

BARRY SCHWEID

Ky's Actions Disturb West

WASHINGTON (AP) — By proposing an invasion of North Viet Nam and a confrontation with Communist China, South Viet Nam Premier Nguyen Cao Ky has demonstrated anew that he has a special talent for offending Western sensibilities.

Following Ky's advice would be an abomination, declared Sen. Mike Mansfield, the usually mild-mannered Senate Democratic leader. Administration spokesmen reacted firmly, though with considerable restraint.

"Our position of not seeking any wider war has been repeatedly made clear and remains our position," said Robert J. McCloskey, State Department press officer. "We do not seek to threaten any regime."

'PRESIDENT'S VIEWS KNOWN'

"The President's views on not wanting a wider war are pretty well known," said Bill D. Moyers, White House press secretary.

Clearly, once again, Ky and official Washington were at cross purposes, though the measure of stability the slender, 35-year-old pilot has achieved in Saigon is considered a blessing here.

In April, 1965, two months before Ky became premier, he questioned the effectiveness of air strikes against highways, railroads and bridges in the North and proposed South Viet Nam's land forces move into the North.

"If we are just going to bomb communications lines the Viet Cong will be able to stand up for a long time, I'm afraid," he said. "So the next step must be big, either a big escalation of the war or negotiations."

17TH PARALLEL NOT CROSSED

Though President Johnson varied the bombing pattern last June, 14 months later, to strike at oil depots in the North, Ky's call for moving South Vietnamese forces across the 17th Parallel never has been followed.

Earlier, in October, 1964, Ky kicked off a storm by telling the London Sunday Mirror:

"People ask me who my heroes are. I have only one—Hitler. I admire Hitler because he pulled his country together when it was in terrible state in the early '30s. But the situation here is so desperate that one man would not be enough. We need four or five Hitlers in Viet Nam."

The British government inquired into the interviews and in July, 1965, a month after he became premier, Ky's office said he had been referring to Hitler's qualities of discipline and hadn't intended to praise Hitler in general.

Last February, Ky was at odds with administration policy when he called for the bombing of the North Vietnamese port of Haiphong.

TROOPS TO DA NANG

In April he sent government troops into Da Nang though the U.S. Marine Corps commandant, Gen. Wallace M. Greene Jr., said the situation in the South Vietnamese city was calm and the demonstrations there were well-ordered and semi-religious.

In May, Ky caused considerable embarrassment in Washington by declaring he had no intention of resigning following election of a constituent assembly.

There are several possible explanations of Ky's pronouncements and policy divergences from Washington. One may lie in his comparative youth, nationalism and military background. Certainly they have the effect of demonstrating that he is not Washington's puppet, that no matter how large the United States' involvement, it is South Viet Nam's independence that is at stake in the war.