

EPISCOPAL CHURCHMEN for SOUTH AFRICA

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—For A Free Southern Africa—

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ACTION on RHODESIA

The United States is being shoved ever closer into war in Southern Africa.

The drive in Congress to lift sanctions against the newly proclaimed entity of Zimbabwe Rhodesia is grinding on with frantic haste. The Senate voted yesterday 89 to 7 to approve a defense authorization bill which includes an amendment ending economic sanctions against Zimbabwe Rhodesia. The bill is now at the House of Representatives for conference discussion. Speaker Tip O'Neill, according to today's WASHINGTON POST, predicted the House would concur. That vote will come very soon. The White House states that President Carter 'most probably' will veto any bill ending sanctions. Carter is on record as vowing 'to do everything I can, within my power, to prevail in this situation'.

An aide to Bishop Abel Muzowera, prime minister of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, is quoted in today's NEW YORK TIMES as exulting: 'We're halfway there', and foreign minister David Mukome said: 'I am absolutely delighted'. The bishop has sent two representatives to Washington to help with the lobbying. North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms - who is leading the forces for lifting sanctions - has invited Bishop Muzowera himself to visit the USA; he is due in early July.

The Zimbabwe Rhodesia regime of Abel Muzowera/Ian Smith is desperate for sanctions to be lifted and for diplomatic recognition. Black African countries and the rest of the world condemns the regime. Salisbury is pinning its hopes on quick American succour. A revealing dispatch published in THE WASHINGTON POST on 9 June quoted a source in the Rhodesian capital: 'We've got the votes definitely in the Senate, and we think we've got them in the House as well. The fight for Zimbabwe Rhodesia is going to be won or lost on Capitol Hill.'

We, the American people, are being conned into the ongoing Rhodesian war - to save the hides of those 'We' in Salisbury. This must be stopped.

WIRE PHONE WRITE

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(and at their home offices)

President Jimmy Carter The White House
Washington, DC 20500 PHONE: (202) 456-1414
(support his stand, encourage him to exercise the veto if necessary)

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The US Senate launched a stampede on 15 May by voting 75 to 19 that the April elections in Rhodesia were free and that sanctions should be lifted. This 'sense of the Congress' resolution came after strenuous lobbying on the Hill by observers sent out by conservative US organizations, plus the assertedly liberal Freedom House of New York. (It was the Senate which two months earlier had tried to get approval for a quasi-official Congressional observer team for the Rhodesian exercise; the gambit failed when the House of Representatives refused to accede.) The burden of the observers' reports was that the elections - in spite of conditions in war-torn Zimbabwe - were the fairest held in Africa. Pressure was intense and frenzied from these quickie Yankee experts, most of whom had never been to the place and were hosted and guided by Ian Smith's security people.

Sounder views were readily available. An all party delegation from the British Parliament visited Washington in March and warned that the upcoming elections could be neither fair nor free. Constitutional law Professor Claire Palley of the University of Kent, drawing on her long experience in Southern Africa and with prior Rhodesian elections, went out four weeks ahead, and with the help of a wide circle of friends, detailed the preparatory softening up of the African population by the Rhodesian military and police, private armies of those black leaders now in power, a deluge of propaganda and other methods (Christian Bishop Abel Muzorewa made extensive use of 'spirit mediums' to strike fear into audiences), threats of job loss by urban white employers (Rhodesia suffers from massive unemployment), wholesale trucking of black voters to the polls by white farmers. The British Parliamentary Human Rights Group dispatched Liberal peer Lord Chitnis and Ms Eileen Sudworth of the Catholic Institute for International Relations to Rhodesia before the elections and they too did an authoritative dissection of the fraudulence of the proceedings. Lord Chitnis testified in Washington and spoke to government and legislative people, was politely listened to, and largely ignored. The US National Bar Association prepared a report at some Senators' request and concluded that the elections 'cannot be considered "fair and free" regardless of the alleged size of the voter turnout', that the constitution approved by whites only earlier in the year 'preserves existing power relationships in Rhodesia, and thereby denies majority rule' and, that lifting sanctions would breach US treaty obligations under the United Nations Charter,

As a matter of fact, lifting of sanctions and recognition of the Muzorewa/Smith regime is well underway, proceeding on a measured schedule which those cowboys in the Senate threaten to disrupt. Shortly after the new Tory government took over in Britain early in May, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance flew to London to confer with his counterpart, Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington. From this came an appreciation for the 'new reality', that there is an entity in place in Salisbury and it must be dealt with, even nurtured. The air of 'at least it's a beginning' permeates - summoning up like expressions from US officials when South Africa began its Turnhalle Conference four years ago, a monster which has grown into the Pretoria-sponsored 'national assembly' in Namibia today. The talk in London is of 'return to legality', meaning Salisbury would end its 14 year old rebellion and submit to the Crown, which would grant independence. There is scant talk of the so-called Anglo-American plan for an all parties conference, a deliberate distancing by the West from the Patriotic Front which is fighting for Zimbabwean independence. The British have installed a representative in Salisbury, and the US government is setting up an office in the British mission. The Brits have serious problems, though. The Commonwealth Conference meets in August in Lusaka, Zambia and both the Queen and Prime Minister Thatcher are to attend. High commissioners of 34 Commonwealth countries have warned Whitehall not to drop sanctions or recognize Salisbury. Formal recognition is on the back burner while efforts are being made to tinker with the constitution to water down a few of the whites-only entrenched clauses, to offer the result to a black referendum, and, that perennial task, to try to ease out Ian Smith.

Meanwhile the war goes on. The Patriotic Front is more tightly organized, and its leaders, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, have pledged vigorous pursuit of the liberation struggle. Zimbabwe Rhodesia's military commander, Peter Walls, abandoning hope of PF troops deserting to the new regime, predicts the heaviest fighting ahead. Despite backing from South Africa - as Pretoria elaborates on its Fortress Southern Africa - the Salisbury set-up is desperate. That's why it is reaching out for US support - right now. The American people are being tugged from there and pushed from here into the war in Southern Africa.