United States Congress Versus Apartheid

By Abdul Karim Bangura and Robert Ansah-Birikorang

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FOREWORD

Mario D. Fenyo
Professor of History and Government
Bowie State University
University System of Maryland

United States Congress Versus Apartheid is yet another tour de force by Abdul Karim Bangura and Robert Ansah-Birikorang, this time in their quality as political scientists and as philosophers who, like nature itself, abhors vacuum; in this instance the vacuum, the void, is the lack of coherent analyses of United States-South Africa political relations during the last decades of the apartheid regime, of the activities of the Congressional Subcommittee on Africa, of the operations of congressional subcommittees in general. As regards the scientific aspect of the work, Bangura and Ansah-Birikorang, committed Africans, African-centric scholars by their own admission, try hard to be impartial. The politics behind the policies advocated are examined dispassionately, are dissected session by session, as if there were no such thing as morality, as right and wrong. But dispassionate as the style and language appear to be, Bangura and Ansah-Birikorang know that the Reagan administration’s “constructive engagement” served only to prolong the existence of the moribund regime in South Africa. Indeed, that knowledge inevitably leads to condemnation in this work, even if it is dispassionate terms: the facts speak for themselves. There is no need for vituperation.

In the words of Nobel prize-winning Archbishop Desmond Tutu, spoken on Capitol Hill in 1984, President Ronald Reagan’s support of apartheid, euphemistically disguised as “constructive engagement,” is “immoral, evil, and totally un-Christian.” When the facts are brought to light, as in Bangura and Ansah-Birikorang’s detailed work, these facts suffice to condemn those who were on the wrong side of history, on the wrong side of justice. Reagan, however, was hardly moved. Thousands more had to die, and tens of thousand get arrested under “State of emergency decrees” (Jackson 2004), before the apartheid regime collapsed of its own accord, with little help from the government of the United States.

Apart from the people of South Africa struggling for liberation, Bangura and Ansah’s story does have heroes. They are congressmen Howard Wolpe, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, and a few others. Congressman Wolpe agreed with the South African bishop and with most governments of Africa and Europe with regard to attitude toward the apartheid
regime. I even asked myself if there was any connection between the American Wolpe and
the progressive South African social scientist Harold Wolpe; indeed, I found many of the
latter’s works in the catalogue of the Congressman’s library. As for Parren Mitchell, he was
the first African American congressman from the State of Maryland.

During and after the Cold War, the spokespersons for United States foreign relations
stood and still stand on the side of democracy; unfortunately, this pro-democracy stand
is not always bolstered by tangible evidence, judging from the ambiguous, often outright
conflicting steps we hear about and read about in the media. But certainly there were
American politicians, congressmen with power, who were on the right side of history and
morality; they are the persons who not only championed the right cause and contribute
to the triumph of that cause—they represent the long tradition of idealism, the thread of
which runs through American history, even in times of slavery.

REFERENCE
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Employing a “systems” analysis approach, this book seeks to fill a critical gap in the study of congressional committees in the United States: the lack of examination of the role of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in shaping United States foreign policy towards South Africa. This subcommittee emerged as one of the major battlegrounds, where United States foreign policy towards South Africa was shaped during the Reagan-Bush era, 1981–1992 (the time-frame examined). Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush were more oriented toward strategic calculations in their formulation of United States foreign policy towards the African continent.

