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Office of the White House Press Secretary  
-----THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

When I took office 13 months ago, the status of persons who had evaded military service or had deserted the Armed Forces during the Vietnam conflict remained unresolved. In furtherance of our national commitment to justice and mercy, I established on September 16, 1974, a Program for the Return of Vietnam Era Draft Evaders and Military Deserters, because I believed these young Americans should have the opportunity to contribute a share in the rebuilding of peace among ourselves and with all nations.

As part of this program, I established the Presidential Clemency Board to review the cases of evaders and deserters who had been convicted of these offenses. In addition, other parts of the program were administered by the Department of Justice and by the Department of Defense.

The Clemency Board, under the chairmanship of Charles E. Goodell, has considered approximately 15,500 applications on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of making recommendations to me. As I had intended, the Board gave careful attention to each individual case and did not simply recommend blanket amnesty for whole categories of applicants. The Board has worked diligently to fulfill its very important assignment.

Now that the Presidential Clemency Board has completed its consideration of all its cases, I have signed an Executive Order terminating operations of the Board and transferring to the Attorney General whatever administrative duties may remain to be completed.

I want to thank the members of the Board for their personal contribution and hard work. As a result of their efforts, many deserving young Americans will have been helped to achieve full re-entry into their respective communities.

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