

# Kissinger Peace

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## Phnom Penh

Ambassador John Günther Dean was rebuffed last year when he proposed to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that an attempt be made to establish contact with a key Cambodian insurgent leader to feel out the possibility of peace negotiations, according to sources in the U.S. embassy here.

The sources said that Dean, who was new in Phnom Penh at the time but

already had begun pushing for peace initiatives, recommended contact with Khieu Samphan, perhaps the leading figure in the insurgent movement. He is the rebels' deputy premier, defense minister and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

At the time of Dean's proposal last April, Samphan was touring Eastern Europe and Africa to rally support for his cause. Dean, according to the embassy sources, felt this was a perfect opportunity for contact.

The ambassador was quot-

ed by those familiar with the episode as having said, "Every straw should be grasped at."

Kissinger rejected the proposal, the sources said, on the ground that the fighting was going poorly at the time and the United States would have been in a position of negotiating from weakness. Long-time observers note, however, that the situation has never been favorable for the Phnom Penh government since the war began in 1970.

The State Department did

## Talk 'Rebuff'

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not mention the Dean proposal when it announced last week that Washington had made numerous attempts at negotiations with the insurgents but had been rebuffed.

Kissinger's critics have said that he lacks interest in peace talks because Cambodia is a small, inconsequential country, it is a losing situation for the United States and he does not want to be identified with defeats. It is also said that he does not want to expend the limited leverage he has on Peking in obtaining a Cambodi-

an settlement that will be unsatisfactory for Washington in any case.

President Ford and Kissinger, in an effort to persuade Congress to grant more military aid, have been saying that without the aid, the Phnom Penh government will fall within weeks, but that with the aid there is a chance of convincing the insurgents of the wisdom of a compromise settlement.

The Embassy, according to sources inside it, believes

that there is no possibility of a compromise and that the best that can be hoped for is little more than a negotiated surrender.

This Embassy assessment, based on conditions that have deteriorated since the insurgents began their offensive two months ago, is shared by almost the entire diplomatic community.

At the moment, this city of two million people is being kept alive solely by an American airlift because other supply routes have been cut by the insurgents.