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Anderson-Holifield 2nd NL A270 240

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WASHINGTON AP - Columnist Jack Anderson asserted Tuesday that Rep. Chet Holifield received \$500 from International Telephone & Telegraph Corp., apparently in return for writing a letter to the Defense Department on behalf of the firm. Holifield and ITT called the accusation false.

Anderson wrote that Holifield, a California Democrat, took the money at "about the same time that he wrote the Defense Department on behalf of a multimillion-dollar ITT contract approval."

Holifield released a statement later Tuesday describing the letter as a routine matter and said if anyone connected with ITT made any contribution to his political campaign he has no recollection of it.

Anderson wrote that Holifield had been contacted by Robert L. Schmidt, public-affairs director in ITT's Washington office.

Schmidt said Tuesday night: "I have made no payoff or contribution to Rep. Holifield or his assistant, and Anderson's charge that I did so is completely false, misleading and destructive to my name and reputation."

"I have retained Walter J. Bonner as my personal counsel to consider legal redress against Mr. Anderson and the newspapers which published the column," Schmidt said.

Anderson said Schmidt approached Holifield in 1968 after ITT became interested in landing a contract for electronic air field equipment.

Anderson said: 5th graf A270.

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Anderson-Holifield NL 350

WASHINGTON AP - Columnist Jack Anderson reported Tuesday that Rep. Chet Holifield, D-Calif., received \$500 from International Telephone & Telegraph Corp., apparently in return for writing a letter in the big conglomerate's behalf. Holifield called the accusation false.

Anderson said in his syndicated column that Holifield took the money at "about the same time that he wrote the Defense Department on behalf of a multimillion-dollar ITT contract approval."

Holifield in a statement Tuesday afternoon described the letter as a routine matter and said if anyone connected with ITT made any contribution to his political campaign he has no recollection or record of it.

Anderson said ITT lobbyist Robert Schmidt approached Holifield after ITT became interested in 1968 in landing a contract for electronic airfield equipment.

Anderson said that Holifield's office sent a letter to the Defense Department substantially as Schmidt prepared it. At about this time, Anderson said, Schmidt went to Holifield's office again. Holifield wasn't there, Anderson said, and Schmidt left \$500 in \$100 bills with a Holifield aide.

Anderson wrote also that "As chairman of the House government operations military subcommittee, Holifield had vast watchdog powers over all defense contracts."

Holifield said his letter of Dec. 19, 1968, to the Secretary of the Air Force was written on his office stationery and made no reference to his subcommittee chairmanship. He said he considered it his duty to urge that fair consideration be given to potential government contractors located in his state.

Holifield said he has written hundreds of such letters on behalf of labor unions, manufacturers, universities and others, "all without compensation of any kind," and added:

"It is ridiculous on the face of it that a routine letter of this sort, written after a briefing with other members of the California delegation, is made to appear as a service rendered for compensation, which, of course, would be illegal under federal statutes."

Anderson said that ITT failed to get the contract.

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