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# Aid Request for Cambodia Said to Exceed Needs Now

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, a war-weary Congress can be Feb. 6 — President Ford has expected to provide even less asked for \$497-million in mili- aid to Indochina than this year. tary aid for Cambodia, but fig- .In the view of the diplomats ures obtained here and from and military analysts, the basic the Administration's own esti- question is: Why did the Admin- mates show that as recently as istration ask \$362.5-million in military support when the a few weeks ago American offi- foreign aid bill came up in De- cials believed a far lower cember—Congress cut the fig- amount would be sufficient. ure to \$275-million—only to ask

Information gathered from for a supplemental amount that Western diplomats and military would make the military budget analysts, as well as from offi- the biggest of the Cambodian cials at the United States Em- war, which has lasted nearly bassy, indicates that the Pres- five years? What has happened ident's request last week for in less that two months, the an- supplemental military aid—an- alysts inquire, that would justi- extra \$222-million, which fy so much more money? would bring the total to the They maintain that the ex- \$497-million figure —may be planations provided in Wash- more than the Government ington and at the embassy do not square with the facts avail- needs for this fiscal year, which able and have only confused ends June 30. the picture.

The analysts feel that this raises serious questions whe- For example the President, in ther the Ford Administraion is trying to establish a buffer arms stock for next year, when

Continued on Page 2, Column 1

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Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

his message to Congress seeking the extra funds, said that the original \$275-million had already been "largely expended" before the current offensive by the Communist-led insurgents. (The \$275-million consisted of \$200-million in regular grants under the foreign aid bill and \$75-million in arms from Pentagon stocks, which is known as "drawdown authorization.") The President said that unless the extra money was approved, the Government "will exhaust all available funds well before the end of this fiscal year."

As long ago as November, however, embassy officials were anticipating reduced aid and were saying that the Government of President Lon Nol was embarked on an ammunition-conservation program designed to make the original amount last, though narrowly, through the fiscal year.

As recently as Jan. 7 a senior embassy official asked during a "deep background" meeting with a newsman if the aid cut had created a critical situation replied: "I don't think we're in trouble. They're just going to have to be more careful in how they use their resources. I don't think we're in as bad shape as South Vietnam."

President Ford said that the extra money was needed "to meet minimum requirements for the survival of the Khmer Republic."

Since the submission of the Presidential request, the embassy's approach has changed distinctly. Ambassador John Gunther Dean, in a statement a few days ago in an echo of the President, said that without the supplemental funds the Cambodian

Army would run out of ammunition long before the end of the fiscal year. "It is not an exaggeration to say that this is a matter of survival for the non-Communist side in this war," he asserted.

Asked to explain the discrepancy, the embassy said that there had been "a lot of confusion" and "conflicting views" among embassy officials. Now, it added, everyone is in agreement that the Cambodians will run out by April or earlier.

The embassy, in making its new case, suggests that two developments were unexpected: increased costs and the intensity of the insurgents' offensive. However, the embassy had predicted the offensive — one is mounted every dry season — and the fighting, according to the embassy's assessments, is no more intense than last year. Moreover, the analysts here maintain, the trend in ammunition costs was visible when the original request was prepared.

## Big Price Rise Noted

The embassy says the price rise since last year has been about 30 per cent, about half of it since October. But other authoritative sources suggest that this was accounted for in the original request, which would seem to be borne out by the fact that in December, when Congress was acting on it, no one said that it was not enough.

The embassy also insists that another factor was not apparent when the original figure was prepared: a Congressional

change in the foreign aid bill under which the cost of transportation must come out of the military aid budget rather than from a special Pentagon budget for this purpose. Though the embassy says this will mean an extra \$50-million this year, other reliable American sources put the cost much lower.

## Army Might Squeak By

In any event, the shipping issue has raised another question of credibility. Since the beginning of the war the embassy has told newsmen that shipping costs were included; now it would appear that tens of millions of dollars were disguised in the Defense Department's budget so that the real total of aid to Cambodia has never been given to the public.

Some diplomats wonder whether President Ford is asking for more military aid purely for bargaining purposes because he expects Congress to chop his request drastically if it gives him any military money at all.

These diplomats and other foreign analysts do not necessarily question the validity of the original \$362.5-million re-

quest, although some believe that the Phnom Penh Government might squeak by on the reduced figure. The larger amount is about the same as last year, when the army was using considerably more ammunition. But almost all the analysts do question the extra amount.

In contrast to military aid, the matter of economic and humanitarian aid for Cambodia seems clear-cut.

Although a supplemental request has not been announced, embassy officials indicate that the Administration will seek only what was cut by Congress when the aid bill came up in December; the Administration asked for \$288-million and Congress voted \$177-million. The additional funds would go for food, mostly rice, which is badly needed as the offensive continues to generate tens of thousands of refugees in a country where at least half the population of seven million was already displaced.

International relief officials believe that substantially more aid than was originally requested could be used because malnutrition is becoming a serious problem.