

U.S. Will Give Cambodia \$7.5-Million in Weapons

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WASHINGTON, May 25—The Administration has informed Congress that it has decided to give about \$7.5-million worth of arms to the military Government in Cambodia on the ground that such assistance is important to the security of the United States.

The type of arms was not disclosed, but on the basis of earlier statements by Administration officials it was believed the assistance consists largely of small arms that could be readily used by the Cambodian Army.

The State Department, it was learned today, informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the decision in a letter that was delivered on Friday to Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the committee. The letter was classified secret, a classification that Senator Fulbright is now trying to have removed so that the decision can be discussed openly in the Senate.

The letter was accompanied by a document signed by President Nixon stating that it had been determined that such military aid for Cambodia was important to the security of the United States.

Such a Presidential determination was required by the Foreign Aid Act, but the question being raised by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was whether such a determination was made retroactively to cover a decision already made by the Administration.

The letter was the first of

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Congress Is Told U.S. Will Give Cambodia \$7.5-Million in Arms

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Official indication that the Administration had decided to respond favorably to a request by the Government of Premier Lon Nol for military assistance to deal with the Communist forces in Cambodia. The request to the United States and other governments was made shortly after Premier Lon Nol deposed Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Chief of State on March 18.

The United States assistance, however, is to be far less than requested by the Lon Nol Government. Initially the Cambodian Government requested enough arms to equip a 400,000-man army—assistance that would have totaled more than \$500-million—and then scaled down its request to enough weapons for a 200,000-man army.

During his April 30 speech announcing the American military intervention in Cambodia, President Nixon said, "With other nations we shall do our best to provide the small arms and other equipment which the Cambodian Army of 40,000 needs and can use for its defense. But the aid we provide will be limited for the purpose of enabling Cambodia to defend its neutrality and not for the purpose of making it an active belligerent on one side or the other."

In the course of a Senate debate on Cambodia today, Senator Fulbright, observed that the Administration had decided to give \$7.5-million in military aid to Cambodia. Later, apparently because of

the secret classification imposed by the Administration, the Senator, an Arkansas Democrat, changed his comments in The Congressional Record to state that the aid would total "several million dollars."

Captured Rifles Sent

Shortly after the request was received from the Lon Nol Government, the Administration confirmed that 6,000 captured AK-47 rifles—a Soviet-designed weapon—had been given to Cambodia. But at the time the Administration maintained that the rifles had been supplied by South Vietnam with American permission, although there were indications that the captured rifles were refurbished by the United States Army at a special plant it maintains in Okinawa.

The first indication that the United States was supplying weapons directly to Cambodia came last week when Ellsworth Bunker, the United States Ambassador to South Vietnam, said at a secret session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that 7,200 M-2 carbines had been supplied.

The Foreign Relations Committee is trying to determine whether the Administration has legal authority to supply military aid to Cambodia and whether it complied with the provisions of the Foreign Aid Act in deciding to give such assistance.

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