Today, the Senate passed S. 1868 to end importation of "strategic and critical materials" from Rhodesia in violation of U.N. sanctions by a margin of 54 to 37, after defeating by 63 to 27 a filibuster by Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia. This is the first significant vote in either house of Congress in support of the struggle for majority rule in southern Africa. The victory was a good one, brought about by real persistence on the part of the bill's proponents, especially Gale McGee. A seven-month effort by national groups and groups of constituents across the country focusing on key Senators also helped in gaining a major victory.

THE LEGISLATIVE STORY

In May, when S. 1868 was introduced, it appeared that it would be fairly easy to gain Senate passage. The defeat of a Byrd Amendment-repealer in 1972 was close, 36 to 40, and it seemed that sanctions supporters could switch the few votes necessary for victory. We who have been working to end this sanctions violation knew all along that the real fight would be in the House. But we thought that even a House victory was possible with sustained effort using arguments about U.S. economic, strategic and political self-interest as well as concern about U.S. policy toward Rhodesia. As we began to make progress in the House and Senate, representatives of the stainless steel industry started lobbying in the House, assuming that Senate passage would be inevitable but relatively insignificant since a minimal effort on their part could ensure House defeat.

Senator Humphrey's Subcommittee on Africa held hearings in September and the full Foreign Relations Committee voted unanimously on September 19th to recommend favorable Senate action on S. 1868. Thereafter, Harry Byrd quietly convinced Democratic leaders Mansfield and Robert Byrd to delay Senate action week after week. Finally, on November 20th, Senators McGee and Humphrey succeeded in pressing the leadership to schedule S. 1868 for Senate consideration. At this point, Byrd had to filibuster in the open. Realizing that a strong Senate victory could in fact be very damaging, Byrd's industry supporters turned their attention to presaging at least one-third of the Senate to block a vote by refusing to agree to close debate. In the first vote to cut off debate on December 11th, two-thirds of the Senate failed to invoke cloture by a vote of 59 to 35. In a second attempt on the 13th White House and State Department lobbyists convinced three Senators to change their votes, and the measure lost by only 1½ votes. Finally, cloture was invoked by a vote of 63 to 26 on the 18th.

After the filibuster was defeated, the Senate considered the bill itself. In a last effort to weaken the bill, Harry Byrd offered an amendment to strike from the pre-amble the words "to restore the United States to its position as a law-abiding member of the international community." Because the change had no substantive effect and to help Byrd save face after an overwhelming defeat, supporters of S. 1868 voted with Byrd on the amendment in a 91 to 0 vote. The Senate then voted 54 to 37 in favor of S. 1868.

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HOW THE VOTE BROKE DOWN

The 54 to 37 victory on S. 1868 represents a substantial gain over the 40 to 36 defeat of the 1972 attempt to end the violation of U.S. compliance with sanctions. Seven Senators actually switched their positions to support sanctions: Mathias (Md.), Weicker (Conn.), Moth (Del.), Pearson (Kans.), Schweiker (Pa.), Long (La.), and Bentsen (Tex.). Also, four freshman Senators whose predecessors had supported Byrd voted for S. 1868: Johnston (La.), Clark (Iowa), Haskell (Colo.), and Abourezk (S.D.). On the other side, Byrd’s gains were very small. No Senators switched to oppose sanctions and only two Senators whose predecessors had supported sanctions voted with Byrd this time: Huddleston (Ky.) and Bartlett (Okla.).

Pressure from constituents urging key Senators to support sanctions was important in several states. Perhaps the biggest success was Schweiker of Pennsylvania. He was under intense pressure from the stainless steel industry to oppose the sanctions, but strong efforts by constituents, labor unions and several Senators all paid off. Schweiker’s affirmative vote will help a great deal with some Pennsylvania Representatives who are under similar pressure. Pressure from church and civil rights groups also proved important in Kansas and Delaware. In Louisiana Black voters surely had a significant impact on Johnston and Long, showing that members of Congress from the South can no longer afford to ignore Black voters if they want to be re-elected. Although Senators Cook and Huddleston of Kentucky did not vote for the bill itself, they did vote for cloture, and even that break from the South’s support for white minority rule would probably not have happened a few years ago.

Notwithstanding lots of pressure from constituents in Ohio, Senator Taft voted against the bill and even spoke out opposing sanctions. He did vote for the third cloture attempt, but that was probably due mainly to internal Senate politics, although he also got a number of telegrams from Ohio. Other Senators who spoke in opposition to S. 1868 were Allen (Ala.), Ervin and Helms (N.C.), Stennis (Miss.), William Scott (Va.), Dominick (Colo.), Curtis (Neb.), Goldwater (Ariz.), and Cannon (Nev.).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Senate vote puts us in good stead to go to work in the House in 1974. Don Fraser’s Subcommittee on International Organizations has held hearings jointly with Charles Diggs’ Subcommittee on Africa and has unanimously recommended the bill to the full Foreign Affairs Committee. Chairman Thomas Morgan (Pa.) should be pressed to schedule Committee action as soon as the House reconvenes in January. When the Committee does vote, we can be assured of majority support, but we want to get as strong and wide support as possible in the Committee. Committee members who especially need attention are Zablocki (Wis.), Hays (Ohio), Fountain and Taylor (N.C.), Yatron (Pa.), Wilson (Tex.), and Derwinski (Ill.). If the United States government is to strengthen its compliance with sanctions against Rhodesia we will have to work hard on House members who are still uncommitted to urging them to vote for passage of H.R. 8005.

VOTE ON S. 1868

YEA—34

Housley........Humphrey.........Inouye.........Jackson.........java.........Johnson.........Kennedy.........Long.........Magnuson.........Manafort.........Mathias.........McGovern..........McIntyre.........McNiffe.........Mondale.........Moss.........Muskie

NAY—87

Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene

VOTE ON CLOTURE

YEA—93

Abourezk..........Aiken............Aiken............Aiken............Alger............Alger............Alger............Alger

NAY—29

Allen............Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene

VOTE ON S. 1868

YEA—34

Housley........Humphrey.........Inouye.........Jackson.........java.........Johnson.........Kennedy.........Long.........Magnuson.........Manafort.........Mathias.........McGovern..........McIntyre.........McNiffe.........Mondale.........Moss.........Muskie

NAY—87

Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene.........Boumediene

VOTE ON CLOTURE

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NAY—29

Allen............Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene

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NAY—29

Allen............Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene........Boumediene