This era, 1981–1992, also saw the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee being chaired by Howard Wolpe (Democrat-Michigan). A graduate of Reed College, Howard Wolpe came to Congress with a Ph.D. degree in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His books included *Urban Politics in Nigeria: A Study of Port Harcourt* and *Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism*. Before his election to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1972, he taught Political Science at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

In 1981, Wolpe was chosen Chair of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He proceeded to gather a knowledgeable, committed and dedicated staff. Ably assisted by those he had hired, he made the subcommittee a model of professionalism and a rigorous critic of American foreign policy in Africa. The congressman emerged as a voice for peace by playing a role in reducing military aid to dictatorial regimes within Africa and opposing policies that he believed perpetuated conflict and destroyed life within the continent. Furthermore, he helped his congressional colleagues
and the American public comprehend the non-aligned position of African states and the aspirations of African people. He was a consistent critic of the Reagan-Bush “constructive engagement” policy towards the then racist regime in South Africa, a major architect of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 and a crucial backer of the negotiations that led to Namibian independence in 1990. Apart from this, Wolpe supported African human rights activists while he, at the same time, put pressure on those within Africa who denied such rights.

House rules require every standing committee with 20 or more members, except Budget (the Budget Committee has task forces as functional equivalents of subcommittees), to have at least four subcommittees. This rule, adopted in 1975, was an attempt to weaken committees’ chairmen’s monopoly over power in Congress. It was instituted to avoid the kind of personal dominance exemplified by Ways and Means Chairman Wilbur D. Mills (Democrat-Arkansas), who had abolished subcommittees altogether (Manley 1970:39). In order to effectively limit the number of subcommittees to the number of majority party members on a committee, the Senate prohibits a senator from chairing more than one subcommittee on any standing committee.

Like standing committees, subcommittees vary widely in rules and procedures, staff arrangements, modes of operation, and relationships with other subcommittees and the full committee. Subcommittees sometimes even spawn offspring (“sub-subcommittees”).

Performing most of the day-to-day lawmaking and oversight work of Congress, subcommittees have grown tremendously. Their growth, as Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek observe, is the result of several factors, namely:

(a) the complexities of problems that require policy specialization;
(b) the demands of interest groups calling for subcommittees handling their subject area;
(c) the desire of members to chair subcommittees in order to initiate lawmaking and oversight, augment personal prestige and influence, gain staff and office space, and gain a national platform; and
(d) the desire of a majority of Democrats in the early 1970s to circumscribe the power of committee chairmen (Davidson & Oleszek 1981:208–209).

Subcommittees are also created to enhance the reelection prospects of members. By serving as a chairman of a subcommittee, constituents would think that the individual senator or congress person is doing a good job in Washington.

Subcommittees offer workshops, where members of Congress can get things done. An individual who feels frustrated in the spacious House or Senate floor may very well work more effectively in the smaller committee room. Subcommittee workshops make it possible for Congress to deal coherently with a mass of complex issues. Without such a system, a legislature comprising 100 senators and 440 representatives could in no way handle about 20,000 pieces of legislation biennially, a trillion-dollar national budget, and
an endless array of controversial issues. While final legislative products are refined by floor actions, subcommittees are the means by which Congress sifts through the multitude of bills, proposals, and issues. As the review of the theoretical proposition on committees reveals, while a plethora of studies exists on congressional committees in general, investigation on subcommittees, in particular, has been sparse. Thus, the significance of this book (which seeks to conduct a thorough investigation of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee) hinges on the fact that comprehensive examinations of subcommittees are urgently needed, because Congress’s reliance on these institutions is very striking. Whether bills originate in the White House, bureaucracy, or lobby groups, they invariably are subject to subcommittee review, before being considered by the standing committees in the House or the Senate. Thus, in light of Davidson and Oleszek’s observations and the major objectives of this book, the following major questions are investigated in terms of a “systems” perspective:

1. In what types of political, economic, social and cultural environments did the debate on United States foreign policy towards South Africa emerge between 1981 and 1992?
2. What were the positions of the competing factions that lobbied the Subcommittee on the South African issue, and how can they be characterized?
3. What shaped the roles played by the Subcommittee in transforming inputs into outputs?
4. What were the outputs of the transformational processes, and how can they be characterized?

While contemplating these questions, it is useful at this point to review the relevant theoretical propositions that have emerged in dealing with some aspects of congressional committees to delineate available suggestions.

