

Hanoi Press

Quotes McCain, Fellow POW

G. I. M. T., New York Times News Service

HANOI, North Vietnam (Agence France-Presse)—Lt. Cmdr. John Sydney McCain III, son of Adm. John S. McCain Jr., commander of United States naval forces in Europe, was quoted by the Hanoi press Friday as having said that the United States appeared "isolated" because of the Vietnam war.

Cdr. McCain, who was captured after his plane was shot down over Hanoi on Oct. 26, was said to have been interviewed by North Vietnamese newsmen along with another captured pilot, John Peter Flynn, identified as an Air Force colonel whose plane was shot down over the capital on Oct. 27.

McCain was quoted as having said: "The morale of the Vietnamese people is very high, the Vietnamese people are very strong, present events are moving to the advantage of North Vietnam and the United States appears to be isolated."

McCain, 31, said he had carried out 23 raids over North Vietnam, including five or six over Halphong. He was shot down on his first raid over Hanoi, from the aircraft carrier *Oriskany*.

He said he had previously been based on the carrier *Forrestal*, and had narrowly escaped death during the fire aboard the vessel in July.

The newspapers reported that both McCain and Flynn had said they were impressed by the density and accuracy of the anti-aircraft fire over Hanoi.

Col. Flynn was quoted as having said: "Your ground-to-air missiles are really dangerous. As for your MIGs, we could hardly tell where they were coming from. And after firing they disappeared."

FLYNN, 43, a veteran of the Korean War with 23 years of active service, said he had flown from the U.S. air base at Korat, Thailand.

He was reported to have said that each squadron at the base had lost three pilots and more than three planes each month to flights over North Vietnam. The greatest losses were of the F105 fighter bombers, he was quoted as having said. At present, the United States "lacks experienced pilots," he said.

The papers quoted Flynn as having said that the young pilots at the Korat base, despite an outward show of bravado, were frightened at the idea of having to fly over North Vietnam, and particularly Hanoi.

Many young pilots wanted to leave the Air Force to become civilian pilots, he was quoted as having said. As for the "old pilots like me, we want to retire and return to our families," he said.