

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 23, 1975

Brent:

I would like to speak personally with  
you about this sometime today.

Jack Marsh

SAM STEIGER  
3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

125 CANNON BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
202-223-4573

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-60-1-20-1

467  
GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
5015 FEDERAL BUILDING  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85025  
602-251-4041

January 22, 1975

The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.  
Counsellor to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear John:

You will recall our past conversations about my concern for the plight of my friend Lawrence Lunt who has long been imprisoned in Cuba for activities said to have been conducted upon direction of the CIA. I know that you are also aware of the interest expressed by the Leadership here in the House and of various other Members of the Senate in resolving this situation and in support of the efforts of the Vatican. A letter advising you of this interest is attached.

Last Monday, I am told, the State Department received a communication from the Cubans offering to release Lunt upon condition that Lolita Lebron, a U.S. citizen sentenced to 56 years in prison for participating in the shooting incident of March 1954 in the House Gallery.

This, I understand, is not an offer in the nature of an exchange of prisoners, but rather an offer making Mrs. Lebron's release a condition precedent to their rescinding the remainder of Larry Lunt's thirty-year sentence.

The State Department, I understand, has referred the matter to the Justice Department who are currently objecting that a release of Mrs. Lebron would pervert the criminal justice system.

This matter can be speedily solved by the use of the President's powers of executive clemency in the form of commutation of sentence to the amount already served. This method of release by commutation has no overtures of forgiveness as does a pardon and does not involve the restoration of civil rights. Also, it does not involve the consent of Lolita Lebron and permit her to attach political considerations of her own as does the parole procedure.

January 22, 1975

-2-

John O. Marsh, Jr.

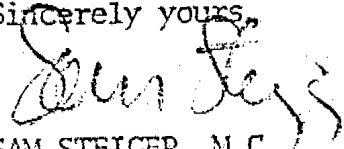
I cannot imagine that there would be serious Congressional criticism to release Mrs. Lebron upon these circumstances. She has now been jailed for over twenty years and her continued detention merely adds impetus to the efforts of the Puerto Rican nationalists.

I can understand why the Justice Department is so cautious, given the dramatic circumstances of this case, but apart from my concern for Larry, I would think it regrettable if this situation should be extended so as to provide an excuse for more disturbances in Puerto Rico -- to say nothing of our relations with Cuba. It would be a pity if the exercise of extreme caution and fear of Congressional criticism should rescind this offer and provide the Cubans and Puerto Ricans of a radical persuasion with an opportunity to make trouble.

From Larry's point of view, his situation as you know is quite desperate. He not only has a family of his own but his mother, I understand, is most gravely ill.

With many thanks for your continued assistance in this tragic matter, I am

Sincerely yours,

  
SAM STEIGER, M.C.

SS:pk  
Enclosure

*Congress of the United States*

*House of Representatives*

*Washington, D.C. 20515*

February 27, 1974

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congressman Sam Steiger has brought to our attention the tragic situation of his friend, Mr. Lawrence K. Lunt, and of the opportunity currently available to secure the release of this political prisoner.

It is our understanding that the Cuban Government, acting in response to a plea of the Holy Father which was made upon the request of Ambassador Lodge, has officially proposed that the remainder of Mr. Lunt's thirty year sentence, imposed for activities alleged by the Cuban Government to have been undertaken on behalf of the United States, be commuted upon the condition that the Portuguese Government also release Captain Rodriguez Peralta, a Cuban Army officer, convicted on similar charges for activities in Guinea (Bissau) and sentenced in 1972, to ten years imprisonment by a Portuguese Military Court. We are informed that, as the young Cuban officer has been severely wounded, the Cubans are anxious for his return and that they have reiterated this proposal, first made to the Holy See, to both Mr. Lunt's wife and to the Belgian Government.

It appears that Mr. Lunt's position is quite desperate in that, after nine years in prison, he is now over fifty years old and has a wife and three minor children. The prospects of twenty-one more years imprisonment in Cuba do not appear very encouraging; and therefore the successful negotiation of this proposed exchange may be his only opportunity for freedom. Moreover, we understand that his mother in Colorado is hospitalized and is in her final illness.


