

**The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “House Speech Assassination of Dan Mitrione, August 11, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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Jerry's speech in

Office Copy  
House  
8-11-70

Mr. Speaker, I raise my voice today in the hope that peoples of the world of whatever persuasion, creed or nationality will realize that the death Monday of an American citizen in Montevideo, Uruguay at the hands of Communist terrorists is a senseless, savage, cowardly act; it is now clear for all the world to see how these people plan to bring about changes in their society. The wave of revulsion which has followed this brutal act proclaims the total bankruptcy of terrorism, from whatever end of the spectrum, as an instrument of political action.

Dan A. Mitrione, Chief Public Safety Advisor of our AID program of assistance to the Uruguayan police was doing his job, helping the Uruguayan police to be more effective in providing service to the public in a modern and humane manner. Indeed he was trying to help the police assume their proper role in Uruguayan society. His assassination at the hands of the subversive Movement for National Liberation bodes ill for the continued growth of this society.

It has been suggested by some that this tragedy raises questions as to whether the United States should be engaged in this activity. I submit that it proves <sup>instead</sup> how important it is for us to persevere in this essential task.

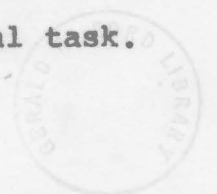
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The frequent reference we have heard to "political prisoners" is totally misleading. The MLN demanded release of all "political prisoners" held by the Government as ransom. It should be noted that these people are not being held nor were they convicted because of their political beliefs. They are criminals arrested for murder, bank robbery, extortion and the like. Constant reference to them otherwise by us all gives an erroneous impression as to why they are being held by the Uruguayan Government.

I have seen some reference to this subversive group that it has a "Robin Hood" image. Dan Mitrione's murder should dispell any doubt that this group is anything but a Communist-led gang intent on the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of President Pacheco Areco.

I view with equal concern the plight of Mr. Claude Fly, an American agriculturist in the employe of the Uruguay Government who is still being held by the terrorists. I am confident that the Uruguayan government and particularly the Uruguayan police did all in their power to obtain the release of Mr. Mitrione. I am confident that they will continue to be unwavering in their efforts to effect Mr. Fly's release and that of the

Brazilian Consul, Mr. Aloysio Mares Dias Comide.

I commend the tireless efforts the American Ambassador, Charles Adair, the many officials in the Department of State who have worked tirelessly for the past week in an effort to effect Mitrione's release, and I especially commend Mr. Byron Engle, Director of the Office of Public Safety in AID for the leading role he played in this effort. Expressions of concern by the Pope ~~and~~ ~~xxx~~ lead us to hope that the subversives will bend to public opinion and release the remaining hostages.

M r. Mitrione's body is being flown back tonight to his home town of Richmond, Indiana for burial and the tribute of his former neighbors and friends. The Uruguayan Government will pay its last tribute to him before the plane leaves tonight bearing his body and grieving wife and children away from the locale of his murder. His comrades in the police force there will have the job of bringing to justice those responsible for his brutal murder.

This government must do all in its power to assist the ~~Uruguayan~~ ~~Uruguayan~~ Government to assure that the assassins pay the price for their crime and that such crimes are condemned throughout the world.

The coldblooded murder of Mr. Mitrione shocks us all and prompts us to renew our prayers for those still being held.