International Seminar
on
The Role of Transnational
Corporations in Namibia

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Thank you very much. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, I'm delighted to be here to represent the Congressional Black Caucus tonight, in part because it is often unknown that the Congressional Black Caucus stands in great solidarity and great concern as a progressive force within the American political context and within the Congress itself for some principles that are simply not represented by the kinds of policies that are followed by the current Administration. I say that the role of the Congressional Black Caucus is not known perhaps because it is not in the interest of certain powers and certain establishments to have that role be known.

What I'd like to say, in very few minutes, is to tell you a little bit about the Congressional Black Caucus's position on the matter of Namibia and on the matter of issues related to South Africa, so that those of you who are here can know that there is within Congress a progressive force that plans to work hard and has already begun to work, now and in the 98th Congress, to ensure that legislation is developed and passed that helps U.S. policy to conform to international law, to conform to the UN resolutions on these issues, and to conform most important to notions of morality and justice and equality, notions which at least rhetorically guide United States policy and have guided it for several hundred years.

The Congressional Black Caucus has deplored publicly the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa and it is very deeply concerned and it has said so publicly that the United States action, particularly those recently, have lead to and increased the intransigence of South Africa in the context of negotiations for Resolution 435. The Caucus sees this kind of encouragement of South African intransigence as part and parcel of a very flawed and morally bankrupt policy of "constructive engagement". We are concerned in addition that the U.S. policy of arguing for "linkage" of Cuban troops in Angola in fact has obscured the important issues in this area and has prolonged the possibility of resolution in this regard. It seems clear that good-willed people throughout the world, and I see many friends here from countries other than the United States, the black community in the United States, and the Caucus itself knows what the real issues are. The real issue is the right to self-determination for the Namibian people, the real issue is the legitimacy of their struggle, the real issue is the repugnance that all of us feel for the barbarous system of apartheid that has been imported by South Africa into Namibia. And so we are working within the Congress right now as I mentioned earlier to ensure that something happens to indicate to the policy makers within the Administration and to the world community that there is not unanimity and indeed there is abhorrence of some of the policies advanced by this Administration.
There will be hearings this week in congress on Thursday, on the destabi-
zation of the region by the actions of South Africa. It is hoped that
the kind of information which has not been part of the public debate will
come out of these kind of hearings. This is the begining of a long
series of hearing supported by the Caucus and worked on by Caucus members
who are on the appropriate committees, to ensure that the public policy
debate on what America’s policy should be in southern Africa, and with
regards to Namibia, takes a turn for the sane, for the fair, and for
the correct.

In addition, the Caucus is working to reverse some of the calamitous
results of the policies that this Administration has adopted by arguing
for specific legislation indicating the sense of the Congress that US
policy makers in this area must immediately work with all the affected
parties to ensure implimentation of 435. There are members of the Caucus
who are now developing specific legislation to provide disincentives for
further commercial dealings with South Africa. There are efforts to
further isolate South Africa, that will be sponsored by the Congressional
Black Caucus in the next session.

I think it is very important and the challenge to those of us who are
here is to share information about how the Caucus can be more effective,
so I am very happy to join with you, and I know that if members of
the Caucus could be here they would say that it is extremely important
that the word go forth that we are committed to the questions and that
we are willing to work and work hard in our own arena and in our own
way to ensure that justice and fairness and the conformity with inter-
national law is the rule. We need to hear from you the kind of specific
steps in terms of arguing against the policy directions of this admini-
istration and in terms of supporting the Namibian cause in the interna-
tional arena that could be undertaken by the Caucus.

I’m delighted to be here and I know that the members of the Caucus
if they could be here would say to you that this is not only a timely
session, but a session which hopefully will shed light on the issue
and will provide for us the kind of information that we need to make
American policy in this area conform to the kinds of norms and the
kinds of requirements that have been clearly established and are clearly
mandated by international law and by justice and fairness. Thank you
all very much.