

U.S. Acknowledges Text Of Letter to Cambodia

Washington

The State Department acknowledged yesterday that it sent Cambodia the "suggested text" of a letter to be sent to other nations to solicit economic aid.

It would be "a mistake to conclude" from this "that the United States was somehow involved in a shady deal," said State Department spokesman Charles W. Bray.

DISAGREE

He characterized the newly disclosed aid solicitation letter as a U.S. form of "technical assistance" to a nation unfamiliar with setting up an international consortium to help stabilize its war-battered economy. "I

see nothing mysterious in that," said Bray.

Bray was supplying what amounted to the first full, official confirmation of one of the secret Nixon administration documents made public by columnist Jack Anderson. But Bray was disagreeing with the implications raised by the columnist.

Anderson has said that the preparation of a secret solicitation letter to be sent out over the signature of ailing Cambodian Premier Lon Nol showed that "apparently, U.S. policymakers don't trust the Cambodian leader to write his own letters on such a delicate matter."

The columnist charged that the Nixon administration

"has resorted to deception again to raise Exchange Support Funds for Cambodia."

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Anderson quoted from the text of a cablegram from the State Department to the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, dated Dec. 8, 1971, containing the draft of a solicitation letter to raise \$25 million. "All Lon Nol had to do," said Anderson, "was fill in the blank space with the correct amount for each country," starting with the U.S., from which a \$12.5 million contribution is sought.

Bray acknowledged that this is the amount the U.S. intends to pledge, subject to congressional approval, at an exchange fund stabilization conference due to begin Friday in Phnom Penh. Other nations expected to attend, said Bray, include Japan, Australia, Indonesia, Italy and Malaysia.

This is "in part an attempt to lighten the burden on the American taxpayer," said Bray, "by eliciting assistance" from other nations. An international donors program was suggested by the International Monetary Fund, said Bray, and "we have given the government of Cambodia our suggestions as how best to proceed . . ."

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