It is encouraging to know that the Department of State has recently undertaken to persuade the Portuguese Government to participate in this proposal for the sake of the overriding humanitarian considerations involved. We understand that the Portuguese Government has now informed our Embassy in Lisbon that it is currently considering the matter and that no definite decision has yet been made.

The Honorable  
Henry A. Kissinger  
Page Two

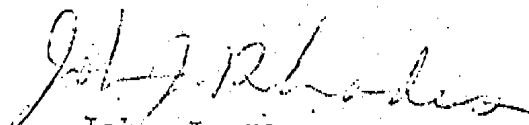
Thus, it is because of our government's obligation to this American citizen that we commend the Department of State for this undertaking and ask that the Portuguese Government be fully and adequately informed as to our concern and that of other Members of Congress. We hope that this matter will be successfully resolved in accordance with our country's friendship and mutual regard for its NATO ally, and that due notice be taken of the urgent humanitarian considerations that are involved. In that this situation has been permitted to drag on since the Cubans first proposed it in 1971, it seems that speedy and effective measures should be taken to resolve it while the opportunity still exists.

With all personal good wishes,

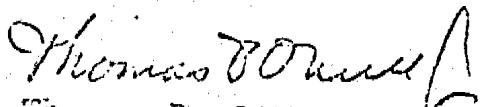
Sincerely yours,



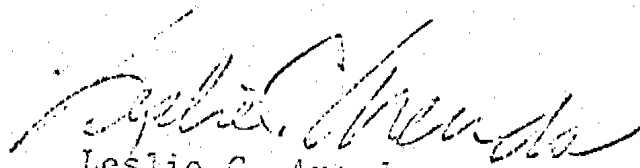
Carl Albert  
Speaker of the House  
of Representatives



John J. Rhodes  
Minority Leader



Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.  
Majority Leader



Leslie C. Arends  
Minority Whip



John J. McFall  
Majority Whip

## Cuba Offers Trade: 'Spy' for Prisoner

Associated Press

Cuba has proposed to the United States a prisoner exchange involving the release of an alleged CIA agent for a Puerto Rican nationalist convicted in the 1954 U.S. House of Representatives shooting incident, informed sources say.

Under the proposal, Cuba would release Lawrence K. Lunt, a Massachusetts native arrested in June 1965 on charges of espionage and harboring counter-revolutionaries, the sources said. Lunt, now about 50, was sentenced to a 30-year jail term in 1966.

**IN EXCHANGE**, Cuba has asked for the release of Lolita Lebron, one of four Puerto Rican nationalists who wounded five congressmen in the House chamber on March 1, 1954.

It was understood the proposal has been referred to the Justice Department, but Justice and State Department officials declined comment.

Mrs. Lebron, now about 55, was sentenced to 16 to 50 years in prison on a charge of assault with a deadly weapon. She is an inmate at the federal prison in Alderson, W. Va. Her three male companions were given stiffer sentences on their

convictions of assault with intent to kill.

A heroine to many supporters of Puerto Rican independence, Mrs. Lebron has described herself as the ringleader of the group.

LUNT is one of about eight American prisoners in Cuban jails.

He left Massachusetts as a young man and became a ranchhand in the West. After U.S. Air Force service in World War II and the Korean War, he married a Belgian and settled in Cuba to raise cattle.

Partly because of his marriage to a non-American and partly because expansion of the cattle industry was a goal of the Cuban revolution, he was allowed to remain in Cuba after Prime Minister Fidel Castro came to power.

The Cubans reportedly claimed that Lunt, during a family visit to Washington in 1961, was recruited by the CIA to gather information about conditions on the island. He was convicted in 1966 after a six-month trial.

One State Department official said that to his knowledge, Lunt was not employed by the CIA or any other U.S. government agency prior to his arrest in Cuba.