

Senator sees defense cuts ahead

BAKER, Ore. (AP) - Sen. Bob Packwood says recent events in Eastern Europe should allow the United States to reduce its defense spending.

In an interview with the Baker Democrat-Herald, Packwood said Monday that Defense Secretary Dick Cheney is predicting a \$180 billion decrease in defense needs over the next three years.

Two-thirds of that savings should be used to reduce the federal deficit, he said. The rest of the money should go to fight crime and drugs as well as to support education.

"I tie education and drugs together," he said, adding that the country doesn't need more Coast Guard cutters and airplanes to fight drug imports. Instead, a better drug education program is needed.

He said it might take 10 to 20 years for the message to get through, but increased education eventually would begin to change attitudes toward drugs in the way they have been changed toward using seat belts and discouraging smoking.

In another matter, Packwood said Congress learned a lesson when it repealed the bill supplying catastrophic health care for the elderly. The program was established to help the nation's elderly, but they were asked to help pay for it with

a surtax. He likened the setup to a user fee, and said the users said they'd rather not have the fee and rather not have the service.

"It'll be some period of time before we approach that subject again," he said.

Packwood predicted the budget deficit will drop to between \$80 billion and \$90 billion next year.

"It's going in the right direction," he said.

The senator said he saw nothing wrong with the pay raise Congress approved for its members. Senators' pay will increase to \$101,400 next October, and they will be allowed to keep \$23,568 in speaking fees. Members of the House can keep no speaking fees, but their salaries were increased to \$96,600 next February and to \$125,000 by January 1991.

Packwood praised the Senate for establishing the ethics package that accompanied the pay raise and said he expects the body to eliminate speaking fees eventually.

The next session, he said, Congress needs to look at the Medicare situation. He said that at its present growth rate, Medicare will pay out more annually than Social Security does.

State waste's 'minuscule'

ALBANY (AP) - A spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality says that compared with the rest of the country, the state's hazardous waste problem is minuscule.

Carolyn Young, public-affairs manager of the agency, said in an interview Monday that Oregon doesn't have the types of chemical plants and oil refineries that caused hazardous-waste pollution in other parts of the United States.

"Actually, even the federal Superfund sites — they're not particularly dangerous to people," she said. "In most cases the hazard is contained on the site, and people are not exposed to it."

Superfund refers to a federal program to identify, study and clean sites where hazardous waste may be a problem. One of those sites is the Teledyne Wah Chang Albany plant in Millersburg.

The DEQ is working on making a new list of Oregon sites with "confirmed releases" of hazardous substances.

A preliminary list created so much opposition among affected property owners and industries that the 1989 Legislature changed the law under which it had been compiled.

The new law calls for companies to get at least two months' notice before being included on such a list.

The new list of suspected pollution sites is supposed to be ready by Jan. 15.

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