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ROBIN VIETNAM

If the Nixon administration still stubbornly refuses to give up its scheme of aggression and persistently carries on the war--whether Americanized or Vietnamized--to implement neocolonialism in South Vietnam and to perpetuate the partition of Vietnam, then the entire Vietnamese people will resolutely brave all hardships and sacrifices to carry on their just fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation until complete victory.

If the Nixon administration listens to reason and acts in accordance with the legitimate interests of the United States, with those of the Vietnamese people and that of world peace, it must stop U.S. aggression, and peacefully settle the war in Vietnam on the basis of true respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the right to self-determination of the South Vietnam people. We have on many occasions declared that we are ready to settle the problem rapidly with the United States on the basis of the 10-point overall solution of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

Either restore peace or continue the war, the choice now rests with the Nixon administration.

GRANMA PUBLISHES INTERVIEW WITH U.S. POW MCCAIN

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[Text] Dr Fernando Barral, a Spanish psychiatrist residing in Cuba, returned last week from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam where he was invited; and in his notebook he brought back some journalistic news: an interview with a North American pilot captured in the DRV after bombing Hanoi on 26 October 1967. The meeting between him and the pilot took place in an office of the Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations in Hanoi.

The pilot interviewed is Lt Cmdr John Sidney McCain, son and grandson of American Navy Admirals. His father, as the Yankee prisoner declared, is higher ranking than General Abrams, who commands the Yankee aggressor troops in South Vietnam; despite this, Johnson gave orders directly to Abrams, passing over McCain's father, who has a long history of services of aggression in Korea, among other imperialist merits. As is seen, Lt Commander John Sidney has a very good name....

Following are the notes from Dr Barral's interview with the Yankee pilot:

Could you tell me your name, serial number, and rank?

"My name is John Sidney McCain and I am a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy-- serial No 624787."

He added: "I understand and speak some Spanish. I studied it in school and I have been in Spain several times. On one of those occasions I visited the Naval Academy and met Prince Carlos...."

In the course of the interview, on various occasions he showed that knowledge of the language, saying some words, dates, and so forth in Spanish, or [using it] when he thought the interpreter was seeking the corresponding French word.

Actually, from the very beginning this established a rare direct communication between us, and more than one question or my response was made directly in Spanish.

Immediately afterward I asked him about the date and circumstances of his capture.

"On 26 October 1967 I was overflying Hanoi in an A45 plane based on the carrier Colibary when my plane was hit by a ground-to-air missile.

"I boiled out, colliding in the air with the remains of the plane, and I landed in one of the lakes in the center of Hanoi, in the middle of the water. On landing I tried to get free of my parachute, but I could not move, and I did not realize why I could not move my arms or legs, but it was because of the injuries."

Injuries?

"Yes, as a result of colliding with the remains of the plane, I fractured my right leg at the knee, and both arms, the right one in three places. Moreover, I dislocated both shoulders."

When he told me this I superficially examined his ability to move his arms, which is almost unrestricted (only he has some difficulty bending his arm all the way). Also his grip is normal. Aside from this, he uses a crutch on the right side only, which shows normal functional ability of the extremity most affected by the traumatism.

What happened next? That is, what was the capture itself like?

"Well, many people gathered around since it was the center of Hanoi and at midday."

Soldiers, militiamen, or civilians?

"I could not determine exactly, because they had removed their clothing in order to take me out of the water."

Well, go on.

"From there, they took me to a military hospital in Hanoi, a large hospital where they operated on me and attended to the multiple fractures. I understand I received more than a liter of blood...."

Were you the object of any physical or moral violence?

"No, although at the time of capture I could sense the people's hate or indignation, there were no insults or violence of any type. On the contrary, you have seen how I am recovering from my injuries."

But were you not afraid of being the object of violent treatment if you were captured...?

"Actually, I never thought I would become a prisoner; therefore those fears never came up."

Did you never think of the possibility of being captured?

"No. I was traveling at a high altitude. I felt completely safe in the plane. I am considered one of the best pilots...."

We had closed one subject, between sips of coffee enjoyed equally by the pilot and me, but the cakes and oranges have not been touched. I mentioned to the pilot, and I began to peel an orange. Soon afterward, we reopened the conversation.

Just let you join the U.S. Navy?

"There is a family reason, since I have many relatives in that branch of service. In particular, my grandfather was outstanding in World War II; he was one of those who made the Japanese sign the act of surrender, and a Naval destroyer bears his name. And my father is also an admiral; he is chief of the Pacific Command of the U.S. Armed Forces. Actually, it is a matter of military tradition. One of my forebears was a colonel in Washington's independence forces. Another was a general in the war of secession. Thus it was natural for me to follow a military career. Of course my father was not always an admiral; during World War II he was commander of a submarine. He has been in the navy since 1927 and has been an admiral since 1965. He holds the highest rank in the navy. If I had not been downed, I would have become an admiral at an earlier age than my father. Theoretically, General Abrams is his subordinate...."

Theoretically?

"Yes, although in practice, because of the importance of this war, Gen Creighton Abrams receives his orders directly from Washington."

I do not understand this about "in theory and in practice." I thought that in military life everything is standardized in an inflexible manner....

