

Senate approves \$81 billion for Iraq, Afghanistan

By LIZ SIDOTI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved \$81 billion for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in a spending bill that would push the total cost of combat and reconstruction past \$300 billion.

Both the Senate and House versions of the measure would give President Bush much of the money he requested. But the bills differ over what portion should go to military operations.

The Pentagon says it needs the money by the first week of May, so Senate and House negotiators are expected to act quickly to send the

president a final bill.

Other issues to be resolved in the competing versions include immigration changes, a U.S. embassy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, military death benefits and the fate of an aircraft carrier.

"I'm confident we will be able to come back with a product, in the form of a conference report, which the Senate can support," said Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

He said the bill gives strong support to troops in the fight against terrorism and provides needed dollars for the State Department.

Overall, the Senate version

would cost about \$81 billion, compared with the \$81.4 billion the House approved and the \$81.9 billion that Bush requested.

Congress has passed four similar emergency spending measures for the wars since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. This one would put the overall cost of combat and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Pentagon operations against terrorists worldwide past \$300 billion.

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, says lawmakers previously approved \$228 billion. The latest money is to last through Sept. 30, the end of the current budget year. Pentagon officials have said they will have to ask for

more money for 2006.

In both the House and Senate, lawmakers struggled to give troops whatever they needed and pay only for projects deemed urgent. Congress was leaving other items to be dealt with in the regular budget for the new budget year starting Oct. 1. In doing so, they were sending a message to the White House that it cannot expect a rubber stamp from Congress on its emergency war-spending requests.

Still, as Bush requested, the bulk of the money about \$75 billion would go to the Pentagon. The Army and the Marine Corps, the two service branches doing most of the fighting, would get the most. The House bill would add

money to the president's request for defense expenses; the Senate's would not. The Senate version would restore some money the House cut for foreign aid and State Department programs.

The Senate bill also would provide \$592 million to build a U.S. embassy in Baghdad. The House bill does not fund the construction of a fortified diplomatic compound.

The Senate added a requirement that the Pentagon report every three months to Congress on how many Iraqi security forces are trained and how many U.S. troops are needed.

The Senate also put in requirement that the Pentagon

keep the Navy's fleet of 12 aircraft carriers intact. The Pentagon had proposed scrapping one carrier to save money.

The Senate version would increase a one-time benefit for the families of soldiers killed to \$100,000 from \$12,000, regardless of whether the deaths occurred in combat, and increase life insurance as well. The House version limits the extra money to survivors of those killed in combat-related duty.

One of the most contentious issues facing congressional negotiators is whether to include an immigration overhaul in the final bill. The Senate decided to take up immigration later.

Japanese prime minister to apologize for wartime aggression

FROM AP REPORTS

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Japan's prime minister planned to express "deep remorse" over Japan's past aggression against Asian neighbors in a speech Friday at the Asia-Africa summit in Jakarta — a move apparently aimed at defusing growing tensions with China.

"In the past Japan through its colonial rule and aggression caused tremendous damage and suffering for the people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations," Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said in an advance copy of a speech.

"Japan squarely faces these facts of history in a spirit of humility," the speech said.

Japan has been trying to arrange a one-on-one meeting between Koizumi and Chinese President Hu Jintao at the summit to resolve an escalating row over Tokyo's handling of its wartime atrocities and its bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Japan has said it is hopeful a meeting will be arranged Friday, but China says it's still considering the proposal.

Huge anti-Japanese protests

erupted in major Chinese cities this month after Tokyo approved a new history textbook that critics say plays down wartime Japanese offenses, including mass sex slavery and germ warfare.

The protests also have been fueled by disputes over gas-drilling in disputed waters and Koizumi's repeated visits to a wartime shrine in Tokyo that honors executed World War II war criminals along with 2.5 million Japanese war dead.

"With feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology always engaged in mind, Japan has resolutely maintained, consistently since the end of World War II, never turning into a military power but an economic power, its principle of resolving all matters by peaceful means, without recourse through the use of force," Koizumi said.

The prime minister said that Japan will stick to a "peaceful path" and increase its overseas development aid to Asian and African nations.

Japan's Kyodo News Agency said Koizumi's remarks would be based in a 1995 speech made by Tomiichi Murayama, the prime minister at the time, marking the

50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Going beyond statements of remorse made by previous Japanese leaders, Murayama spoke of Japan's "mistaken national policy" that "caused tremendous damage and suffering to people of many countries" and offered a "heartfelt apology."

In an interview with Japanese broadcaster NHK shown Thursday, U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer said Washington has watched with concern as tensions between Tokyo and Beijing have escalated, and hopes the two can resolve the conflict.

"This is a matter of concern for us, really, on two fronts. The first is, Asia is, in many ways, in transition. It's trying to figure out how everybody fits together. We believe a secure, peaceful Asia must have an architecture that has China and Japan getting along, and we believe that is possible.

"The second part is, when embassies are attacked, that should be of a concern to anybody because violence never furthers a diplomatic cause, and we hope that people can sit down and resolve



GREG BAKER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chinese protestors chant anti-Japanese slogans as they march in Beijing's Haidian district Saturday. Japan has warned its citizens in China to pay attention to safety since anti-Japanese protests began three weekends ago. But ordinary Japanese say life has gone on as normal.

their differences."

The two-day Indonesian summit draws together presidents, prime ministers and kings. In all, 80

nations were represented. The meeting commemorates the 50th anniversary of the first Asia-Africa conference that gave birth to the

Nonaligned Movement, which tried to steer a neutral course between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

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