

American Officer Is Said to Advise Cambodian Troops

WASHINGTON, March 13 (Reuters)—An American military adviser is working in the field with Cambodian combat troops, according to a dispatch from Cambodia printed in The Washington Post today.

The State Department said that it had asked the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh for a full report on the dispatch.

The Washington Post identified the officer as Maj. Lawrence Ondecker, and said he was advising Cambodian officer in the government command post at Kampot, a coastal town 80 miles south of Phnom Penh.

Congress has passed a law banning direct American military involvement in Indochina and the newspaper report prompted an angry Senate demand for an investigation.

The State Department noted that military personnel are required by law to maintain close liaison with Cambodian officials to insure safe delivery of United States military equipment.

"However, I do acknowledge that they are not supposed to function in a combat advisory role," the department spokesman, John King, said.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee made preliminary inquiries during a nomination hearing for the ambassador-designate to Cambodia, John Gunther Dean. But a bipartisan group of nearly two dozen Senators formally requested an investigation by the Armed Services Committee, declaring in a statement that "covert and illegal war cannot be tolerated by the Congress."