

January 17, 1979

Mr. James Carter
President
United States of America
White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Carter:

We, the Political Bureau of the PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DE LOS TRABAJADORES PUERTORRIQUEÑOS (P RTP), are writing to you on behalf of the four nationalist political prisoners Oscar Collazo, Irving Flores, Rafael Cancel and Lolita Lebrón. It is widely known in Puerto Rico that their case is on your desk for consideration at this moment. As ideological and practical heirs and disciples of their tradition and principles of love, dedication and sacrifice for our country, we feel the need and duty to intercede for their liberation.

There are unbridgeable differences between you and us, inasmuch as we believe and struggle for the independence and freedom of our country and the end of exploitation of our people and resources by the interests that run your country.

We harbour no illusions about the human rights policy you advocate. We understand the political considerations that obstruct the implementation of such a policy on a truly human level.

Nevertheless, we feel there are issues between the government of the United States and the people of Puerto Rico that can be resolved favorably for both sides. Regardless of how opposed our interests may be in the final analysis, there are areas in which agreement can be mutually beneficial. It is our impression that you are sensitive to this principle and will understand that our political prisoners, -the four nationalist and Pablo Marciano and Nydia Cuevas- are a case in point.

Your human rights policy has a hollow ring to it as long as they are still imprisoned. They are, after all, the oldest political prisoners in the hemisphere, and Marciano and Cuevas did not harm anyone.

They do as much for the cause of independence and freedom of Puerto Rico imprisoned as they would if they were free. Their cause has won support much wider and deeper than the cause of independence itself. You are of course aware that all four ex-governors, the municipal assemblies, twelve of your own congressmen, and other leaders of Governor Romero's party have advocated their unconditional release.

It is our understanding that Governor Romero's opposition to their release may be a factor in your decision.

We do not know what your intelligence reports concerning Governor Romero are but we assure you Romero is on his way to becoming as untenable as the Shah, or Somoza, or Nixon. Nevertheless, it is not necessary for you to accept our assessment to understand that he has made a colossal political error which you need not share with him.

If Mr. Edward Kennedy were to present his National Health Insurance Plan in Puerto Rico, there is no doubt that Mr. Romero would label him a communist.

In spite of Phillips Exeter and Yale, (or perhaps because of) Mr. Romero is so servile and obsequious on some questions as to be almost useless, if not counterproductive for you. The black leaders who collaborate with Prime Minister Smith in Zimbabwe would probably serve as a rough analogy. Out and out Uncle Toms in the United States would be an example closer to home. His recent actions regarding the flags and anthems for the Pan American Games are an example of the errors his mentality provokes him into.

Romero's argument regarding the violence the nationalist might provoke is patently absurd and even false. We don't need them as an issue for struggle. The causes of our struggle are deeper than repression itself. We have been circumspect in working for their liberation, however. Everyone knows that the case is before you. Whatever we do henceforth regarding this matter depends strictly upon your decision.

Already the actions for their liberation have become increasingly militant. Marches and petitions have given way to the occupation of the statue of Liberty, the seizure of the Chilean Consulate by Pablo and Nydia on July fourth, the seizure of UPI offices in San Juan....

We abhor violence, and long for the day when it will not be necessary to resolve problems among peoples or governments. Nevertheless, that day has not arrived, and like you, we must deal with political realities.

We are sure you remember Sir William Stephenson's (Intrepid) synthesis of "the most striking element" of World War II. He very rightly said..."the great engines of destruction did not determine the outcome. The invinci-

bility of free people and the ingenuity of free minds did.
Or perhaps, in a vein closer to you, the story of David and Goliath.
This is not a threat, for we are both above that. We only wish to
point out the political and military vulnerability a negative decision
would entail for you.

Your decision will be our reply. We expect that before March
first, they will be here, where they belong. In the land they have
so courageously defended and among the people that they love.

PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DE LOS TRABAJADORES
PUERTORRIQUEÑOS (P RTP)