

# \$71-Billion Defense Fund Voted by House Committee

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 11 —

The House Appropriations Committee approved a \$71-billion military budget today after rejecting by a 2-to-1 margin an amendment cutting off funds for military operations in Indochina after June 1.

In drafting the largest appropriations bill of the year, the committee cut \$2.5-billion, or about 3 per cent, from the Administration's request for new funds for the armed services.

The effect of the committee's action in reducing appropriations, which can be spent over a period of years, would be to reduce actual spending by about \$1-billion below the \$75-billion planned by the Defense Department in the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

The long-delayed defense appropriations bill is scheduled to be called up on the floor of the House of Representatives Tuesday—the day after President Nixon is expected to announce his new plans for troop withdrawals from Vietnam. The timing as well as the content of the President's speech undoubtedly will greatly influence the success of a planned move to attach an end-the-war amendment to the bill on the floor.

## Move Led by Boland

In the Appropriations Committee, the end-the-war move was led by Representative Edward P. Boland, Democrat of Massachusetts, who offered an amendment specifying that none of the funds could be used to finance military combat or support operations by United States forces in or over Indochina after June 1, 1972.

The amendment was defeated by a 31-to-15 margin, which Mr. Boland later termed "a pretty good vote" in the predominantly conservative committee.

With support from Common Cause, which describes itself as a citizens' lobby, Mr. Boland plans to offer his amendment on the floor, presenting the House with its first direct, recorded vote on an amendment that would use the Congressional power over the purse strings to bring an end to the Vietnam war.

In the past, through procedural maneuvers, the House leadership has succeeded in preventing any direct vote in the House on the Vietnam issue. But sentiment has been growing, particularly on the Democratic side, in favor of a troop withdrawal amendment.

## Indirect Test Last Month

On the latest test, an indirect one, last month on the military procurement authorization bill, the House, by a 215-to-193 vote, refused to instruct its conferees to accept a Senate amendment by the majority leader, Mike Mansfield.

The amendment set the policy that the United States should withdraw all its forces in six months, contingent only upon the release of American prisoners of war. The Mansfield amendment has been incorporated in the military aid bill passed by the Senate today.

In the military procurement bill, the Mansfield amendment was modified in conference by elimination of the six-month deadline, but it would still declare it to be the policy of the United States to withdraw all its forces expeditiously by a time certain, subject only to the prisoner releases.

As with previous Vietnam amendments, the Administration will undoubtedly oppose the Boland amendment as infringing upon the President's powers as Commander in Chief and interfering with his plans for disengagement from Vietnam. There was no immediate comment from opponents of the amendment on the committee.

It was to enforce the policy that Mr. Boland offered his amendment establishing, in effect, a six-month withdrawal deadline by cutting off funds after that time.

for getting our military forces out of Indochina."

In supplemental views in the committee report, Mr. Boland argued that Congress, as "the court of last resort for the American people on this issue," must use its purse string powers to end the war because "the executive branch refuses to establish a termination date." Indirectly, the committee took issue in its report today with the repeated warnings of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird about the threat posed by the Soviet build-up of land-based intercontinental missiles.

Acknowledging that the Soviet Union had surpassed the United States in numbers of intercontinental missiles, the report said: "The United States still maintains an adequate and credible strategic deterrent force since our missile-launching submarines still outnumber those of the Soviet Union and our manned strategic bomber aircraft far outnumber those of the Soviets."

However, the committee found that "the magnitude and intensity of the Soviet buildup precludes the United States from making drastic reduction in the defense budget at this time."

It also cautioned that the Defense Department "cannot wait another year" on an agreement to limit strategic arms "while the Soviets produce additional strategic weapons and the United States does not."

## Intelligence Funds Cut

One of the largest single reductions made by the House committee was \$181-million in funds for defense intelligence operations. The committee found that these operations "have grown beyond the needs" of the Pentagon.

The committee reluctantly provided funds for production of 48 F-14 jet fighters for the Navy by Grumman Aerospace Corporation of Bethpage, L. I. The committee said it had seriously considered the possibility of halting production and returning the project to a research-and-development status.

The committee concluded that revision of the current production would result in large cost increases and that the Navy needed the new carrier fighter to meet the emerging threat presented by new Soviet planes. At the same time it urged the Navy to limit the number of F-14A models produced and to move on to the more advanced 14B model.