

U.S. Planes Attack

in Battle for Quang

Hanoi Is

Accused of

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Invasion

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Washington

The United States yesterday accused North Vietnam of launching an "invasion" of South Vietnam and said it is leaving all retaliatory options open—including renewed American bombing of North Vietnam.

The justification for such action was provided by the State Department, which charged North Vietnam with "flagrant violations" both of the 1954 treaty ending the French-Indochina war and the 1968 understanding that led to the end of systematic bombing of North Vietnam and the start of what were to be substantive talks in Paris.

White House, State Department and Defense Department spokesmen, however, refused to predict what course might be taken, there by preserving President Nixon's freedom of action.

OFFICIAL

A senior pentagon official said privately that he thinks Mr. Nixon will order American aircraft to bomb the lines of supply and base camps in North Vietnam of those enemy units that have crossed the demilitarized zone into South Vietnam's northern-most province of Quang Tri in recent days.

Mr. Nixon spent most of the morning discussing the Vietnamese developments with his top aides. He met with Kenneth Rush, deputy Secretary of Defense, and Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He spoke by phone with Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin A. Laird.

Later in the morning, Henry A. Kissinger, the presi-

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dent's adviser on national security affairs, headed a session of the Washington Special Action Group to discuss what tactics to follow. That panel includes representatives from the State Department, the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other concerned agencies. It meets during periods of emergency.

Kissinger also met privately with Mr. Nixon after the meeting ended, White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said.

STRATEGY

It was evident that despite the crisis in South Vietnam, the administration is seeking to avoid giving an impression of undue concern.

Ziegler referred several times to "the South Vietnamese operation" and said the attack by North Vietnam had been expected.

"Now that it is beginning, our position is to evaluate it day by day," he said.

PULLOUT

He cautioned newsmen against making any "assumptions at this time" on what would be done because the President wants "all options open."

Ziegler and Defense Department spokesman Jerry W. Freidheim said that the American withdrawal of troops from South Vietnam is continuing on schedule despite the increased fighting. Mr. Nixon has set a troop level of 69,000 by May 1 and has promised a new troop reduction announcement be-

fore then. Ziegler said this plan is unchanged.

In answer to questions, Ziegler also said that American air power will be used as necessary to aid South Vietnam.

Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman — who had attended the Washington Special Action Group meeting — was the administration's sharpest voice during the day.

He said that what has happened in South Vietnam "is a flagrant violation by North Vietnam" of the 1954 agreement on Indochina and the 1968 understanding negotiated by the U.S. and North Vietnam.

"And by any definition, what has occurred is an invasion of South Vietnam," he said.