

**The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/24/76 - Remarks at 7th Annual Convention of the League of Families of Missing in Action” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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- THANK YOU, BUS (Mills is Ch of Bd)
- COLONEL EARL HOPPER (Incoming Ch of Bd)
- CAROL BATES
- CONGRESSMAN SONNY MONTEGOMERY ?
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS / LADIES AND  
GENTLEMEN

**THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .**

**MISSING IN ACTION ADDRESS - JULY 24, 1976**

I AM HONORED TO MEET ONCE AGAIN WITH THIS

COURAGEOUS ASSEMBLY OF AMERICANS WHOSE LOVED ONES REMAIN

UNACCOUNTED FOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

YOU HAVE BORNE A HEAVY BURDEN WITH INCREDIBLE

COURAGE.

EVERY CITIZEN IN THIS COUNTRY ADMIRES YOUR

BRAVERY, YOUR DIGNITY AND YOUR PERSISTENCE.

THROUGH LONG MONTHS AND YEARS OF TRIAL, YOU  
HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED BY THE LOVE OF YOUR MISSING MEN AND  
BY YOUR LOVE OF THE COUNTRY THOSE MEN HAVE DEFENDED.

I AM PROUD OF YOU, AND PROUD OF YOUR MEN.

BUT MY ADMIRATION IS NOT ENOUGH. THE  
GRATITUDE OF THIS NATION IS NOT ENOUGH.

YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES MUST BE ASSURED OF A CONTINUING  
COMMITMENT FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN A FULL ACCOUNTING  
OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION OR STILL LISTED AS PRISONERS OF WAR.

YOU HAVE THAT COMMITMENT FROM THIS ADMINISTRATION.

IT IS A LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT; IT IS STILL AN ACTIVE

COMMITMENT; AND FOR ME IT IS A VERY PERSONAL COMMITMENT;

AND THAT IS WHY I'M HERE TONIGHT.

WHEN I CAME HOME FROM THE PACIFIC THIRTY YEARS AGO,

I JOINED SEVERAL VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND A SHORT TIME  
LATER BECAME A MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

DURING MY SERVICE AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE,

I WORKED ON M.I.A. PROBLEMS, ON AN INDIVIDUAL, CASE-BY-  
CASE BASIS, DURING BOTH THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM CONFLICTS.

AS A CONGRESSMAN, I MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES HERE IN WASHINGTON AND BACK  
HOME IN GRAND RAPIDS•

I DID NOT FORGET YOU THEN, AND I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN  
YOU NOW•

ONE OF MY VERY LAST MEETINGS AS VICE PRESIDENT WAS  
WITH YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS•

A YEAR AGO, AS PRESIDENT I ATTENDED THIS CONVENTION,

AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER MET AGAIN WITH YOUR BOARD OF

DIRECTORS IN THE CABINET ROOM AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

WE ARE EMPLOYING EVERY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ACCOUNT

FOR YOUR LOVED ONES.

LET ME ASSURE YOU TONIGHT THAT

I WILL CONTINUE THAT EFFORT.

WE MUST BE HONEST WITH OURSELVES. THIS IS A

FRUSTRATING AND PAINSTAKING PROCESS.

IT IS A TRAGIC FACT THAT INFORMATION ON EVERY

MISSING MAN MAY NEVER BE AVAILABLE, REGARDLESS OF WHAT

IS DONE.

FURTHERMORE, WE ARE DEALING WITH A GOVERNMENT THAT

HAS DEMONSTRATED LITTLE CONCERN FOR YOUR FEELINGS.

THE VIETNAMESE CLAIM TO HAVE ESTABLISHED AGENCIES

TO SEARCH FOR THE MISSING.

BUT THUS FAR THEY HAVE

WITHHELD THIS INFORMATION

TOTALLY WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION.

WE HAVE OFFERED TO CARRY OUT THE SEARCHES OURSELVES,

OR TO ENLIST A NEUTRAL GOVERNMENT OR THE RED CROSS IN THIS

HUMANITARIAN SEARCH.

THUS FAR, NONE OF THESE OFFERS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED•

BUT WE WILL PERSIST; WE WILL KEEP TRYING•

WE ARE WILLING TO TALK WITH THE VIETNAMESE•

AT MY DIRECTION, WE HAVE EXCHANGED MESSAGES WITH THEM

INDICATING OUR WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS OUTSTANDING ISSUES

BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES•

WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT OUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS

TO OBTAIN AN ACCOUNTING FOR OUR SERVICEMEN WHO ARE

MISSING IN ACTION.

WITHOUT A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE M.I.A.

ISSUE, NO FURTHER PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONS IS POSSIBLE.

I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT

DECLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION RELATED TO M.I.A.'s.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, I DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM

WITH MEMBERS OF MY STAFF AND DIRECTED THAT PROGRESS BE

MADE IN THAT REGARD. I AM INFORMED THAT PROGRESS HAS

BEEN MADE, AND MORE PROGRESS WILL BE MADE.

EVERY ONE IN THIS ROOM HAS DEMONSTRATED A STRENGTH

AND A RESOLVE WHICH MAKE YOU EQUAL TO THE BURDENS YOU

ARE CARRYING. YOUR COURAGE HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION

TO ME AND TO MILLIONS OF YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS.

YOUR LOVED ONES HAVE NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN.

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABANDONED.

I PROMISE YOU I WILL NOT REST UNTIL THE FULLEST

POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING OF YOUR LOVED ONES HAS BEEN MADE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT