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Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

JOHN J. BRADY, JR.
CHIEF OF STAFF

The Honorable P. W. Botha
Prime Minister
The Republic of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

In the past several days, a number of American newspapers have reported your speech in Welkom in which you state that you plan to prohibit Bishop Tutu from travelling abroad again by withdrawing his South African passport. We sincerely hope that you do not carry out your plan. To do so would be most unfortunate and would signal to many people in the United States that you intend to muzzle all those who criticize your Government. Moreover, it would call into serious question the South African Government's stated intention of trying to achieve racial reform and genuine modifications in South Africa's system of apartheid.

As far as we are aware, Bishop Tutu has always acted as a constructive critic of South Africa's system of apartheid. He has never called for armed insurrection or espoused the violent overthrow of the South African Government. On the contrary, he has consistently advocated peaceful change in South Africa and has sought whenever possible to enter into a constructive dialogue with you and your Government. When Bishop Tutu met with Members of the House of Representatives in Washington last week, he reiterated his desire to see fundamental change achieved in South Africa through peaceful means.

We in the United States have always held the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of travel in high regard. These two principles have been cornerstones of America's democratic tradition for over two hundred years. Moreover, we have found that tyranny and injustice have flourished in those nations where

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freedom of speech and the right of travel have been arbitrarily denied. In attempting to silence Bishop Tutu, South Africa will be following a path pursued by many of the world's most repressive governments. We are sure that you do not want your Government to be included in this category.

We recognize that Bishop Tutu is a spokesman for change, but he is a moderate voice who seeks to work within the law. If you begin to silence distinguished clergymen like Bishop Tutu, you will be playing into the hands of those who seek violent change in South Africa. We hope, therefore, that you and your Government will consider closely your actions with respect to Bishop Tutu.

With best regards.