

Hon. Don Edwards  
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STATEMENT

As a former Congressman from California for over thirty years, a former FBI agent and a citizen committed to justice, I wish to speak out strongly against the FBI's efforts in opposing the clemency appeal of Leonard Peltier.

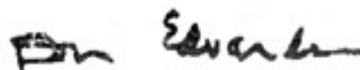
I served as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights in the U.S. House of Representatives. I took a personal interest in Mr. Peltier's case and became convinced that he never received a fair trial. Even the government now admits that the theory it presented against Mr. Peltier at trial was not true. After 24 years in prison, Leonard Peltier has served an inordinate amount of time and deserves the right to consideration of his clemency request on the facts and the merits.

The FBI continues to deny its improper conduct on Pine Ridge during the 1970's and in the trial of Leonard Peltier. The FBI used Mr. Peltier as a scapegoat and they continue to do so today. At every step of the way, FBI agents and leadership have opposed any admission of wrongdoing by the government, and they have sought to misrepresent and politicize the meaning of clemency for Leonard Peltier. The killing of FBI agents at Pine Ridge was reprehensible, but the government now admits that it cannot prove that Mr. Peltier killed the agents.

Granting clemency to Mr. Peltier should not be viewed as expressing any disrespect for the current agents or leadership of the FBI, nor would it represent any condoning of the killings that took place on Pine Ridge. Instead, clemency for Mr. Peltier would recognize past wrongdoing and the undermining of the government's case since trial. Finally, it would serve as a crucial step in the reconciliation and healing between the U.S. Government and Native Americans, on the Pine Ridge Reservation and throughout the country.

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12/14/00



Don Edwards (D-CA), ret.  
Member of Congress, 1963-1995