

**MEMORANDUM**

**NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**

January 23, 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: DONALD RUMSFELD  
 THRU: GENERAL SCOWCROFT /S/   
 FROM: STEPHEN LOW <sup>cc</sup>  
 SUBJECT: The Lawrence Lunt case: Call to you from Mr. Wainwright

ON-FILE NSC  
 RELEASE  
 INSTRUCTIONS  
 APPLY

At the request of your office I responded to Mr. John T. Wainwright's call to you. Wainwright's concern was related to the matter of Lawrence Lunt, who is an American imprisoned in Cuba. Wainwright said that he had discussed this matter with you in the past and that he believed you would have to deal with it later on, and he requested that I inform you of our conversation.

By way of background:

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He did so anyway, together with his Belgian wife, and lived for some time on her family's ranch there. He may have engaged in black market activities while there, but in any case, he was eventually imprisoned, tried and convicted of espionage by Cuban authorities. He has served ten years of a thirty-year sentence. His family in this country has brought considerable pressure on the government, both directly and through members of Congress, to obtain his release, and their lawyer, Wainwright, has been extremely active both within the executive and the Congress on Lunt's behalf. At one point in the past the Cubans had agreed to exchange Lunt for a Cuban prisoner in Portugal but later reneged on that offer after the change in government in Portugal.

Within the last week the Cuban government has informed us through the Belgian government that it would agree to release Lunt if Lolita Lebron were released from the federal penitentiary in Alderson, West Virginia. Lebron was a member of the Puerto Rican group which

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attacked and wounded a number of U.S. Congressmen on the floor of the House in 1954. She was captured, convicted and sentenced to 16 to 50 years' imprisonment. Two years ago she became eligible for parole, but refused to apply unless the other Puerto Ricans arrested with her also were released and she was granted amnesty.

Wainwright has been in touch with everyone in State and Justice involved in the case. He knows that Justice is not inclined to recommend accession to the demand but is aware that the matter is under study. His proposal is that the President commute Lebron's sentence, which is not a pardon and would not require a request from her. For this reason Wainwright believes the matter must ultimately pass through your office.

Whether through Wainwright or others, the matter has now appeared in the press in most of its detail.

I pointed out to Wainwright that action by the USG to commute a sentence in response to a demand of this kind would inevitably carry implications for our policy on terrorism. He noted that a precedent existed from the time when a Cuban member of Fidel Castro's delegation to the U.N. in New York was released by us after conviction for a shooting. I pointed out that this involved a Cuban member of a foreign delegation, not an American as in the Lebron case, but I noted that the matter was under careful study and we were fully aware of his concerns.

The matter is under consideration by State and Justice, and we are following it closely. Initially, at least, we are not inclined to recommend acceptance of the Cuban proposal.

cc: Philip W. Buchen

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