

North Vietnamese that were in South Vietnam. We were never allowed to attack them. All we could do is trail them and inform the South Vietnamese. If they violated international waters, then they would finally be taken under fire.

Then we had a procedure called protective reaction, which meant in effect that if you were flying over North Vietnam on reconnaissance you could not attack anything on the ground unless they fired at you first. Of course, you know I have flown a lot of times, and you get back to your base, and you have bullet holes all through your wings and everything else, and you didn't know when it happened.

But the rule was that you don't attack the man that is shooting at you until he shoots at you first. And so, as I say, the restraints and the rules of engagement were nothing short of ridiculous.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Chairman, if I may just continue for a moment.

Mr. NICHOLS. Without objection.

Mr. McDONALD. You mentioned the fact that, as Chief of Naval Operations or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you were at the upper levels of the command pyramid or executive pyramid, and that you would have to be part of a team, so you basically support the presentation that was made, even though it would not be the way you would have conducted it had you been the one responsible for the overall decision.

In retrospect, there were instances, not many, but there were instances of those low down in the pyramid who strongly did object to the conduct of the war. I am not speaking of the draft-dodgers or the war protesters. I am speaking of those that were assigned to the missions who objected to the fact that they were fighting a no-win effort, where there was not a clear objective.

Particularly I remember Lt. Comdr. Larry Baldorf who came from a distinguished Navy family, his wife from a distinguished Navy family, Annapolis graduate, Navy test pilot, who finally began to write letters. You probably received some, Admiral Sharp received some, objecting to flying off a carrier deck carrying one or two bombs, bombing insignificant targets, and saying, "I am willing to fight when I fight to win, but I am not willing to play this game."

I am just curious. Is that a point of frustration to you when you start running up against that type of thing?

Admiral MOORER. No, it is not a case of frustration. For instance, when we were bombing Hanoi with the B-52's out of Thailand, one of the pilots refused to go. He had some hangup about killing civilians. You have people—those kinds of situations come up, I think, in any war.

Mr. McDONALD. Baldorf was different. He was critical because he said we are not allowed to fight to win the war; we do not have an objective of winning, so why should I be here in an undeclared conflict risking multimillion dollar planes, education, for an uncertain, unclear objective where my hands are tied behind my back in the process of my fighting? That is going the other way. It is a different situation.

Admiral MOORER. That is right. He has a perfect right to say that. What I am saying is if we get into a war and you let everyone