

Hanoi Commits Its Last Division

Washington

Advance units of the last North Vietnamese combat division remaining on northern soil are reported to be entering the demilitarized zone toward the battle in South Vietnam:

Senior administration officials said yesterday that the movements are a dramatic sign that Hanoi, rather than scaling down its combat operations, is stepping up preparations for a long campaign in the northern-most provinces of the South.

Military analysts said the division, the 10,000 - man

325-C Division, was accompanied by tanks, long - range artillery and anti-aircraft weapons. While two below - strength training divisions are believed to be left in the North, they said, 325-C is the last of 13 combat divisions to be committed to the fight in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

It was the passage of the 308th Division through the DMZ three weeks ago with tanks and artillery that angered President Nixon and led to the resumption of extensive air attacks on targets throughout North Vietnam, including Hanoi and Haiphong.

Defense and State Depart-

ment sources said that, despite recent suggestions to the contrary, the United States has markedly "throttled back" the air war over the North since the big raids by heavy bombers and fighter - bombers in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas last weekend.

The reduction in the size and scope of the bombing, they added, was designed both to see whether Hanoi might show some sign of restraint and to improve the atmosphere for pursuing "certain diplomatic initiatives." They refused to discuss the nature of the initiatives.

The movement of units of the 325-C division into the demilitarized zone, together with other activities in recent days, has convinced many officials that North Vietnam does not intend to call off or diminish its offensive soon.

Officials doubt that the division would have been moved all the way from Hanoi to the zone to remain aloof from the battle. "We could be wrong, but having come this far, we expect them to come all the way," one said.

In recent days, analysts said, North Vietnam has moved numbers of tanks, radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns, troop reinforcements and supply trucks on all four roads running through the zone.

Also, a four-inch petroleum pipeline along the coast is being extended into the zone with the apparent intention, the officials said, of continuing into Quang Tri province.

Despite the additional North Vietnamese build-up, most military analysts believe that the South Vietnamese, backed by American air support, should be able to contain the renewed offensive. - *N.Y. Times Service*