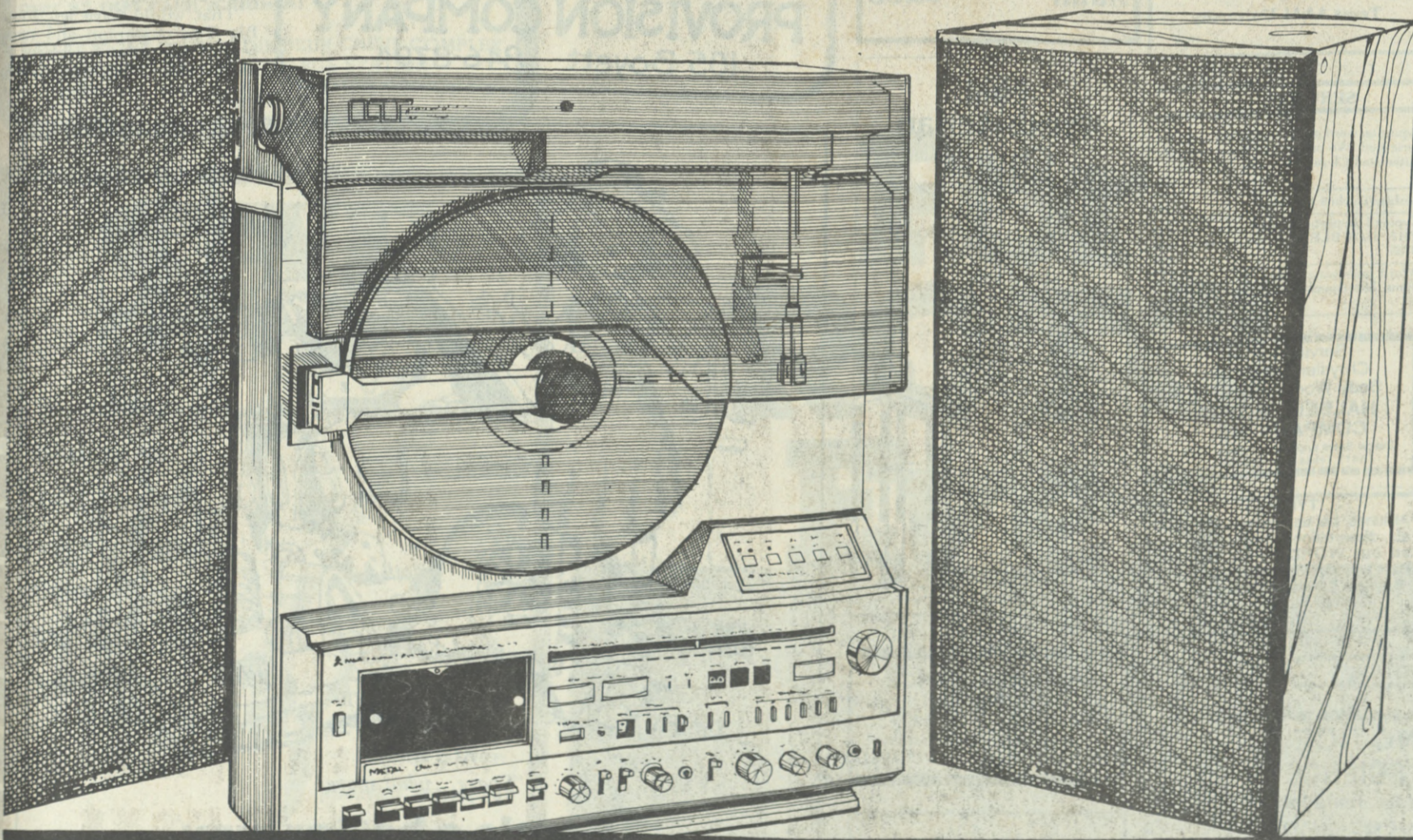
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