Dear Representative:

The Congress will soon face a decision as to whether to lift sanctions against Rhodesia.

Much attention will be given to whether the election just completed in Rhodesia was free and fair, since this is one of the conditions for lifting sanctions laid down by the Case-Javits amendment. We have prepared a memorandum suggesting some factors to keep in mind when you evaluate the election results. (See enclosed "The Rhodesian Election: Free and Fair?") Though only preliminary reports are available at this time, we believe that there is already sufficient evidence to determine that the elections will not meet the test of the Case-Javits amendment.

The question of lifting sanctions, however, inevitably involves other significant foreign policy issues.

The critical question to ask about the situation in Rhodesia is "Will the elections end the war?" Observers of every political persuasion -- whether journalists, academics or government officials -- are convinced that it will not. Rhodesian military officials have admitted that they cannot achieve a military victory in the seven-year-old guerrilla war. For this reason, Rhodesia has used the elections as a bait to get recognition and aid from the United States.

If, as we believe, the elections will not end the war, lifting sanctions will pull the United States inextricably into yet another volatile and dangerous foreign armed conflict. If we commit ourselves to backing one side in this protracted war, the United States will be placing itself alone with South Africa in buttressing a minority-controlled regime which does not have the support of its own people. This will destroy United States credibility with independent Africa and the rest of the Third World. It will also draw us into an alliance with South Africa and make it impossible to implement an arms embargo against that minority regime, because South Africa announced on April 19th its intention to create a southern Africa military "fortress" in which Rhodesian leaders will cooperate.

The Congress should not act precipitously to lift sanctions against Rhodesia. To give the new black leaders this backing will eliminate the chance of a negotiated settlement and cause more bloodshed and suffering in Rhodesia.

In the interests of United States foreign policy, I urge you to vote against any move to lift sanctions against Rhodesia.

Sincerely,

Edgar Lockwood
Executive Director