

China to Get Computers

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 (AP) — A 15-nation export control panel has approved the sale of 20 United States computers to China for use in conducting that nation's population census, Government officials said Friday.

The computers are to be supplied by the International Business Machines Corporation. The sale approval, confirmed by I.B.M., had been pending since the Carter Administration and had become a matter of controversy between the United States and China.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. was said by aides to be frustrated that the deal had not been approved much sooner and felt the chief problem was a bottleneck in the Commerce Department. He had hoped to

have it cleared by the time he went to China last summer.

"The Chinese have a national census coming up; you can imagine how important these are to them," said a State Department source, who asked not to be identified by name.

Kay Keeshen, an I.B.M. spokesman, said in New York that the export control panel — called Cocom for coordinating committee — approved the sale of the 20 I.B.M. computers Tuesday. She said one system had already been installed and that the package included one intermediate-sized I.B.M. 4341 and the rest small-sized I.B.M. 4331's.

She said it was I.B.M. policy not to disclose the value of the sale.