Legislative Situation

During the next two weeks, conservative Senators led by Jesse Helms of North Carolina will attempt to come to the aid of the floundering internal settlement regime in Rhodesia by suspending sanctions. Amendments are expected to be offered to the Security Assistance bill which will:

1) Lift sanctions against Rhodesia for six months
2) Repeal the Clark Amendment which prohibits direct or indirect funding for military or paramilitary operations in Angola
3) Cut aid to front-line states that provide bases for the Patriotic Front, especially Zambia and Tanzania.

Helms feels that he can win on Rhodesia, based on his near-success with a one-year sanctions-lifting amendment to the Foreign Relations Authorization bill on June 28th. He lost then by only 6 votes — 48 to 42. What is particularly encouraging to him also is that the Senate adopted an amendment on the 27th forbidding foreign aid to any nation which fails to prevent "terrorist" groups from making incursions into territories outside its borders. The amendment was clearly addressed to the Rhodesian situation.

Analysis

It is scarcely a year since the Senate voted to restore sanctions by an overwhelming 66 to 26 margin, in the early days of the Carter Administration.

What explains the surge of strength in favor of the Helms position is the missionary zeal of the new Right to save Rhodesia and South Africa from Cuba, the Soviet Union and "godless Communism". The vote for the Helms position came basically from moderate to right-wing Republicans and from conservative Democrats from the South, Southwest and mountain states. All Southern Senators and eight out of ten from the Southwestern group voted with Helms. Only four Senators from the old industrial states of the Northeast and northern Midwest voted with Helms, and they were all Republicans: Schweiker (Pa.), Weicker (Conn.), Griffin (Mich.) and Lugar (Ind.).

Points to Bear In Mind

1. The most important of these three amendments to lobby on is the attempt to lift sanctions. Lifting sanctions even for a short time would mean the resumption of all trade, including the supply of arms. A lot of organizations spent five years fighting the Byrd Amendment which only allowed U.S. imports from Rhodesia of strategic materials such as chrome.

Lifting sanctions would amount to a de facto recognition of the internal settlement government as legitimate in spite of its rejection by the United Nations and African leaders.

The repeal of the Clark Amendment and the cutting of aid to the front-line states should be seen as related attempts to aid the military effort of Rhodesia by tying down Cuban forces in Angola and squeezing the economic life out of front-line states which support the guerrilla movements.

2. The vote on June 28th has already heartened Rhodesia and its South African ally. It put more iron into the determination of the internal settlement forces not to negotiate an end to the fighting with the Patriotic Front, the only organization that can end the fighting. If the Senate and the House lift sanctions, it will harden Rhodesian intransigence even further.

3. The lifting of sanctions would take the United States further down the path toward other kinds of intervention as the military situation continues to deteriorate.
4. Lifting sanctions would remove any possibility whatsoever for the United States to play a constructive role in negotiating a peaceful transfer of power. The Patriotic Front and the front-line states could not be expected to co-operate with the western proposals.

5. Alleged atrocities committed in the Rhodesian war by the "terrorists" against missionaries, women and children fit all too conveniently into the desperate propaganda needs of the Rhodesian government. This could have provided the motivation for the Smith forces to commit the massacre themselves, although the possibility of guerrilla responsibility for the latest attack cannot be entirely ruled out. In either case, the barbaric slaughter of hundreds of African refugees in Mozambique and of the African civilian population in Rhodesia is consistently under-reported by the western press, which must satisfy Rhodesian censors to get stories out.

6. The internal settlement is unacceptable because it enshrines white privileges instead of ending racist rule. A Senate Foreign Relations Committee analysis of the settlement concludes:

"Every white vote will be worth approximately ten times as much as every black vote... All the instruments of state power will remain in white hands for at least a decade. The civil service, the police, the army and the judiciary all stay intact, despite what the new post-independence government may wish to change."

7. Neither the internal settlement nor lifting of sanctions will cause the guerrillas to lay down their arms; on the contrary, they will fight on until their essential demands for a transfer of power are met. But the embracing of the internal settlement by the United States could prolong the conflict and make it a lot bloodier, without affecting the final outcome.

8. By calling for the repeal of the Clark Amendment, the Senate would be authorizing paramilitary and military intervention in Angola to overturn a government that has received recognition from most countries of the world and by the United Nations. The United States would in effect be legitimating and assisting the on-going destabilization efforts of FNLA and UNITA, which have the backing of Zaire, France, South Africa and some of the conservative Arab states. The futility and ignorance of such an approach is amply documented by John Stockwell, who headed the CIA's Angola Task Force during the 1975-6 war, in his book, In Search of Enemies.

ACTION WE ASK YOU TO TAKE

Individuals should send mailgrams to their Senators or make telephone calls to their local offices immediately. Groups should send letters and mailgrams to all Senators they can, with special attention to the following:

Senators who were absent on June 28th but who have been supportive in the past: Anderson (D-Minn.), Church (D-Ida.), Gravel (D-Alaska), H. Hatfield (R-Ore.), P. Hatfield (D-Mont.), Inouye (D-Haw.), Mathias (R-Md.), Sparkman (D-Ala.).

Ask them to be sure to be on hand and vote against Helms.

Senators who voted against Helms but who might change their minds and vote with him this time:
Bentsen (D-Tex.), Brooke (R-Mass.), Case (R-N.J.), Chafee (R-R.I.), Eagleton (D-Mo.), Ford (D-Ky.), Heinz (R-Pa.), Huddleston (D-Ky.), Jackson (D-Wash.), Javits (R-N.Y.), Melcher (D-Mont.), Moynihan (D-N.Y.), Pearson (R-Kans.), Roth (R-Del.), Stevenson (D-Ill.), Zorinsky (D-Neb.).

Congratulate them and tell them to hang in there.

Senators who voted with Helms but who supported sanctions in March 1977:
Bumpers (D-Ark.), Chiles (D-Fla.), Griffin (R-Mich.), Hollings (D-S.C.), Johnston (D-La.), Packwood (R-Ore.), Sasser (D-Tenn.), Schweiker (R-Pa.), Weicker (R-Conn.), Lugar (R-Ind.).

Remind them of their previous vote and ask them to switch back.

Thank you for anything you can do in this emergency in the limited time we have available.