

Rogers: U.S. Won't Ban North Invasion



WILLIAM P. ROGERS
No intervention

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Secretary of State William Rogers said today the United States would not intervene if South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to invade North Vietnam.

"There's no reason, when the South Vietnamese are as strong as they are, why they should be under any restrictions militarily," Rogers said.

Rogers made the statement while reviewing the Indochina situation before the winter conference of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Praises S. Viets

Rogers praised the South Vietnamese army, saying, "They're developing a military resolve that is very encouraging."

He predicted there would be many tough battles in Laos in the coming weeks and months.

Noting the opposition to the U.S. air support given to the South Vietnamese operation in Laos, Rogers said, "In the long run, I believe this decision will be construed as a very wise decision indeed."

Laos-Cambodia

He compared the Laotian operation to the Cambodian incursion last year and said "there was no reason at all — legally or morally — why they (North Vietnamese)

should have that safe haven from which to operate."

The aggressive posture taken recently by the South Vietnamese army, Rogers said, means that it is no longer at the mercy of the enemy.

If a nation fights a defensive war, he added, the enemy dictates the time and place of battle. "And you all know what that means," he said.

'Saves Yanks'

Rogers reiterated President Nixon's statements that the Laotian operation will save American lives and permit the continued withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam.

He added that the objective in Laos is to sever several supply lines on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and not to occupy territory.