

## Implies Tough Attitude toward N. Korea

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**WASHINGTON** John McCain has resurrected the ghosts of the Vietnam War in a rip-roaring appeal to patriotism. McCain delivered a classic message at the Republican Party convention of a revival of fighting spirit that might just as well have been entitled, "Never again." Some war veterans, wearing American Legion caps and medals earned in Vietnam, seemed close to tears as he vowed "to keep the country I love safe" if elected in November.

McCain dramatized the point with the fullest description he's given so far of the suffering he endured in five and a half years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi after his Navy plane was shot down. He was "dumped in a dark cell and left to die, he said, after parachuting into a lake in the middle of the Vietnamese capital with two broken arms and a broken leg.

McCain's tone contrasted totally with that of the Democratic Party candidate, Barack Obama, who has called for withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq by early 2010. Although McCain refrained from pillorying Obama for his views, he left no doubt of what he thought of any sign of weakness. No American presidential candidate has dared talk about war in such emotion-laden terms including Republicans. They, after all, have difficulty shaking the legacy of the failure of Gerald Ford, as Richard Nixon's successor, to stop North Vietnam's final offensive in the first four months of 1975.

McCain presented a saga of endurance and willpower against the enemy, the kind of story that he and his strategists believe should stand as an example for all Americans. As delegates cheered again and again, McCain spoke of the agonies he survived, of how his weight fell to 100 pounds, of the torture inflicted by his captors.

McCain portrayed that ordeal as having deepened his patriotism, his will to fight and inspired the core line of his appeal for votes in November. "I fell in love with my country when I was a prisoner in someone else's," he said. "My country saved me, and I cannot forget it." He would, "fight for her as long as I draw breath, so help me God."

McCain's remarks sharpened comparisons between him and Obama, who was a child in the care of his grandparents when McCain was in prison in Hanoi and who never served in the armed forces. "We face many threats in this dangerous world, but I'm not afraid of them," he said, in a dig at his foe. "I know how the military works, what it can do, what it can do better, and what it should not do. I know how the world works. I know the good and the evil in it."

The fight talk suggests McCain's lack of interest in negotiations with America's enemies. Although McCain did not mention North Korea, anyone listening to him would have to think he would oppose any agreement that failed to verify that the North had given up all its nuclear activities as a prerequisite for aid. He suggested what he thought of negotiations in remarks on the Russian invasion of Georgia. "I will work to establish good relations with Russia so we need not fear a return of the Cold War," he said, "but we can't turn a blind eye to aggression and international lawlessness."

Clearly, McCain had memories of Vietnam in mind. Less clear was how he proposed to carry on the fight. In his speech he said nothing about building up U.S. forces in case of a breakdown in negotiations with enemies near and far. Nor did he talk up the danger of war on multi-fronts or discuss that of nuclear war

other than to say Iran "remains the chief state sponsor of terrorism and on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons. "

But is McCain thinking of a military build-up? That conclusion hardly seems an exaggeration, at least to judge from his final invocation to glory. "Stand up, stand up, stand up and fight," he told the wildly applauding throng, calling for heroism based on patriotism. "We`re Americans, and we never give up. We never quit."

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