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS ON COMMITTEES

As stated earlier, although a large number of studies exist on congressional committees in the United States in general, not much empirical investigation has been done on any subcommittee. The available literature on congressional committees in general can be placed into six theoretical categories based on the authors’ foci and interests: (1) evolution of the committee system, (2) types of committees, (3) the assignment process in committees, (4) committee leadership, (5) policymaking in committees, and (6) committees in change. A discussion of each of these categories follows.

The major focus of the scholars writing about the evolution of the committee system is on how committees have tended to dominate legislative decision-making and routine from the very first Congress. They point out that early lawmakers had served in state
assemblies or other forms (such as the Constitutional Convention) that functioned with and through committees. They also point to changes in the duration of congressional committees from temporary panels in the early Congresses to permanent bodies in later Congresses. The time frame covered by these scholars ranges from 1787 to the late 1970s. The general view of these writers is that during this time frame, there was a shift from committee government to subcommittee government in Congress.

Roy Swanstrom’s work (1962) is a dissertation on the first 14 years (1787–1801) of the upper legislative body (US Senate) prepared for the degree of doctor of philosophy in history, in the graduate division of the University of California. The study begins with the State House at Philadelphia, where the delegates to the Constitution Convention debated and framed the new structure of government for the US, including the form and powers of the Senate. It discusses the meeting of the first Senators in New York City and follows them and their successors as they struggled with problems of their day at that city, at the second temporary capital in Philadelphia, and finally at the new capital in Washington, D.C. Swanstrom’s data sources included the following: congressional records; Arthur Taylor Prescott’s *Drafting of the Federal Constitution*, used for the Convention debate; personal correspondence and other papers of principal senators; congressional biographical directories; national and other encyclopedia; and newspapers of the time. Swanstrom’s substantive findings were that (a) the Senate was subjected to a great deal of stress and strains in order to assume its now traditional place in the structure of American government; and (b) the Senate’s personality is unique among the legislative bodies in the world.

Lauros McConachie’s study (1898) is based on information gleaned from debates, memoirs, newspapers and other records, and testimony of legislators to explain the conditions that prevailed in the House and Senate during the late 1800s. The approach used is scientific—an approach that prevailed at the universities during McConachie’s time.

George Galloway (1976) provides an authoritative description and assessment of the changes that took place in the House during the 1960s. This revision is a thorough updating of the historical facts relating to the House. Three changes are given particular attention: (1) the major modification now taking place in the seniority system, (2) the recent rise in importance of the Democratic Caucus, and (3) the growing assertiveness in congressional-executive relations. In addition, Galloway provides an overview of rules, organization, committee leadership, parties, and oversight.

George Haynes (1938) provides an historical account of the U.S. Senate. Haynes is cognizant of the powerful influence of the Senate in governmental affairs. However, the author indicates that this pre-eminence is due more to the existence of its unique non-legislative powers than to its pure lawmaking functions. Haynes furthers his analysis by looking at the Senate not as a mere wheel in an elaborate governmental framework, but as group of individual personalities, intent upon an intricate and ever changing task.

Ralph Harlow (1917) traces the growth of the committee system in the lawmaking bodies of the colonies and the states from 1750 to 1790, and in the Federal House of
Representative from 1825. In essence, Harlow provides a comprehensive analysis of the legislative history of the U.S. as it relates to the development of legislative committees. Harlow focuses on matters of procedures. The author attempts to show how the colonial legislatures were directed by party leadership and how the caucus and the executive influenced the operation of Congress. The author concludes that standing committees have changed over time.

Barbara Hinkley (1971) provides insights into the process of congressional leadership selection. The author indicates that the seniority rule is a custom, not a formal rule, of Congress. Hinkley rationalizes that the development of the seniority system came about as legislation became more complex. This expansion of legislative and governmental activities called for specialization and professionalization. Hinkley concludes that the seniority system clearly strengthens the particularistic motivation of the Congress. The author rationalizes that the multiplication of centers of power resulted in the fragmentation of power, which has made any attempt to form majority coalitions impossible.

