Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/06 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000202230081-5

STAT

ARTICLE APPEARED ON PAGE A-7

NEW YORK TIMES
5 MAY 1982

SENATORS BRIEFED ON SOVIET MILITARY

Unusual Secret Session Takes Place as Prelude to Debate Over Arms Budget Plan

By BERNARD WEINRAUB
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 4 — The Senate, moving into debate on President Reagan's military spending requests, met in an unusual closed session this afternoon for a briefing on Soviet military capabilities.

Extraordinary security measures were in place as Senator John Tower, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Senator Barry Goldwater, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Committee, conducted a briefing and responded to questions for about three hours. The press and visitors' galleries were closed. Howard H. Baker Jr., the Senate majority leader, said the chamber was open "only for senators and very limited staff cleared for code work."

Although the Pentagon's $180.2 billion military procurement bill was placed before the Senate late Monday afternoon, full-fledged debate on the measure is not expected to start until Wednesday when such issues as the fate of the MX missile program, chemical warfare, the Reagan Administration's $6.97 billion package for two Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and the B-1 bomber are set to reach the Senate floor.

Senator Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan, a member of the Armed Services Committee, disclosed plans today to introduce a motion to send the military authorization bill back to the Armed Services Committee until the Budget Committee agrees on a level of military spending for next year.

A Show of Opposition

Mr. Levin's aim, according to his aides, was to show opposition to the Reagan Administration's overall $216 billion military budget for the fiscal year 1983. Beyond this, Mr. Levin and several other Democratic senators say the Budget Committee will probably trim the Administration's military procurement bill. By withholding action on the measure, the Armed Services Committee would have an opportunity to decide where the reductions should be made.

"It doesn't make sense for Armed Services to send along a bill that would be voted on by the Senate that's obviously higher than what will eventually come through," said Burt Hoffman, an aide to Mr. Levin.

Mr. Levin's supporters include Robert C. Byrd, Democrat of West Virginia, the Senate minority leader, and Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, the ranking Democrat on the Budget Committee.

At this point, Mr. Levin's aim to recommit the procurement bill appears doomed, Senate aides say. Such influential Democrats on the Armed Services Committee as Sam Nunn of Georgia and Henry M. Jackson of Washington oppose the measure.

Purpose of Measure

The bill before the Senate would authorize the procurement of weapons and military research and development. The actual funds would be provided in a subsequent appropriations bill.

The overall military spending bill itself is expected to meet some heavy opposition on the Senate floor because of its costliness at a time of high deficits and a faltering economy. The bill reached the Senate floor after the Armed Services Committee shaved $3.2 billion from Mr. Reagan's request. Most of the cuts came from two programs, the interim deployment of the first 40 MX intercontinental missiles and production of a new Army attack helicopter, the AH-64, which has been overwhelmed in cost overruns.

Senator Tower, the Texas Republican who heads the Armed Services Committee, opened the drive for the military spending bill, saying it was a "burden" to build up the nation's defenses in a time of fiscal austerity. "We simply have no choice," Mr. Tower said. "The threat that faces us demands that we endure sacrifices." Similar comments were voiced by such Senators Goldwater and John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi.

But a faintly discordant note was struck by Senator Dan Quayle, Republican of Indiana, a member of the Armed Services Committee, who called for a balance between military and fiscal needs. "The Soviet buildup is sobering and troubling," he said, "but so is the $183 billion deficit projected for 1983." What is needed, Mr. Quayle said, is "a more moderate increase in defense spending than originally had been intended."

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/06 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000202230081-5