Dear Colleague:

In February, 1985, I introduced H.R. 997, a bill calling for complete disinvestment from South Africa. It has become very evident that nothing short of a complete pull-out of U.S. investment will hasten the demise of apartheid.

U.S. investments in South Africa are concentrated in capital-intensive industries such as computers, energy, and transportation. Without access to American capital and technology, the South African police state would be denied much of the means for sustaining the repression inherent in the practice of apartheid.

Yet, many argue that disinvestment would harm South African blacks. However, it is estimated that these investments employ fewer than 1% of South African workers.

Even if the direct impact of disinvestment were greater, the best argument in its favor was made by the South African freedom fighter Steve Biko, when he said that "The argument is often made that the loss of foreign investment would hurt blacks in the short run, because many of them would stand to lose their jobs. But, it should be understood in Europe and North America that foreign investment supports the present economic system of political injustice .... If Washington is really interested in contributing to a development of a just society in South Africa, it would discourage investment in South Africa. We blacks are perfectly willing to suffer the consequences. We are quite accustomed to suffering."

Unfortunately, the struggle to end apartheid is bound to create an Afrikaner backlash that will extend beyond unemployment for a small percentage of the South African workforce. Steve Biko died in 1977 while being held in police custody. Bishop Tutu is risking a charge of treason for merely advocating economic sanctions.

Black South Africans already labor under the yoke of oppression, however, and in the final analysis, ending apartheid justifies these means. Please contact Bob Brauer at 5-2661 to become a cosponsor of H.R. 997.

Sincerely,

Ronald V. Dellums
Member of Congress

CURRENT COSPONSORS OF H.R. 997