Burton French (1915) looks at the responsibility of the committees of the Senate and House. French associates the responsibilities of the House and Senate committees as directly involving activities of the subcommittees. He asserts that the Senate and the House possess enormous control over the committees, including the power to discharge a committee from further consideration of a bill. The author concludes that it is impossible for Senators and Representatives to perform effectively, when dealing with committee and subcommittee transactions. French also points out that members of such committees must divide their work, refer it to subcommittees, and then from time to time meet as members of full committees and consider the advice of the members of the subcommittees who have given special attention to their areas.

Charles O. Jones (1962) explores the operations of the House Committee on Agriculture. He asserts that when Democrats control the committee, cotton, rice, and tobacco are favored. When Republicans control the committee, corn, wheat, and other feed grains are favored. The author explores the degree of internal conflict among competing interests. Jones points out that the degree of internal conflict is considerable; and since it follows party lines, minimal partisanship is an essential ingredient, if integration is to be achieved. Finally, the author concludes that under these circumstances, the subcommittee system is used by the majority party to develop legislation to solve its own commodity programs rather than as a means of integrating the committee.

Steven Haeberle (1978) investigates procedural reforms between 1971 and 1975 known as the “Subcommittee bill of rights.” He indicates that these rule changes formalized a transfer of power within the House to its subcommittees. The author presents data to demonstrate that House subcommittees are entities that exist in their own right. Haeberle concludes that the consequences of the institutionalization produce reduced power and influence within the House for both the full committee chairmen and the leaders of the Democratic Party.
Studies on types of committees (Standing, Select or Special, and Joint committees) highlight the significant differences between congressional committees and the variations within each general type. The major emphasis of these works is on the sizes and the ratios of the committees. These works are also unanimous in the belief that committee enlargements are engineered by majority party leaders who want to accommodate the assignment preferences of colleagues, and that party ratios influence committee work as much as panel size does.

George Goodwin (1970) provides a historical overview of the Congressional Committee System and pertinent congressional developments between 1947 and 1968. This work is an extensive, comparative anatomy of congressional committees in the 80th through 90th Congresses. He focuses on the complex structure of power in the legislative and decision-making processes of Congress. Goodwin provides an in-depth analysis of the committee system. The author concludes by showing his support for the seniority system.

William Morrow (1969) describes congressional committees as “little legislatures”—smaller in size and increasingly playing a greater role in molding legislation. According to him, (a) committees perform vital conflict resolution roles for Congress and the general political system; (b) committees grow in size and importance, because the legislative task has been magnified; and (c) the political system in which they operate explains behavior of committees as units and of their individual members. He notes that the heavy dependence on the rapidly expanding literature on the Congress and its committees helps to make these case studies primarily descriptive and analytical.

Joseph Cooper (1971) provides a comprehensive summary treatment of the various facets of congressional committee operations, since the passage of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Cooper further sets out to define, apply, and elaborate a conceptual framework that explains, organizes, and extends the empirical knowledge amassed.

James Dyson and John Soule (1970) investigate the influence of congressional committees on the legislative process. This study indicates that congressional committees are highly influential on roll call voting. Three main factors are used as explanatory variables: (1) committee attractiveness to its members, (2) committee integration, and (3) the degree of partisanship on each committee. The latter two variables were related to committee success, while attractiveness was not. Highly attractive committees were not more successful, not more integrated, and as partisan as less attractive committees. The study also looks at whether committee influence is present during floor stages or roll call.

Kenneth Shepsle (1978) offers a theory of committee assignment in the House of Representatives and tested with data from the Democratic committee assignments during 1958–1974. Occasional references are made to Republican assignment practices, and Democratic practices in other areas are sprinkled throughout the book. The major propositions in this work include the following: (a) rank-and-file members are motivated by a desire for “good” Committee assignments—a value judgment; (b) party leaders, engaged in the early forms of condition activity required for partisan leadership, try to
accommodate member requests; and (c) members of the party in a congressional committee are interested primarily in chamber influence.

