

Dispute Over Size of Mexico Oil find

Mexico City

A senior Mexican government official has denied that recent oil finds in southern Mexico are as large as suggested by recent U.S. reports.

The official confirmed that recent explorations had uncovered oil deposits are considerably larger than anticipated. But he insisted Sat-

urday that "the reports from Washington are so out of proportion with reality that I could call them a lie."

A report in Saturday's editions of the Washington Post quoted U.S. government and oil industry executives as saying that Mexico had struck reserves estimated at up to 20 billion barrels.

"We cannot have an ac-

curate estimate of reserves until 1975," Antonio Dovali Jaime, director of the Pemex state oil monopoly, told reporters. "but I believe the find is the richest yet in the country."

The other official, who is close to President Luis Echeverria, said the 20-billion-barrel figure was "an absolute exaggeration." He

asked not to be identified.

"Mexico has nothing to hide, and it's false to say that our reserves are anything like those of the Persian Gulf. As much as we would like it to be true, our findings are nowhere near that scale," the anonymous official said. He declined, however, to give details on the size of the findings.

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