



LE PRÉSIDENT
Réf. : 492/11/PT/JPD/VP/FY

**President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
U.S.A.**

Thursday, September 26th 2011

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Mr. President,

At the time of its 86th congress, the French Human Rights League, which is the oldest organization defending human rights in the world, decided to write to you about the case of the most ancient political prisoner in the world, Mr. Leonard Peltier.

As you certainly know, Mr. Peltier is one of the founder members of American Indian Movement, which fights for the rights of Native Americans and takes its inspiration from the Movement for Civic Rights in the 1960s.

Mr. Peltier had already been accused on November 1972, of aggression against FBI agents and imprisoned during five months... then discharged because it has been proven that the story had been arranged by the FBI, which regarded the AIM as a « subversive » organization, to compromise him.

Mr. Peltier was sentenced to life jail on 1977 by a Court of Fargo (North Dakota) for the murder of two federal agents on June 1975 at Pine Ridge, a murder which he always denied. The conditions of that trial were not fair : the judge rejected all the testimonies presented by M. Peltier's attorneys and admitted false evidences from federal agents, who pretended having identified Mr. Peltier whereas it was proved that they could not identify him from the place where they were. This judgement was at first confirmed in appeal but, in 1981, on the basis of new elements, a new law suit in appeal made it possible to establish by a ballistic expert report that the rifle having been used to pretend that Mr. Peltier was guilty could not be the weapon used for the crime. On September 22, 1986, the Court of Appeal concluded that the ballistic report produced during the first law suit was « suspect » and that the new evidence « could have changed the verdict of the first trial »... but confirmed the sentence !

In 1995, whereas Mr. Peltier was defended by the former Attorney General Ramsay Clark, the prosecutor Lynn Crook admitted in a new judicial process that « no evidence exists against Leonard Peltier », declared that the government « had never really accused him of direct murder » (for what he was condemned in 1977) and that in the event of a new trial « justice could not sentence him again ». But the Council of parole refused to release him for the only reason that he went on declaring he was innocent... which was contrary to the decision of the initial court.

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In 1996, President William Jefferson Clinton publically said : « I will not forget Leonard ». But he did not answer the request in grace in 2000, on the last day of his presidential mandate...

Today Mr. Peltier has been jailed for more than 35 years. It was formally established that he cannot be the author of the murder for which he was sentenced. It is obvious for any honest observer that he was accused only because of his commitment for the rights of Native Americans and of his militant activities.

So the USA hold the most ancient political prisoner in the world, a victim of an unbearable miscarriage of justice and of the systematic refusal to repair it, either by contempt of justice, or by political cowardice.

The French Human Rights League, which was founded in 1898 because of the Dreyfus case in which, already, an innocent had been condemned for discriminatory reasons, requires you today, Mr. President, to put an end to this situation which is in total opposition with the values and the principles that you have proclaimed since the beginning of your political career. We ask you to immediately make release Mr. Peltier, whose life was broken by injustice and discrimination and who has suffered, for more than one third of century, a form of slow death in the jails of your country.

You will understand that, by respect for the fight of the Native American people and of the activists who defend their rights, we decided to publish this letter.

With my high consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pierre Tartakowsky', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pierre Tartakowsky