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CONGRESSMAN CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR.
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 1, 1973

ACTION IMPERATIVE -- REPEAL THE BYRD AMENDMENT

YOU ARE URGED TO:

1. Cable and write your Representatives and Senators to join the movement to negate the Byrd Amendment.
2. Contact the swing voters listed on the enclosed materials.
3. Urge all groups with whom you are affiliated to join this national effort to stop the U.S. from violating its international legal obligations.
4. Visit your Congressmen in Washington and at their district offices to explain your concern about illegal Rhodesian imports.
5. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper explaining the urgency of this issue.

Background:

Bills to stop importation of Rhodesian chrome and other "strategic" materials were introduced by Senator Humphrey (S. 1868) and Congressmen Don Fraser and Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (H.R. 8005) on May 22.

In the mounting effort to reverse U.S. support for the racist and illegal regimes of Southern Africa, priority must be given to the bipartisan campaign to repeal the Byrd Amendment. Under this infamous amendment, the United States imports goods from Rhodesia in blatant violation of its treaty obligations as a member of the United Nations.

Sanctions against the white minority regime in Southern Rhodesia which represents less than 5% of the population are beginning to have an impact. There is an acute shortage of foreign exchange; the transportation system is winding down and tourism and emigration to Rhodesia have fallen off, largely as a result of the heroic actions of the liberation movements. Even neighboring Zambia, vulnerable though it is, has made a courageous decision to keep closed its border with Southern Rhodesia at considerable economic cost. The Nixon Administration has made no contribution to the international effort to assist Zambia through this economic crisis. Most recently, the U.S. vetoed a Security Council resolution aimed at countering the impact of flagrant violations of the Rhodesian sanctions by asking states to repeal laws allowing imports from Southern Rhodesia and plugging up South African and Portuguese loopholes in the embargo.

The passage of the Byrd Amendment in the fall of 1971 was a significant psychological and economic boost to the regime. If we can repeal it this year, this action coupled with the African resistance inside Rhodesia, could be an even greater blow.

Sponsored by 24 Senators and 78 Congressmen, the bills would negate the statutory language authorizing the United States to break mandatory sanctions and thus help restore the U.S. to its position as a law-abiding member of the international community.

The enacting clause reads:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that section 5(a) of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945 (22 U.S.C. 287c (a)) amended by adding at the end thereof the following new sentence: "Section 10 of the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act (60 Stat. 596; 50 U.S.C. 98-98h) shall not apply to prohibitions or regulations established under the authority of this section."

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The Senate failed by a vote of 36-40 to rescind the Byrd Amendment last May 31; the House struck an amendment to counteract the Byrd Amendment on August 10 by 253-140.

Since it came into effect on January 1, 1972, the Rhodesian Chrome Amendment has not accomplished what its proponents claimed it would:

- it has not reduced chrome imports from the Soviet Union, but rather from Turkey, a NATO ally.
- it has not contributed to national security. National security was never in jeopardy. At the time of passage we had an over-abundance of chrome in the national stockpile. Presently the government is seeking Congressional authorization to sell off one half million tons of stockpiled chrome per year.
- it has not saved American jobs. In fact since the importation of Rhodesian ferrochrome, plans to close two American ferrochrome plants have been announced.

Instead...

- U.S. imports of Rhodesian goods have added \$13,300,000 in foreign exchange to Smith's illegal regime. Moreover U.S. trade now accounts for nearly 20% of all Rhodesian foreign commercial transactions. Without this Southern Rhodesian exports would have stagnated.

For further information contact:

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