

HOUSE UNIT VOTES A \$4.3-BILLION CUT IN DEFENSE FUNDS

But \$74.6-Billion Measure Is
Largest Recommended
Since World War II
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END-THE-WAR BID LOST

Outlays Provided for Most
Key Weapons Programs
Administration Sought
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WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — The House Appropriations Committee approved today a \$4.3-billion cut in the defense budget. Despite the reduction, the \$74.6-billion measure represents the largest defense appropriations bill to be recommended by the committee since World War II.

While cutting Pentagon requests in several areas, the House committee provided funds for most of the major weapons programs sought by the Administration, including the Navy's Trident missile, the launching submarine and the Air Force's B-1 supersonic strategic bomber.

For the Vietnam war, the committee approved all but \$450-million of the additional \$2.8-billion requested by the Administration in June for increased military operations following the Communist offensive.

At the same time the committee rejected by voice vote an end-the-war amendment offered by Representative Joseph P. Addabbo, Democrat of Queens, that would have required the withdrawal of all American forces from Indochina in four months.

Mr. Addabbo will reoffer his amendment when the defense appropriations bill reaches the House floor later this week, but there is virtually no chance that it will be adopted by the House.

Probable Effect

The committee's 5 per cent reduction in defense appropriations for the current fiscal year is about the same magnitude as Congressional cuts made in the military budget in recent years and probably pre-determines the outcome of the defense debate in Congress.

The committee's reductions are virtually certain to be accepted by the House and probably will be endorsed, perhaps with some further trimming, by the Senate, where Senator George McGovern thus far has been unable to establish his case for sharply reduced defense spending.

The Senate rejected in August a McGovern move to hold the defense budget to last year's appropriations level. The bill approved by the Appropriations Committee provides \$1.7-billion more than last year, an increase that the panel attributed largely to inflation.

About \$2.3-billion of the reductions were dictated by the annual military procurement bill, which authorizes the

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House Unit Votes 4.3-Billion Cut In Outlays for Defense Budget

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levels of appropriations for weapons and military research. The House Appropriations Committee imposed an additional \$2-billion in cuts to eliminate what it described as "fat" in the defense budget.

Changing Conditions Cited

In a report, the House committee argued that changing world conditions combined with excessive military requests had permitted some reductions in the defense budget without impairing national security.

"We must tailor our military forces to meet world conditions as they are, not as they were," the report said. "The tendency in the Department of Defense too frequently is to add new programs which were valuable at one time but are now marginal at best."

The committee also contended that its reductions were "fully in accord with the spirit" of President Nixon's special message in July urging Congress to exercise fiscal restraint by making "hard choices" on what new programs to approve.

"The reductions delete programs that might be nice to have but which are not essential to national defense at this time," the report said.

In cutting specific programs, the committee took the following actions:

¶ It rejected a request for \$190-million for purchase of three Boeing 747 jumbo jets to be used as airborne command posts by the President and his staff in event of nuclear attack. Noting that the presently used Boeing 707 aircraft seem adequate until more advanced command-and-control equipment is developed, the committee said, "Essentially, these three aircraft will provide little more than additional space for advisers, the requirement for which has not been adequately justified."

¶ It cut by \$100-million the Air Force's request to purchase 30 F-15 fighter aircraft from the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, saying the Air Force should be satisfied with buying 15 until the performance of the new plane and its engine can be established.

¶ With a \$132-million reduction, it ordered the Navy to buy only 23 of the S-3A anti-submarine warfare patrol planes instead of the 42 it wanted. The plane, being developed by the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, has run into cost overrun problems, with the estimated cost of the program rising by \$226-million in the last year.

¶ It reduced the Safeguard antiballistic missile program by \$300-million, including elimination of all funds for an ABM site around Washington.

The committee also saved \$125-million by ordering the military services to bring to an end by next April their program to relieve military personnel of kitchen police and housekeeping chores by turning such duties over to civilian employees.

Taking the military services to task for proceeding with a

costly "civilianization" program without Congressional consent, the report said:

"The committee is of the opinion that such duties do not detract from the serviceman's image. As a matter of fact, the committee believes that these are wholesale and character building duties which enhance a serviceman's pride in the services and the facilities made available to him by the American people."

The committee also criticized the Defense Department for not complying with a Congressional mandate to reduce the size of headquarters staff and for permitting a "grade creep" to develop that it contended had made the services top-heavy with senior noncommissioned officers and colonels and generals.

As one specific measure, the committee ordered that starting next May flight pay not be given to colonels and generals serving in noncombat assignments.

The committee questioned whether the F-14A carrier fighter, built for the Navy by the Grumman Aerospace Corporation at Bethpage, L. I., was worth its present cost of \$16.8-million-a-plane.

But in providing the full \$732-million requested for purchase of 48 more of the planes, the committee said it had bowed to the Defense Department argument that if funds were denied, it would break the contract with Grumman, placing the Government at a disadvantage in negotiating a new contract.