

250 in State Dept. Sign a War Protest

By PETER GROSE

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WASHINGTON, May 8—More than 250 State Department and foreign-aid employes have signed a letter to Secretary of State William P. Rogers criticizing the United States military involvement in Cambodia.

Mr. Rogers accepted the petitions, but was reliably reported to have urged that there be no public dissent among career diplomats that could embarrass the Administration.

In addition, at the Peace Corps, about a dozen antiwar demonstrators today occupied part of one floor of the headquarters building, overlooking Lafayette Square in front of

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the White House, and hung out a Vietcong flag. About two dozen more picketed in front of the building, calling for peace in Indochina.

The Peace Corps director, Joseph H. Blatchford, said at a news conference this afternoon that he had refused to call in the police to evict the demonstrators, some of whom were former Peace Corps volunteers overseas, and that both Secretary Rogers and Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel supported this decision.

These developments stood as new evidence that the foreign-affairs bureaucracy of the Federal Government is facing a crisis of morale, seeming to mirror closely what Mr. Blatchford termed the "discontent and disillusionment" among young people across the country.

The letter to Mr. Rogers expressed "concern and apprehension over the enlargement of hostilities in Southeast Asia" and asked the Secretary to "seek reconsideration of the apparent direction of United States policy in Southeast Asia."

The letter made clear that anyone signing it was doing so

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as a private citizen expressing personal views. The names of those who signed it were not made public.

Aides to the Secretary said that Mr. Rogers had agreed to receive the petition, though not necessarily to discuss it with any of the signers.

Reliable sources said that Mr. Rogers was annoyed at published reports suggesting that he had opposed the Cambodian operation, and that he has passed the word through his department that no officials were to discuss this or speculate on it publicly.

His spokesmen have refused to comment on the Secretary's personal attitude toward the present military activities, except to say that he supports the President's decision.

State Department spokesmen did not comment on the Peace Corps demonstration. Formally, the Peace Corps operates under the Secretary of State's responsibility, but since inception a decade ago it has maintained a large degree of autonomy.

Mr. Blatchford said that he took the responsibility of deciding against a forceful eviction of the occupiers.