

Defense firms give millions for politics

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's largest defense contractors have doubled their political donations since President Ronald Reagan took office, with the top 20 firms pouring \$3.6 million into 1984 congressional and presidential campaigns.

The surge in campaign contributions occurred as government contracts to those firms swelled over last four years by nearly 150 percent to \$69 billion in 1984. Opinions differ, however, on what effect the donations have on defense spending.

Sen. John Warner, R-Va., the top congressional recipient, said the contributions gain the firms no special attention. But Fred Wertheimer, president of Common Cause, the citizens lobby, called the political donations "a critical part of the lobbying process."

An Associated Press review of contributions by political action committees, or PACs, affiliated with the 20 leading defense contractors, found that most top congressional recipients are supporters of Reagan's \$1.8 trillion arms buildup, including many on committees that handle military spending bills.

Of the 20 House members receiving more than \$15,000 from those PACs, 17 voted last week to approve the president's request for \$1.5 billion to build 21 more MX missiles. Thirteen of the 14 senators who received more than \$30,000 backed Reagan on the MX. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., was the only exception.

Through its PAC, Rockwell International Corp. increased contributions from \$59,625 in 1980 to \$328,440 in 1984, a jump of 450 percent, according to Federal Election Commission figures.

Over those four years, Rockwell's defense contracts rose from \$1 billion to \$8.4 billion, pushing the aerospace firm, which is building the B-1 bomber, from 14th spot on the Pentagon's annual list of major contractors to No. 1.

Corporate PACs raise their funds through voluntary contributions from salaried employees. Trade associations, political interest groups and labor unions also have PACs.

Lockheed Corp., the fifth biggest contractor, was the heaviest PAC spender among the top 20 defense firms, contributing \$420,191 to candidates for federal office in 1984. That total represented a 325 percent increase over four years earlier. Lockheed's Pentagon contracts rose from \$2 billion to \$5.2 billion during that period.

Warner, a ranking Senate Armed Services Committee member, got \$80,050 from the top 20 defense contractors for the 1984 campaign. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, who chairs the appropriations defense subcommittee, was second with \$60,800.

Both men said the contributions did not influence their voting on defense spending.

Rep. Joseph Addabbo, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee, topped House recipients from the 20 contractors with \$48,403, despite his reputation as an opponent of many military projects, including the MX.

Gillis successor to be picked

SALEM (AP) — Republican precinct committee leaders will meet April 11 to submit nominations for a successor to former state Rep. Pat Gillis of Portland, state GOP chairman Diarmuid O'Scannlain announced Friday.

"We will act to carry out our responsibilities as quickly as legally possible so the people of

District 20 will not be without representation in Salem any longer than necessary," O'Scannlain said.

The District 20 precinct leaders will pick five nominees whose names will be submitted to the secretary of state and forwarded to the Multnomah County Commission.

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SI throws curve at its readership

NEW YORK (AP) — A pitching prospect found by the New York Mets had never played an organized game of baseball but learned how to throw a ball at 168 mph in Tibet — or so Sports Illustrated claimed in its April 1 issue.

"We wanted to give (readers) something to remember, and I think they'll remember this," Mark Mulvoy, the magazine's managing editor, said of the 14-page feature on the legend of Hayden "Sidd" Finch.

The story, complete with pictures of Finch and real-life Mets players and coaches, was written by George Plimpton, who said he and Mulvoy wanted to do something special for the April Fool's issue.

"We thought about a compilation of pranks pulled over the years," Plimpton said. "But we couldn't come up with enough of those stories. Then we decided I would write my own."

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