

Defense bill passes House New \$305 billion legislation cuts Bush's Star Wars request

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House on Thursday approved a \$305 billion defense bill that would cut President Bush's request for Star Wars by \$1.1 billion, the first budget reduction in the program in six years.

"I'm very unhappy with the final product. We made too severe a cut in the SDI budget line," said William Dickinson, R-Alabama, ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, about the Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as Star Wars.

"We cut in the wrong places. We played politics with this bill," Dickinson, who nevertheless voted to adopt it, said.

By a vote of 236-172, the Democratic-controlled House adopted legislation to provide many of the funds Bush sought for the MX and Midgetman nuclear missiles and the B-2 stealth bomber and restore money for four of the 10 conventional programs the president tried to kill.

The bill goes to the Senate for consideration.

Among the provisions is \$4.3 billion for the B-2, \$430 million less than the administration requested for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

The bat-winged aircraft has come under attack on Capitol Hill for its expensive price tag of about \$530 million a copy. The bill provides money for two bombers in fiscal 1990, one less than the administration sought. However, the legislation accepts Bush's proposal for components for five bombers in fiscal 1991.

The bill provides \$3.8 billion for Star Wars, about \$279 million less than was spent in fiscal 1989 and the first decrease since President Reagan proposed the anti-missile shield six years ago. Bush had sought \$4.9 billion for the program.

Approximately \$1.1 billion is in-

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cluded for two land-based nuclear missiles: the multiple-warhead, rail-garrison MX and the single-warhead, truck-based Midgetman. The bill trims about \$150 million from the administration's request for the two weapons and adds House language imposing a 50-missile cap on the MX.

Both proponents and opponents found fault with the bill, but grudgingly accepted the result of nearly two months of contentious negotiations between the House and Senate

on widely divergent defense blueprints approved this past summer.

The legislation continues two programs — the Navy's F-14D Tomcat jet fighter and the AHIP helicopter — for one more year, and postpones a decision on the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey and the Phoenix missile.

The bill accepts the administration's plan to kill six other programs, including the SSN-688 submarine, the F-15 aircraft and the M-88 tank recovery vehicle.

The Osprey, the tilt-rotor aircraft that takes off like a helicopter but can fly like a plane, will receive about \$255 million in research and development money in fiscal 1990 but no funds for procurement.

The legislation includes money for 18 F-14D jet fighters but requires the manufacturer, Grumman Corp., to sign a termination agreement ending all future production.

"This is the last deficit-driven defense budget. What we're likely to face next year is the first in a series of (Soviet President Mikhail) Gorbachev-driven defense budgets," Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said.

The bill trims about \$500 million from the troubled Trident II missile, provides \$900 million of the \$1.1 billion the administration requested for the Advanced Tactical Fighter plane and adds \$848 million for the National Guard and Reserves.

Democrats beam after elections as Wilder, Dinkins win offices; mull over Jesse Jackson's role

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic Party establishment on Capitol Hill stood beaming Thursday with L. Douglas Wilder and David Dinkins, clearly pleased to have mainstream elected officials moving into a spotlight once held exclusively by Jesse Jackson.

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine, House Speaker Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., and the entire Democratic leadership of Congress smiled broadly as Wilder and Dinkins stepped forward at a news conference in an ornate room off the Senate floor.

"Americans are prepared to accept candidates on the basis of their individual talent," Mitchell said.

Wilder and Dinkins needed strong support from white voters, and they got it by concentrating on running campaigns that stressed mainstream positions on issues. Both campaigned as fiscal conservatives who were tough on law and order questions.

And both kept Jesse Jackson at arms length.

Never totally comfortable with Jackson, establishment Democrats dive for cover when he becomes involved with left-wing leaders around the world. Only a week before the 1989 elections, President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua called Jackson to ask him to intervene with President Bush to obtain support for disbanding the Contra forces.

Democratic Party leaders can rest easy, aware that

neither Wilder nor Dinkins is likely to get any phone calls from Ortega.

Other 1989 election winners were present — House members who won contests throughout the year to fill vacancies — but most of the attention was on Wilder and Dinkins, who scored racial breakthroughs on Tuesday.