Louis Gawthrop (1966) examines standing committee assignments in the House of Representatives, mainly the 80th through 89th Congresses. The author discovers that in the period studied there is clear evidence of a steady increase in the number of double committee assignments. This is ascribed to the increase in the size of House committees. The collected data demonstrate the steady decline of single committee assignment during this period. In 1949, 89 percent of all House members had only one standing committee assignment, whereas by 1965 this figure had declined to 65 percent. The author poses serious questions. For example, is the role pattern of the individual member altered as his committee assignments are doubled? Do assignments create conflicting or complementary role situations? Gawthrop concludes that a wide range of interpersonal and group relationships involving such organizational concepts as authority, loyalty, individual autonomy, and control may be altered under the circumstances of double committee assignments.

John F. Manley (1968 & 1970) finds that the House Committee on Ways and Means has funded a great deal of the most significant legislation that Congress is called upon to pass: tax policy, medicare and social welfare issues, and problems of reciprocal trade and tariff control. Influenced by Richard Fenno’s landmark research on the House Appropriation Committee, Chester Bernard’s inducement-contribution theory, and George Homon’s and Peter Blau’s exchange theory, his study is based on interviews with 30 committee members and public records. His theory and data are imaginatively blended to explain: (a) recruitment to the committee; (b) congressmen’s value of their membership; (c) integration and other committee norms; and (d) Speaker Wilbur Mills’ crucial role in the Committee, floor, and in conference committee activity with the Senate. The essence of Manley’s study is the importance of committee-centered research for understanding the workings of Congress.

Bertram Waters’ case study (1973) is about the formation in 1967 of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, led by Senator George McGovern. It illustrates the purpose and prominence of select committees, the personal opportunity which leadership of committees extends to lawmakers, and especially the intensity of internal Congressional conflict which underlies their creation and funding. Major emphasis is placed on (a) factors leading to the creation of a select committee, (b) the process of forming the Committee and assembling its staff, and (c) the process of gaining an appropriation to permit the committee to fulfill its tasks.

Richard Cohen (1981) provides an analysis of the exercise of matching available candidates with open slots. The author further looks at the implications choices can have on national legislation. Cohen indicates that the process of assigning House and Senate members to congressional committees is one of the most mysterious and least discussed aspects of the legislative process. Cohen further investigates how the process of assigning seats on committees can affect an individual’s career. The author concludes that in many
cases personal characteristics, such as being a maverick, do influence the selection process. The role of leadership is viewed as probably the most important factor influencing who should go on committees.

Harold Green and Alan Rosental’s thesis (1963) focuses on the lack of power of the legislature to formulate national policies. The thrust of the argument presented indicates that governmental power in the late nineteenth century had become entirely dependent on the Executive for development of national policy. However, in the area of nuclear policy, Congress or, at least, its surrogate committee, acts with distinctive vigor and notable success as watchdog, gadfly, partner, and policy-maker. Harold Green and Alan Rosenthal explore the role of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and provide insights into its contributions to domestic nuclear policy formulation.

Charles Clapp’s work (1963) is prepared from recorded discussion at the Brookings Institution Round Table Conference on Congress in 1959 and from additional interviews. Clapp looks at the role of Congress in American politics. He views the Congress with great puzzlement and calls for reforms. What has emerged from Clapp’s interviews and discussions with 36 congressmen is the illumination of the world of the congressman and the environment in which he lives and works. This work also pinpoints other major issues affecting Congress. The author provides background into the dullness and, at times, the general irrelevance of House debates, the tyranny of the committee chairmanship system, and the almost overwhelming demand of constituents. Clapp provides an insight into the realities of the legislative process in the House. Tremendous detail is provided regarding the congressman, his colleagues and constituents, his own role and that of pressure groups in the legislative process. In addition, there is a chapter on the role of and attitude of congressional wives.

