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Trump again threatened to veto a military bill, days after it passed both chambers by veto-proof majorities.



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President Trump on Sunday renewed his threat to veto a sweeping military policy bill, courting what may be the final legislative fight of his presidency with Congress after lawmakers overwhelmingly approved the measure last week.

Mr. Trump's opposition to the annual bill is not new. Citing a rotating set of rationales, he has been threatening to veto it since the summer. But lawmakers had hoped that the bill's passage by veto-proof majorities in the House and the Senate would force him to back down, rather than set up the first veto override of his presidency.

Evidently it did not.

"THE BIGGEST WINNER OF OUR NEW DEFENSE BILL IS CHINA!" Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter on Sunday morning. "I WILL VETO!"

His defiance now puts Republicans on Capitol Hill in the difficult spot of choosing between overriding Mr. Trump's objections or abandoning a bill that has passed each of the last 60 years and includes a pay raise for troops.

Mr. Trump's initial objections to the bill were focused on a provision that would strip the names of Confederate leaders from military bases. More recently, he has demanded that the bill include a provision repealing a legal shield for social media companies that has drawn his ire.

It was not immediately evident what provision Mr. Trump was referring to on Sunday, when he claimed the bill would help China. Congressional officials involved in its drafting said Mr. Trump could have been talking about the decision not to include various provisions related to China in the final bill, including a ban on Chinese-made drones.

However, the final \$741 billion bill does include more than \$2 billion for a deterrence initiative in the Pacific aimed at countering China and requires the Pentagon to establish a plan to wean itself off Chinese goods, especially electronics.

The bill also includes new benefits to Vietnam-era veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and impediments to Mr. Trump's planned troop withdrawal from Germany and Afghanistan.

A frustrated Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, fired back in a statement that Mr. Trump was being petulant and called on Congress to override a "senseless veto" when it comes.

"President Trump clearly hasn't read the bill, nor does he understand what's in it," he said. "There are several bipartisan provisions in here that get tougher on China than the Trump Administration has ever been."