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April 12, 1978

Honorable Parren J. Mitchell
Chairman
Congressional Black Caucus
House Annex 1
Room 307
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Parren:

This is in response to your memo of April 6 requesting my review and approval of the Caucus' reply to Dr. Brezinski's position on our "twelve points" regarding South Africa.

My overall opinion is that the letter is a most articulate and eloquent expression of the Caucus' deeply-held beliefs about U.S. responsibilities in Southern Africa. I am particularly impressed with the positions expressed about the so-called "internal solutions" proposed for Zimbabwe and Namibia.

With respect to South Africa itself, I wish to offer a few suggestions that would, in my opinion, strengthen the thrust of the Caucus' position.

1. In acknowledging the Administration's efforts to tighten the arms embargo on South Africa, the letter does not mention the continuing sale of civilian aircraft that can be converted to military use. In March for example, the State Department approved export licenses for 70 to 80 Cessna aircraft and announced measures to monitor the end use of the aircraft. However, it is not at all clear that the State Department has either the capacity or the cooperation (of the South African government) necessary to conduct an effective surveillance of the aircraft. For these reasons I have introduced, along with 24 co-sponsors (including yourself), a bill (H.R. 10722) that would close this dangerous loophole in our arms embargo by prohibiting the export to South Africa of aircraft, spare parts, and related equipment, and would subject all other exports to South Africa to a review and possible veto by either House of Congress. This option could be made part of the Caucus' position as consistent with the U.S. and U.N. arms. embargoes.
2. On page 2 the human rights situation in South Africa is characterized as "deplorable...short of dramatic change...of a political nature" such as "releasing from detention and banning South African political prisoners such as "the Soweto Committee of Ten members and following that up with an accomodation of their municipal autonomy recommendations for that township." On March 10, the South African government

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released from prison Percy Qoboza editor of The World (now banned) and two members of the Committee of Ten. On April 5 the South African government announced plans to extend municipal powers to black townships such as Soweto and to permit blacks to assume legal ownership of their homes instead of limited tenancy rights.

I think that you will agree that these changes, although progressive in comparison with the September-October events in South Africa are basically cosmetic effects in the policy of apartheid, leaving its fundamental principles -- racial segregation, political disenfranchisement, and economic inequality -- entirely intact. It should be made clear to Dr. Brezinski that, despite these recent developments, the human rights situation in South Africa will remain "deplorable" so long as that government refuses to recognize the principles of racial equality and majority rule.

3. The letter (page 2) criticizes the Administration's position as "inadequate" due to "the absence of any sense of a timetable governing our policy of restraint" with respect to South Africa. Having made this point, it is, perhaps incumbent upon the Caucus to prepare such a timetable, linking, in a logical sequence some or all of the twelve points. This exercise might, in turn, aid us in developing a better sense of priorities with respect to the types of legislative and executive actions we propose.

Let me again reiterate my general approval for the substance and style of the draft letter to Dr. Brezinski, together with the hope that you will find the above comments useful in articulating the Caucus' position on these issues of great importance to all of us.

Sincerely,


CARDISS COLLINS
Member of Congress

CC/HH/slm