A number of scholars have investigated the assignment process of congressional committees. The focus of this group of authors is on the assignment panel’s decisions (formal and informal criteria, seniority, and biases) and approval by party caucus and the chamber. The major findings of this group of scholars are that: (a) every congressional election sets off a scramble for committee seats; (b) legislators understand the linkage between winning desirable assignments and winning elections; and (c) newly elected representatives and senators make their preferences known quickly, and incumbents may try to move to a more prestigious panel. Linda Fowler et al. (1980) demonstrate the wide availability of opportunities for members of the House of Representatives to curry favor with constituents. The authors indicate that such an activity creates difficulties in assessing the electoral impact of any one institutional feature, even one so distinctive as the committee system. The evidence presented indicates that committee choice is but one aspect of an intricate pattern of electoral force. The authors conclude that the benefits of committee assignments were not universal and failure to obtain a desired appointment produced no major ill effect.
Richard Fenno (1973) provides an analytic study of the congressional committee system. The author’s thesis is that committees differ from one another, and that they differ systematically. In a comparative analysis, Fenno sets out to examine the functioning of six committees of the House and the Senate counterparts from 1955 to 1966 (i.e. the 84th through the 89th Congresses). The committees studied included the Committees on Appropriations, Education and Labor, Foreign Affairs, Internal and Insular Affairs, Post-Office and Civil Service, and Ways and Means. Fenno focuses a good deal on their Senate counterpart, i.e. the Committees on Appropriation, Finance, Foreign Relations, Interior and Insular Affairs, Labor and Public Welfare, and Post Office and Civil Service. Fenno concludes that the House Appropriation Committee was a self-contained social system. In comparative perspective, the members’ contributions seem large and distinctive.

Shirley Chisholm (1970) focuses on politics and government in the United States between 1969 and 1974. She graphically describes her rise to political power against all odds. She provides first-hand accounts of her two “handicaps,” being female and Black. Chisholm indicates that being female was more a hindrance in the world of politics than being Black. Her work provides insights into Chisholm the activist, but one who holds that the committee system can be made to work if others adopt and put into practice her earliest campaign slogan—“Unbought and Unbossed.” On the other hand, Chisholm is cognizant that the political system is sick. She probes the committee system’s ailments, weaknesses, and merciless impartiality. Chisholm possesses self-doubt as to the direction, but in the final analysis agrees to the centrality of the democratic process and particularly the power of the “vote.”

Charles Bullock, III’s study (1972) revolves around committee assignments for freshmen representatives from 1947 to 1967, indicating that the Nicholas Masters-Charles Clapp hypothesis which indicates that the paramount concern in committee assignments is the facilitation of reelection is not true. Bullock suggests that the narrowly elected do not get the top committee assignments or avoid the lowly ranked spots. He maintains that committee assignment is not a vital factor in reelection. Furthermore, Bullock remarks that Southern Democrats were selected because in comparison with other Democrats and Republicans they formed a distinct group, had an interest in certain fields of legislation, and accumulated more seniority than congressmen from other sections.

Irwin Gertzog’s interviews (1976) with three classes of first-term House members soon after they came to Washington indicate that a significant majority received assignments to committees they preferred, and that more than nine of them secured positions on preferred committees by the time they had begun their third term. The findings suggest that the proportion of freshmen whose committee needs are satisfied has been increasing over time; hence, there has been a decrease in the extent to which members transfer after their third term. Gertzog concludes that a more routinized assignment process has important implications for the level of participation and sense of achievement experienced by individual members.
Studies on committee leadership concentrate on who make up such leadership in Congress and what their functions are. Normally, committee leaders are said to be the chairmen and the ranking minority members. Committee chairmen call meetings and establish agendas, hire and fire committee staff, arrange hearings, designate conferees, act as floor managers, control committee funds and rooms, chair hearings and markups, and regulate the internal affairs and organization of the committees.

