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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *dy*

*To Dinky*

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS FOR  
CLEMENCY BOARD SIGNINGS  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1974

ON SEPTEMBER 16, I ANNOUNCED MY PROGRAM OF CLEMENCY.

I AM PLEASED THAT ON THIS THANKSGIVING WEEKEND I AM ABLE TO  
ANNOUNCE MY FIRST DECISIONS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
PRESIDENTIAL CLEMENCY BOARD INVOLVING EIGHTEEN INDIVIDUAL  
CASES OF DRAFT EVASION ~~OR DESERTION~~.

I WANT TO THANK EACH OF YOU HERE FOR SHARING THIS  
CEREMONIAL MOMENT. I ALSO WANT TO THANK THE  
CLEMENCY BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR HARD WORK.

SIGNING CEREMONIES OFTEN MARK THE END OF A PROJECT.

BUT TODAY THESE SIGNINGS REPRESENT THE BEGINNING OF THE

DIFFICULT TASK OF ADMINISTERING CLEMENCY. INSTEAD OF

SIGNING THESE DECISIONS IN A ROUTINE WAY, I WANT TO USE

THIS OCCASION TO UNDERLINE THE COMMITMENT OF MY ADMINISTRATION

TO AN EVEN-HANDED POLICY OF CLEMENCY.

WHEN I INITIATED THIS POLICY; I DETAILED THE REASONS  
FOR MY DECISION ON THIS VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM. I CONSIDER  
THEM AS VALID TODAY AS WHEN I FIRST ANNOUNCED THEM. WE DO  
NOT RESOLVE DIFFICULT ISSUES BY IGNORING THEM.

THERE ARE HONEST DIFFERENCES THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BE  
DISCUSSED. BUT DISCUSSION MUST NOT OVERSHADOW THE NEED  
FOR ACTION AND FAIR AND OPEN RESOLUTION OF THE CLEMENCY PROBLEM.

OF THE EIGHTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS THE BOARD HAS MADE  
TO ME, I HAVE REVIEWED EACH ONE AND HAVE PERSONALLY APPROVED  
EACH ONE. INFORMATION ON THESE CASES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE  
BY THE PRESS OFFICE. I BELIEVE THIS MORE DETAILED INFORMATION  
WILL HELP TO EXPLAIN THE BASIS FOR MY DECISION IN EACH INSTANCE.  
OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLE MORE INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE TO THE  
BOARD AND TO ME ON WHICH TO BASE THESE DECISIONS. BUT TO MAKE  
PUBLIC THE COMPLETE FILE ON EACH INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE A NEGATION  
OF HIS RIGHT TO PRIVACY.

IN EACH CASE, HOWEVER, THE LAW WAS VIOLATED AND  
EACH HAS RECEIVED PUNISHMENT. THE POWER OF CLEMENCY  
CAN LOOK TO REASONS FOR THESE ACTIONS WHICH THE LAW CANNOT.  
UNLIKE GOD'S LAW, MAN'S LAW CANNOT PROBE INTO THE HEART OF  
HUMAN BEINGS. THE BEST WAY WE CAN DO THIS IS TO OFFER  
CLEMENCY AND TO PROVIDE A WAY FOR OFFENDERS TO EARN THEIR  
WAY BACK INTO THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN SOCIETY, ~~BY ALTERNATE~~  
~~SERVICE.~~



LAST WEEK, I TRAVELED OVERSEAS IN SEARCH FOR PEACE.

YET WE CANNOT EFFECTIVELY SEEK PEACE ABROAD WITH OTHER NATIONS --

UNTIL WE HAVE MADE PEACE AT HOME. WHILE AMERICA REACHES

OUT TO THOSE WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISAGREED IN THE PAST,

WE MUST DO NO LESS WITHIN OUR OWN NATION. SOMETIMES IT

SEEMS EASIER FOR US TO FORGIVE FOREIGN ENEMIES THAN FELLOW

AMERICANS AT HOME.

LET US CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR A SOFTENING OF THE  
NATIONAL ANIMOSITY CAUSED BY DIFFERENCES OVER THE VIETNAM WAR.

WE WILL NOT FORGET THE SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO SERVED  
AND DIED IN VIETNAM. IN THEIR HONOR, AMERICA MUST SEEK  
WAYS TO LIVE UP TO THE IDEALS OF FREEDOM AND CHARITY THEY  
FOUGHT TO PRESERVE.

THESE FIRST FEW DECISIONS DO NOT END THE UNFINISHED

BUSINESS OF CLEMENCY.

~~THE CONTROVERSY IS NOT STOPPED~~

~~WITH THE STROKE OF A PEN.~~

BUT THE TASK OF FORMAL

FORGIVENESS IS UNDERWAY.

I HOPE IT MARKS THE BEGINNING

OF PERSONAL FORGIVENESS IN THE HEARTS OF ALL AMERICANS

TROUBLED BY VIETNAM AND ITS AFTERMATH.

END OF TEXT