

250 IN STATE DEPT. SCORE U.S. ON WAR

Letter to Rogers Criticizes Involvement in Cambodia

—Morale Crisis Seen

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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 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.

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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

Continued on Page 7, Column 1

Employes' Note to Rogers Assails U.S. on Cambodia

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

States policy in Southeast Asia."

The letter made clear that anyone signing it was doing so 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.

Mr. Rogers has agreed to meet on Monday a delegation of seven students and faculty members from Colgate University, his own alma mater, who, it is reported, intend to ask that he either resign from the Cabinet or from the Colgate Board of Trustees.

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, even though he had obtained the support of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Hickel, whose letter to President Nixon two days ago urging a greater effort to communicate with young people has found a wide response among many agencies of the Administration.

The protesters were reported to have arrived in the headquarters building early this morning, before the regular staff was on duty, and to have barricaded themselves in the fourth-floor wing, which houses the Peace Corps East Asia and Pacific Region offices.

Corps officials succeeded in removing one Vietcong flag, which was hung from the windows, but another remained hanging there all day. In front of the building, pickets carried signs reading: "Peace Corps Serve Peace," "Don't Be a Cog in the War Machine" and similar slogans.