

Reps handily reject AWACS shipment

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House, by a vote of 301-111, overwhelmingly rejected Pres. Reagan's proposed AWACS radar plane sale to Saudi Arabia today.

Reagan, however, picked up support in his drive to salvage the sale in the Senate as five senators committed themselves to support him. Two had been leaning against approving the deal.

In the Senate, the latest Associated Press count is 33 for or leaning for the sale and 55 against or leaning that way. Twelve senators are uncommitted.

Both houses must veto the sale to stop it.

The White House had acknowledged even before the House vote that it would lose there.

"We don't expect to win," presidential spokesman Larry Speakes had told reporters.

As the House debated the matter before voting, opponents of the deal said putting the surveillance planes in Saudi hands would pose a threat to Israel and to the United States itself if the planes fell into unfriendly hands.

But supporters said a congressional veto of the sale would impinge on Reagan's conduct of foreign policy and hinder the U.S. strategy of helping to defend U.S. allies in the Mideast and bring peace to the region.

One opponent, Rep. William S. Broomfield, R-Mich., ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "In the final analysis our defense concerns outweigh the effect of this sale on our relations with Saudi Arabia."

But Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, D-Wis., a supporter, said veto of the sale "would call into question U.S. reliability as a partner" both for defending the region and seeking a peace settlement for it.

In the face of the House vote, the White House summoned several senators for one-to-one meetings with the president.

After brief meetings with Reagan, four Republicans told reporters they would support the sale when it comes to a vote in the Senate next week. The Senate debate is scheduled to

begin Tuesday and a vote is expected the next day.

The two most significant commitments came from Sens. Mack Mattingly of Georgia and Dan Quayle of Indiana. They met together with Reagan and then told reporters that his promise of written assurances on the issues of sharing AWACS data and the planes' security and maintenance had convinced them to vote for the sale.

The other commitments came from Sens. James Abdnor of South Dakota and John East of North Carolina, both of whom were regarded as likely backers of Reagan's position.

One Democrat, Sen. David Pryor of Arkansas, also met with Reagan but said later he is still opposed to the deal.

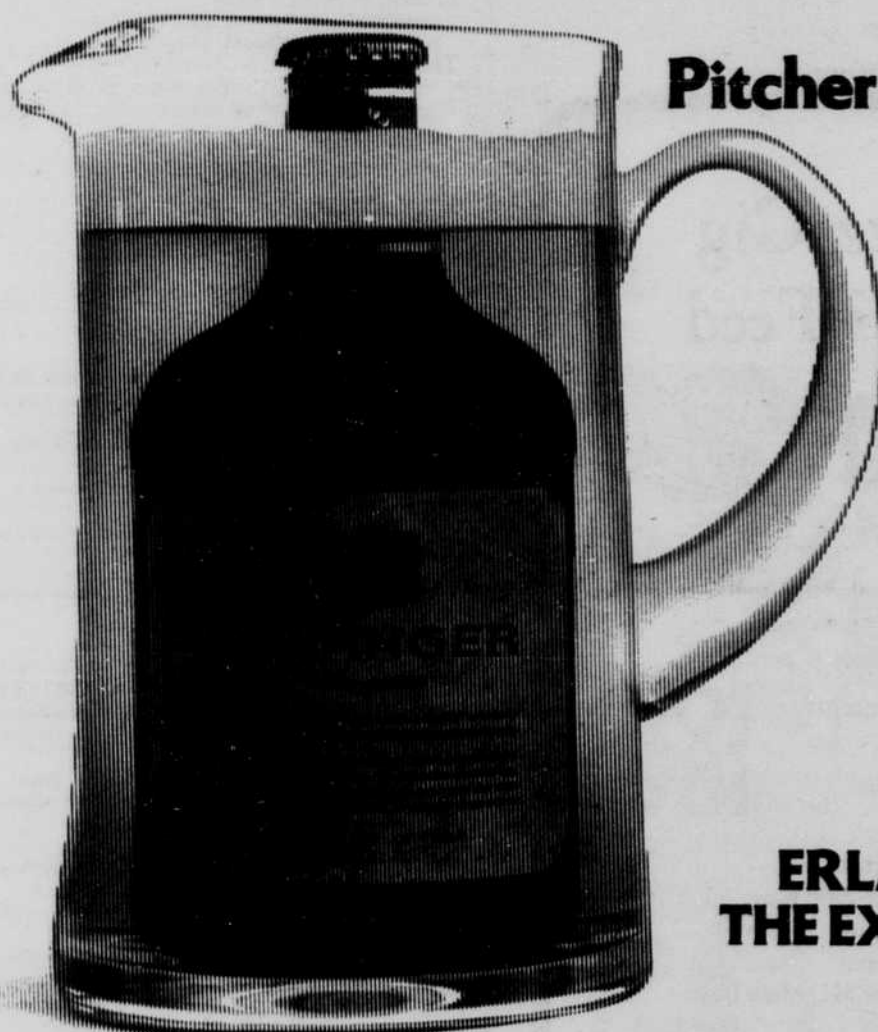


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