While his Republican opponent had yet to concede and a recount was likely, Wilder was claiming victory in the race for governor of Virginia, a triumph that would make him the first black elected governor of any state.

Dinkins is the first black elected mayor of New York City.

In both cases, the margin of victory was smaller than many polls had predicted, a result that prompted speculation that race remains a potent issue in American politics.

Democratic Party chairman Ronald H. Brown, the first black to head a major party, dismissed the speculation as ridiculous.

"All the questions now are, 'Why didn't Wilder do better?' and 'Why didn't Dinkins do better?' It's a ridiculous question," he said. "The fact is that we have elected a Democratic mayor of the city of New York, who happens to be black, and we've elected a Democratic governor of the state of Virginia, who happens to be black."

Lasers hit crewman U.S. suspects Soviets in incident

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials suspect the Soviets of shooting lasers at American planes in the Pacific recently, damaging the eyesight of an Air Force crewman in one of four incidents, Pentagon officials said Thursday.

An agreement signed last summer by top U.S. and Soviet military officials is designed to avoid such military encounters, but it does not go into effect until Jan. 1. Pentagon officials said privately they were dismayed that such incidents could be continuing in the meantime.

At a Pentagon briefing, spokesman Pete Williams said two Soviet vessels "may have" aimed lasers at U.S. aircraft on Oct. 17, Oct. 28 and in two separate incidents on Nov. 1 over waters off Hawaii.

Asked whether the matter affected U.S.-Soviet ties, which have been improving, the spokesman said only, "I will not characterize the incident beyond describing it."

Other Pentagon officials said the matters are being investigated.

One senior official, commenting on condition of anonymity, said laser activity is suspected because of past incidents and because of descriptions provided by the military personnel involved in the most recent cases.

Williams said he could not identify a Soviet vessel involved. Pentagon sources said, however, that it was a military ship that was in the waters where Soviets have traditionally observed the splash-downs for their missile tests.

U.S. planes traditionally observe the movements of such Soviet ships, the sources said.

Lasers are sometimes used as rangefinders to target enemy aircraft.

The afflicted U.S. crewman — a loadmaster aboard an HC-130 aircraft — suffered disruption of his color vision, headaches and other visual problems and is under medical evaluation, the Pentagon sources said.

The crewman had been wearing "laser eye protection" gear at the time, and U.S. officials are also investigating why the damage occurred despite that equipment, the sources said.

In 1987, the copilot of an Air Force WC-135 suffered vision problems when she observed a nearby U.S. Navy reconnaissance aircraft "illuminated" by a laser that was determined to have come from the Soviet ship Chukotka. The vessel was operating off Hawaii, near the target zone of a Soviet missile test.

The Air Force said the crew member's vision was affected for about 10 minutes and that the damage was not permanent.

Study says Alzheimers on upswing Number of Americans affected much higher

CHICAGO (AP) — More than one in 10 people over age 65 may have Alzheimer's disease, says a study which suggests the number of Americans with the devastating illness may be 1.5 million higher than previously estimated.

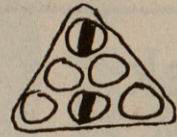
A study of 3,626 elderly people in East Boston, Mass., revealed that rates of Alzheimer's grew rapidly higher with advancing age, soaring to nearly half of those over age 85, researchers at Harvard Medical School said.

Of people ages 65 to 74, 3 percent had "probable" Alzheimer's disease, compared with 18.7 percent of those 75 to 84 and 47.2 percent of those over 85, the study said.

All told, 10.3 percent of those over age 65 had "probable" Alzheimer's disease, the researchers said.

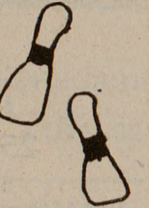
The Harvard study was funded in part by the National Institute on Aging, and its finding prompted the institute to revise its estimate of how many people in the United States suffer from Alzheimer's — which robs people of their memories and their ability to function — from 2.5 million to 4 million.

Findings were published in Friday's Journal of the American Medical Association.



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