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HANOI VNA INTERNATIONAL SERVICE IN FRENCH 1339 GMT 9 NOV 67 B
(FURTHER B091315 HANOI CORRESPONDENT'S DISPATCH ENGLISH FRENSE
LATINA 091205--SHORT VERSION NHAN DAN)

(FIRST OF TWO TAKES--INTERVIEW WITH MCCAIN)

(TEXT) HANOI, 9 NINE NOVEMBER--NHAN DAN TODAY PUBLISHED ANSWERS
TO QUESTIONS BY ONE OF ITS CORRESPONDENTS MADE BY A U.S. AIR
PIRATE DETAINED IN NORTH VIETNAM.

HE IS LT CDR JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN OF THE U.S. NAVY, SERIAL NUMBER
624787 SIXTWOFOURSEVENTEIGHTSEVEN, CAPTURE ON THE TRUC BACH LAKE
IN HANOI 26 TWOSIX OCTOBER 1967 ONE NINE SIXSEVEN AFTER HE HAD BAILED
OUT FROM HIS PLANE IN FLAMES. IT WAS FROM THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER
U.S. CRISKANY THAT HE TOOK OFF FOR THE LAST TIME. BEFORE BEING
TRANSFERRED TO THIS SHIP IN OCTOBER 1967 ONE NINE SIXSEVEN, HE WAS
AMONG THE PERSONNEL FLYING FROM ANOTHER AIRCRAFT CARRIER, THE
FORESTAL. BECAUSE THE LATTER SUSTAINED CONSIDERABLE LOSSES DUE TO
A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION WHICH HAPPENED 29 TWONINE JULY 1967 ONE NINE
SIXSEVEN, MCCAIN COULD TAKE LEAVE IN HIS NATIVE COUNTRY AS ONE OF

ACT;; DIA-15

INFO: CSAF-1 FILE=1 (19) ETO/WC

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Approved for Release
Date AUG 1987

*Interviewer John S
McCain
Statement*

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THE SURVIVORS. HOWEVER, HE COULD STAY ONLY A FEW DAYS WITH HIS FAMILY, BECAUSE HE SOON RECEIVED AN ORDER TO REPORT URGENTLY TO THE CRISKANY WHERE HE WAS TO BE ASSIGNED. DURING HIS LEAVE, HE RELATED, HIS WIFE AND EVEN HIS FATHER IN HIS LETTERS ADVISED HIM TO BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL BECAUSE A GREAT NUMBER OF COFFINS OF AMERICAN MILITARY MEN KILLED IN VIETNAM HAD ALREADY ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES.

TO A QUESTION OF THE CORRESPONDENT, MCCAIN ANSWERED: "MY ASSIGNMENT TO THE CRISKANY, I TOLD MYSELF, WAS DUE TO SERIOUS LOSSES IN PILOTS, WHICH WERE SUSTAINED BY THIS AIRCRAFT CARRIER (DUE TO ITS RAIDS ON THE NORTH VIETNAM TERRITORY--VNA) (BRACKETS AS TRANSMITTED) AND WHICH NECESSITATED REPLACEMENTS. FROM 10 ONEZERO TO 12 ONETWO PILOTS WERE TRANSFERRED LIKE ME FROM THE FORRESTAL TO THE CRISKANY. BEFORE I WAS SHOT DOWN WE HAD MADE SEVERAL SORTIE. ALTOGETHER I MADE ABOUT 23 TWOTHREE FLIGHTS OVER NORTH VIETNAM."

MCCAIN ADMITTED THAT HE PARTICIPATED FIVE OR SIX TIMES IN THE ATTACKS ON THE HAIPHONG SECTOR.

FEAR STILL CLEARLY SHOWED ON HIS FACE WHEN HE RECALLED HIS DISASTROUS SORTIE ON 26 TWOSIX OCTOBER AGAIN HANOI. "THE BRIEFING WAS HELD IN THE MORNING," HE SAID. "THAT'S RIGHT. I REMEMBER THAT IT WAS IN THE MORNING THAT THEY TOLD ME OF THE SITUATION AND THE PLAN OF THE RAID, WHICH SHOULD TAKE PLACE ABOUT NOON. A RECONNAISSANCE OFFICER EXPLAINED THIS PLAN TO ME. THEY SHOWED ME PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY TARGET AND MARKED OUT THE PATHS TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE CRISKANY AT THIS POINT. THEY POINTED OUT TO ME A NUMBER OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT POSITIONS NEAR HANOI AND A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE ROCKET POSITIONS, THE POSITION OF OUR RESCUE SHIPS, THE RADIO FREQUENCY, THE COMPOSITION OF THE FLIGHT, AND SO FORTH. UPON ARRIVAL NEAR THE TARGET, OUR FORMATION, WITH SIX BOMBERS, WOULD MOUNT THE ATTACK ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING ORDER: I WOULD BE NUMBER THREE, AND THE CHIEF OF THE FORMATION, NUMBER ONE. EACH PILOT WOULD HAVE TO APPROACH THE TARGET FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION THE CHOICE OF WHICH WOULD BE LEFT TO HIM. "WHILE MOVING TOWARD THE TARGET, WE STUMBED OVER A VERY DENSE NETWORK OF FIRE, A VERY POWERFUL RIPOSTE. A FEW ROCKETS WERE SEEN. OUR CHIEF TURNED TO APPROACH THE TARGET AND I FOLLOWED HIM AT A DISTANCE. AT THE TIME WHEN I WAS PREPARING TO DROP MY BOMBS--I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER OR NOT I COULD DROP THEM, BECAUSE

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THINGS WERE HAPPENING TOO FAST-- I HEARD A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION WHICH SHOOK MY PLANE AND SENT IT TOWARD THE GROUND. IT WAS HIT SO VIOLENTLY THAT I WAS THROWN ON MY BACK AND WENT STRAIGHT TOWARD THE GROUND IN THIS POSTURE. I TRIED TO PULL THE DIRECTION-STICK TO REESTABLISH THE BALANCE OF MY PLANE BUT IT NO LONGER RESPONDED TO ME.

I CONTINUED TO DESCEND AT A DIZZY SPEED. THEN, I EJECTED MYSELF. I DO NOT KNOW AT WHAT ALTITUDE, BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY LOW. NATURALLY I FELT BUFFETTING BECAUSE MY BAILING OUT WAS MADE AT THE TIME WHEN THE PLANE WAS FALLING TOO FAST. WHEN THE PARACHUTE OPENED, I LOOKED DOWN AND FOUND OUT THAT I WAS GOING TO FALL INTO A LAKE. I WAS REALLY LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO FALL INTO A LAKE. ALL AROUND ME BOMBS WERE EXPLODING WHILE ROCKETS AND ANTI AIRCRAFT SHELLS WERE STREAKING THROUGH THE SKY. I HIT THE LAKE AND WENT TO THE BOTTOM. WHILE TRYING TO RETURN TO THE SURFACE, I WAS SEIZED BY VIETNAMESE AND PUSHED TO THE BANK OF THE LAKE. THEY DISARMED ME AND BROUGHT ME TO PRISON." MORE 091339 [REDACTED] 11/1933Z

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