

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Senate approves education incentives

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The Senate, delaying action on "Star Wars" missiles to wrangle with military benefits, rejected a new GI Bill Wednesday and approved an administration-backed program to lure potential soldiers with the promise of educational benefits.

With Vice President George Bush presiding over the Senate in case his vote was needed to break a tie, the Senate voted 47-45 to kill the sweeping proposal offered by Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Colo., as an amendment to the \$291 billion defense authorization bill before the Senate. The test program supported by President Reagan eventually was approved 72-20.

The Senate, poised all day to start debating Reagan's "Star Wars" missile defense proposal and the MX missile, instead wrangled with the educational benefit issue until early evening. An effort to cut money from Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative was expected later in the night.

Defeat of the measure was a victory for the administration, the Senate's Republican leadership and the Armed Services Committee, all opponents of the move and supporters instead of the more modest four-

year test program proposed by Sen. John Glenn.

Glenn proposed that new recruits willing to give up \$250 a month in pay and in most cases quarters and subsistence allowances get educational benefits that could total \$18,000.

The issue became ensnarled in a series of parliamentary moves — termed by one member as "legislative razzle-dazzle" designed to prevent a direct vote on Armstrong's amendment. It was eventually settled after about eight hours of wrangling on the matter.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker argued against Armstrong's amendment, saying, "If we're going to hatch a new entitlement program that begins two or three years in the future with a general waiver of the budget act, we might as well throw out the budget act."

Budget director David Stockman, in a letter to Armed Services Committee Chairman John Tower, said, "There is no need at this time for a new educational benefits program for military personnel. ... If Congress believes that action ... is essential at this time, the administration would strongly prefer a test program" like Glenn's.

Congress in stalemate over deficit

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Congressional conferees on the budget met for the first time Wednesday but quickly reached a stalemate over the politically potent issue of how to reduce the federal deficit.

House Budget Committee chairman James Jones, D-Okla., called on the conferees not to "hide behind meaningless procedural smoke-screens" and to finish the budget conference by the end of the month when Congress is to take its Independence Day recess.

But Senate Budget Committee chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M.,

said if Jones wants to "proceed with a farce, so be it. The budget is not going to save any money this year."

The problem is that the budgets merely set a spending outline but don't actually cut programs. In addition to the budgets, each chamber also has passed plans to reduce the federal deficits that would actually limit funds for some programs.

Senate Republicans, who worked out their deficit-reduction with President Reagan, want to get the deficit plan agreed on at the same time as the budget. The Senate's \$140 billion deficit-reduction plan would

write into law separate ceilings for defense.

House leaders, who have their own \$182 billion plan to cut the deficit, don't like the Senate caps because they would prevent money from being shifted from defense to social spending. The separate caps in the Senate's deficit-reduction plan also would set a much higher spending level for defense than the House wants.

The House's budget would allow an increase in defense spending of 3.5 percent after inflation in fiscal 1985. The Senate wants to permit a 7.5 percent hike for the military next year.

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