Catherine Rudder’s case study (1977) is about how the revenue committees remain the most powerful committees on Capitol Hill, despite the congressional reforms of the early 1970s that shook the foundations of the House Committee on Ways and Means. This is because the Senate Finance Committee and Ways and Means’ jurisdictions cover not only all federal taxation, but also 40 percent of all direct federal spending. This is due to the following factors: (a) a strengthened House (leadership of Rostenkowski), (b) a contentious Senate note on individual provisions remain open until work on the entire package is completed, and (c) a successful conference (between Daniel Rostenkowski and Robert Dole) in 1982 and 1984.

Irwin Arieff (1981) focuses on the role of Dan Rostenkowski as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Rostenkowski’s influence played a role in shaping the American political economy and the Democratic Party. Rostenkowski’s success as chairman revolved around his ability to translate his position of power into the House passage of bills for which Democrats took credit and the Reagan Administration lived with. Arieff looks at the legislative efforts of the chairman. The author focuses on Rostenkowski’s contributions to kill public campaign financing legislation, to raise congressional pay, and to eliminate a provision of the House ethics code limiting a member’s outside earned income to 15 percent of his official salary. He concludes by indicating that Rostenkowski believed in stressing loyalty and friendship over issues from time to time to win friends and to keep them.

Alan Ehrenhalt (1977) looks at the manner that Russel B. Long was poised to influence American domestic politics. Long headed the Senate Finance Committee in 1977 and worked on several legislation that impacted on President Jimmy Carter’s national policy agenda. The primary focus of Long’s philosophical orientation stresses that the federal government has a limited number of ways it can help people and businesses through the appropriation process. Ehrenhalt views Long as a realist. He points out that unlike other Southern Democrats, Long did not always oppose liberal schemes because of pure fiscal consideration. Ehrenhalt successfully demonstrates Long’s political ties to the business community.

The substantive findings of studies that have examined policymaking in congressional committees are many. First, committees foster fragmented, deliberate, collegial decisions. Second, committees ease outside groups’ access to the legislative process. Third, committees encourage bargaining and accommodation among members. Fourth, to move bills through Congress’s numerous decisions points, from subcommittee to committee, authors
of legislation must compromise differences with committee “gatekeepers.” Finally, before sending a bill to the next policymaking stage, gatekeepers may exact alterations in its substance.

Bob Eckhardt (1974) focuses on political conversations between Representative Bob Eckhardt and Charles Black that stretched over half a lifetime. The discussions vary widely on issues ranging from the congressional committee system to impeachment proceedings. A major point of the book, however, centers on American constitutionalism. The first four chapters center on the constitutive forces of the American Constitution, the weaknesses of Congress, the strength of the presidency, impeachment, impoundment, and executive privilege. Eckhardt acknowledges that the constitutive nature of the American Constitution makes provision for public opinion, current practice, and fixed customs and habits. Finally, Eckhardt believes that there is no greater textual warrant for presidential power in foreign affairs than in domestic matters.

Albert Gore (1974) presents arguments favoring legislative secrecy. He indicates that secrecy and deviousness, often unjustified in other contexts, are acceptable when national interest of high importance is involved. Gore argues that the legislature and government should be able to protect certain diplomatic and military information of potential value to the enemy. The author concludes by indicating his strong support for legislative secrecy. However, Gore points out his support of open government amidst the reality of legislative and governmental seccreries.

Erick Redman (1974) examines the conditions of life and work on Capitol Hill, particularly in the Senate, to illuminate the sequential steps and personalities in the “dance of legislation.” The National Health Service Corp serves as the vehicle for the narrative—a bill that was eventful and dramatic. The information for this study was obtained from personal observations of his service on the Hill and secondary sources—books in the Library of Congress.

