

Kelley voices opinion on defense spending

By RICHARD L. VERNACI
Associated Press Writer

FORT MYER, Va. — Gen. P.X. Kelley, retiring commandant of the Marine Corps, criticized Congress yesterday for relying more on the advice of its own staff than on the military and for being cheap when it comes to defense spending.

Kelley, retiring at the end of the month, leveled his criticism in remarks yesterday at ceremonies honoring him and retiring Gen. John A. Wickham, who is stepping down as the Army's chief of staff.

"My first concern is with a growing attitude in the Congress which places more credence in the views of staff members on matters dealing with national security than in the views of the service chiefs," Kelley said in remarks prepared for delivery. He said, "This attitude is driving a wedge between the members of Congress and the nation's principal military advisers."

Kelley then discarded his prepared text after several members of the

honor guard had collapsed from the heat.

"I had a long speech, but the troops have been out in the sun for about an hour," Kelley said.

"My next concern is with a feeling among some members of our Congress that you can buy the defense of our country 'on the cheap,'" Kelley's text said. "The requirements for the defense of the republic are dictated by external threats and the satisfaction of these requirements should not be emasculated by some arbitrary and capricious budgetary 'meat ax'."

Kelley also took a parting shot at the news media, which he criticized as having a "lynch mob mentality." "Irresponsible sensationalism has no place among men of honor and integrity," he said.

Kelley and Wickham were decorated by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and Adm. William Crowe, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"We will always remember your deeds and your service to our country," said Vice President George Bush to the retiring generals.



Retiring Marine Commandant, Gen. Paul X. Kelley, left, is escorted past the U.S. Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps during ceremonies held in his honor at Ft. Myer army base in Arlington, Va. yesterday.

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