

# Invasion of North Vietnam Unlikely, U.S. Officials Say

## Washington

Authoritative administration officials said yesterday that the United States has no intention of sending ground troops into North Vietnam, and they strongly discounted the likelihood of a South Vietnamese ground attack on North Vietnam.

But in public, administration spokesmen maintained silence on both questions. Other officials acknowledged privately that this was part of a psychological warfare effort to keep enemy forces on guard.

They said that invasion threats attributed to President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam were aimed, in part at least, at diverting some North Vietnamese forces from the enemy build-up around South Vietnamese forces operating in Laos.

Pentagon officials maintained that the South Vietnamese tactics — coupled with American military moves just south of the demilitarized zone along the border of North and South Vietnam, and undisclosed until now — were having the desired effect of keeping some enemy forces pinned down.

## MARINES

These officials said that a 1500-man Marine Corps combat team has been shifted several times in South Vietnam just below the demilitarized zone in a deliberate effort to worry North Vietnamese commanders about the possibility of some foray across the zone, or possibly even an amphibious landing on North Vietnam's coast just above the DMZ.

Both at the White House and at the State Department, administration spokesmen refused to answer questions about whether American ground forces would be used in action against North Vietnam.

The only public comment dealing with this topic came from Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's special assistant for national security affairs, who indicated that the U.S. has no intention of sending ground forces into North Vietnam.

In a television interview of

tion in the Indochina fighting.

If one were to threaten the national existence of North Vietnam directly and immediately — in that case the risk of a Chinese intervention would be very great," Kissinger said.

Otherwise, he went on, "we consider it highly unlikely that Communist China will come in under the circumstances that now exist and in what we still believe — despite the temporary flare-ups that are inseparable from the disengagement process — at the phase of the war in which the American involvement is obviously being wound down."

He also noted that the nearest point of the Chinese border is roughly 400 miles from the current fighting in Laos.

Asked about the possibility of a South Vietnamese ground attack on North Vietnam, Kissinger said that it was "not the dominant probability." But, like other administration officials, he stopped short of a categorical denial.

Nonetheless, in private conversations, well-placed administration officials almost totally discounted the likelihood that Saigon's forces would go into North Vietnam.

The general attitude expressed was that the South Vietnamese have their hands full with their attack on the Ho Chi Minh trail complex in Laos.

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the "CBS Morning News," Kissinger said: "We are not threatening the national existence of North Vietnam by anything we are doing now or that matter by anything that we are intending to do."

Authoritative officials said later that Kissinger meant that there was no intention to send American ground forces into North Vietnam.

## CHINESE

Kissinger's comments came in response to a question about the likelihood of Chinese Communist interven-