

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Dallas, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Within the last few months we have witnessed a new outbreak of international terrorism, some of which has been directed against persons who carry the important burdens of diplomacy. Last summer we were grieved by the brutal murders of our Ambassador to Lebanon and his Economic Counsellor. We also have seen a series of acts of violence directed against diplomatic missions in the United States for which we have host country responsibilities. These acts cannot and will not be tolerated in the United States, nor should they be tolerated anywhere in the world. Preventing or punishing such acts is a prime concern of this government and one which I will pursue with all the force of this office.

Today I am pleased to affix my signature to three documents which once again demonstrate the commitment of the United States to sustain its struggle against international terrorism. Through our efforts and with others in the United Nations the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents was adopted in 1972. A few years previously we had supported the adoption in the Organization of American States of the Convention To Prevent and Punish the Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion That Are of International Significance. The Senate gave its advice and consent to the ratification of both of these Conventions, and implementing legislation was requested from the Congress which would enable us to discharge our obligations under them. I congratulate the Members of Congress whose prompt and effective efforts have made this bill available for my signature. The Act for the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (H. R. 15552) will serve as a significant law enforcement tool for us to deal more effectively with the menace of terrorism and it will assist us in discharging our important responsibilities under the two international Conventions which I am today authorizing for ratification.

An important feature of this bill will be to give extraterritorial effect to our law in order to enable us to punish those who commit offenses against internationally protected persons, wherever those offenses may occur. With this law we will in many cases in the future have an improved basis to request extradition and, if granted, to prosecute such criminal terrorists as those who murdered Ambassador Meloy and Economic Counsellor Waring.

I call upon all nations to join in this vital endeavor. I particularly urge those countries which have not become Parties to these Conventions to do so.

I hope that a new initiative against terrorism as it affects innocent persons and disrupts the fabric of society will be addressed at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. The full force of world opinion and diplomatic action must be brought to bear on this threat to world peace and order.

I pledge our full support to any constructive proposals to combat terrorism. I am, therefore, happy to sign this Act and these Instruments of Ratification as a re-affirmation of the commitment of the United States Government to bring an end to terrorism.

GERALD R. FORD

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