

October 20, 1971

EMERGENCY: STILL TIME TO STOP SENATE DEFIANCE OF U.N. EMBARGO ON CHROME

Senate and House Conferees are now meeting on the Military Procurement Bill (H.R. 8687) which the Senate amended to permit importation of chrome from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The bill must be acted upon again by the House and Senate and by the President. Therefore you should write or wire NOW to your Senators and Representative asking them to vote against the amendment. Write also to the President asking him to veto the bill if it passes as amended.

Undermining the U.N.

If this legislation stands, the U.S. will join South Africa and Portugal as the only countries publicly committed to breaking the embargo, imposed after the white Rhodesian minority government declared its independence rather than consent to move toward majority rule. The U.S. voted in the Security Council in 1966 that Rhodesia was a threat to the peace under Chapter Seven of the U.N. Charter. The U.S. voted for the imposition of increasingly strict embargoes under articles 25 and 41, which authorize action to carry out the charter and to give effect to the decisions of the Security Council. And, of course, originally the U.N. Charter was ratified by the Senate, and the U.N. Participation Act (under which the President implemented the embargo by an Executive Order) was passed by both Houses of Congress.

All this has been rejected by the Senate's action, which was taken chiefly under lobbying pressure from Union Carbide and Foote Mineral, which own the chrome mines, and in the absence of Presidential leadership to counter the pro-Rhodesian forces.

Aiding Racism

Spokesmen for the rebel Smith regime in Rhodesia have already stated that the Senate action strengthens them, that it shows "increasing sympathy for us". Since negotiations have been going on between Britain and Smith for several months, with Smith refusing any concessions toward majority rule, and with the African majority unconsulted during the negotiations, the Senate action specifically strengthens Smith's hand. For if the U.S. openly violates the sanctions, international pressure on the regime will collapse and the forces within Britain pushing for a sellout will be strengthened. Smith will appear to be vindicated in his steady move toward apartheid in the attempt to control the 95% of the Zimbabwean people who are black and in opposition.

No Chrome Scarcity

Only about 10% of the 900,000 tons of high-grade chrome used annually in the U.S. goes for defense purposes. The strategic stockpile amounts now to 5,344,000 tons, of which 2,225,000 tons are in excess of foreseeable needs and authorization to sell 1,300,000 tons has been requested of Congress. Priorities for use or possible rationing have not even entered the discussion. The right-wing complaint is that the Soviet Union is now supplying more than 50% of the chrome at inflated prices. But there are other sources and potential sources which the U.S. has not attempted to develop (for instance Japan has moved to develop facilities in Turkey, now the U.S.'s third source of chrome after the Soviet Union and South Africa). The purpose of the Senate move is not to help the United States but to aid Rhodesia, Union Carbide, and Foote Mineral.

ACT NOW

WRITE OR WIRE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE TO VOTE NO - ASK FOR A PRESIDENTIAL VETO