"Well, look, in fact Abrams is his subordinate but since the Tet offensive of 1968 in view of the gravity of the situation, Abrams, instead of asking for instructions from my father, who is in Honolulu, so that he in turn would ask for them from Washington, went directly to Washington for them because the war is here in Vietnam and my father also has Okinawa, Korea, and so forth under his command. That is why, since the war is so important, he receives his instructions directly from Washington. It is a political problem also, not only military."

Well, let us leave these things about political and military aside. They are too complex. At any rate I do not believe that your father likes the situation very much; that his subordinates receive orders directly from above.

He makes an expressive gesture but does not go further into the subject; rather he takes a tangent.

"Look, my father is a very intelligent person, but... when the bombings of the north began, Johnson asked Abrams' (as published) opinion; not my father's because Abrams is in Saigon, in the war...."

"Now I am going to speak about my wife," he says spontaneously, "she is not in the armed forces," he added with a certain humor. "I saw her the last time in August 1967. At that time I was on the aircraft carrier Forrestal when a fire broke out which damaged it heavily and it had to be sent for repairs to the United States. At that time I miraculously escaped with my life because I was in my airplane and the two pilots on my left and the two on my right were killed."

How did that happen?

"A plane caught fire and one of its rockets went off. This in turn caused other explosions. There were 135 deaths, almost all the airplanes were destroyed, and the ship was seriously damaged. As a result of the fire I became famous on TV."

As one who miraculously escaped death, not

"Yes, but in addition I was able to see my family and stay there nearly a month. I then returned this time to the aircraft carrier Oriskany and 1 month later I was shot down."

You said that you were going to talk to me about your wife but you continue on the subject of the war....

He smiles as he becomes aware that he drifted from the subject and adds: "She is very pretty. Before marrying me she was a model for magazines and on TV. We have a 3-year-old girl. When I saw her she was still a baby. She also has two children from a former marriage. She has now returned to work as a model on TV."

How did you find this out?

"I had a letter from her after I became a prisoner."

It (as published)

"Yes they authorized me to receive a letter and presents on Christmas Eve and I was able to send greetings cards."

Would you like me to relay a message for you?

"If you would be so kind. Tell her I am well, that I wish her happiness, and not to worry about me."

The address?

"Her name is Carol McCain, Mrs Carol McCain. She lives in...."

It is difficult for me to understand the address and I ask him to write it in my notebook. He writes with his left hand: Mrs Carol McCain, 593 Patio Lane, Orange Park, Florida, USA [address as published]. I explain that I will not see her personally but that I will relay the message.

What schooling did you have?

"I went to the Naval Academy. I took two university majors, electrical engineering and naval architecture. The courses were very difficult; 1,200 of us began and only 400 graduated. Discipline was very strict also. I was also in the Spanish Naval Academy. It was there that I met Prince Carlos, as I said before. When I finished I had two choices; to be a naval officer or a pilot. I chose to be a pilot. I had to study another year and a half and I graduated in 1958. I trained intensively. I flew many hours in training to become a jet pilot."

How?

"Yes, 4,000. They really only demand 200 but I flew 4,000 hours."

It (as published)

"I wanted to become a test pilot. It is fascinating to test the new models."

At any rate the difference between 200 and 4,000 appears to be great.

"Well, look, it was because I wanted to be a astronaut. That is why I also engaged in a great deal of sports: boxing, wrestling, swimming, camping, and so forth."

And what happened?

"I had to come to Vietnam."

What is your religion?

"I am a protestant."

Being in captivity, has your faith increased? Do you have hopes for the future?

"My beliefs have always been more or less of the same intensity. As long as the war lasts I do not have much hope for the future."

From the psychiatric point of view, Dr Barral has the following opinion on the personality of the prisoner who is responsible for many criminal bombings of the people of DRV:

He showed himself to be intellectually alert during the interview. From a morale point of view he is not in traumatic shock. He is neither dejected nor depressed. He was able to be sarcastic, and even humorous, indicative of psychic equilibrium. From the moral and ideological point of view he showed us he is an insensitive individual without human depth, who does not show the slightest concern, who does not appear to have thought about the criminal acts he committed against a population from the almost absolute impunity of his airplane, and that nevertheless those people saved his life, fed him, and looked after his health, and he is now healthy and strong. I believe that he bombed densely populated places for sport. I noted that he was hardened, that he spoke of banal things as if he were at a cocktail party.

During the interview he quietly drank three cups of coffee and smoked one of the cigarettes the Vietnamese had placed on the central table.

The idea of interviewing this pilot occurred to me while I was returning from the Fourth Zone of the DRV, Quang Binh Province leveled by the bombings. I was sick of seeing destruction of a people of such tremendous moral fiber. Here I thought that I ought to meet one of the pilots. What would they be like, I wondered--the perpetrators of the destruction, of the savagery? I had come to Vietnam in response to an invitation and my intention was to investigate the traditional [social] structures and social change in Vietnam. But when I interviewed a young militiawoman with a rifle and a smile and she told us about her humble and heroic life, I saw that the bombings had awakened her sense of hate and action, but not fear.

It was clear to me that that girl's moral process and conscience--in her capacity as a prototype of her people--were not the result of chance or the mechanical reaction to aggression, but were the very deep-rooted result of a unique social system and subconscious ideological work.

There I also felt the need to study others who, with their modern techniques and "superior" had not been able to deter the Vietnamese people, Dr Barral concluded.