Hugh Heclo (1978) shows the changes that have taken place in all aspects of legislative politics, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. Heclo looks at the executive as an agent of power. This situation is authoritatively traced as the executive branch is placed against a post-New Deal political environment. The author concludes that the changing executive branch has been brought about because of the diffusion and atomization of power.

E. E. Schattschneider (1960) provides a realist review of democracy in America. He proffers a theory about the relation between organization and conflict, between political organization and democracy and the organizational alternatives open to the American people. The nature of political organization hinges on the conflicts exploited in the political arena, which ultimately is what politics is about. In order to understand politics, he suggests that we know what the struggle is about.

David Price (1978), using a case study approach, attempts to explain the persistence of conflicts between the congressional and executive branches during the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan presidencies to gauge the nature of Congress as a policymaking institution.
He proposes the following: (a) congressional “fragmentation” forces it to balk at what presidents request in some areas and to push them farther than they want to go in others, (b) congressional “particularism” leads Congress to give priority to constituency-based interests aimed at redistributive objectives, (c) congressional policymaking is committee-centered. Indeed, Price, like the other authors discussed earlier, concentrate heavily on committee jurisdiction and lawmaking, patterns of committee decision-making (hearings, markups, and reports), and the policy environment.

Scholars who have written about congressional committees in change trace changes in the system to the 1946 Legislative Reorganization Act. This Act allowed Congress to dramatically alter its committee structure by reducing the number of standing committees and specifying each panel’s jurisdiction. These changes, however, resulted over the years in a proliferation of subcommittees, obsolete jurisdictions, unbalanced workloads, and too many committee assignments for members to manage.

Roger Davidson (1978) provides an overview of Congress, including changes in elections and career patterns. This work is a major revision of a collection of essays divided into four topical areas. Davidson’s piece is part of the first section titled “Patterns and Dynamics of Congressional Change.” The overall emphasis centers on the nature of institutional change. The general conclusion is that Congress needs to be revised to make the government functional. After looking at the various factors impacting the nature of congressional change, the author concludes that interest group politics has effectively sapped the institutional will of Congress by factioning its organization and membership. To lessen the impact of interest groups on the legislative process, Davidson calls for internal reorganization; for example, shifting oversight from appropriation and authorization committees.

Bernard Asbell (1978) provides a fairly pedestrian account of the inner workings of the Senate. The author primarily investigates the functions, operations, and roles of the Senate through his own eyes and those of of Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine, whom Asbell accompanied on his daily rounds over several months (i.e. May 1974 through June 1976). Asbell’s personal perceptions of congressional Washington are provided. He focuses on issues that were related to Muskie’s agenda. The senator was a formidable force on the Subcommittee on Environmental Pollution. As a result, Asbell provides insights into the revisions that were discussed as the Clean Air Act of 1970 expired. In terms of senatorial politics, Asbell spoke of the tactics used by Muskie in getting ready for re-election in 1976. The major one he points out is that by the end of 1975, Muskie had spent 100 days in Maine. The purpose was to eliminate the impression that his heart and mind are “too much” in Washington and on national affairs and too little on his constituency.

Norman J. Ornstein (1975) looks at the causes, nature and consequences, individually and institutionally, of a number of subcommittee reforms enacted by the Democratic Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives in January 1971 and January 1973 at the beginning of the 92nd and 93rd Congress, respectively. Emphasis is placed on the extent of
the successful implementation of the reforms, why and how structural changes in Congress are generated, the impact of the reforms on subsequent legislative actions, and the possible future patterns of behavior and change in the House. According to Ornstein, reforms led to the following outcomes: (a) a minimum of 16 new subcommittee chairmen; (b) spread of power to younger, less senior members; and (c) improving the lot of non-Southern and liberal Democrats in 1971.

As the preceding review reveals, studies on subcommittees and more specifically, for the subject of this book, the role of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in shaping United States foreign policy towards South Africa from 1981 to 1992) are lacking. Since subcommittees have grown in importance in both houses, particularly in the Senate, and almost every majority party senator in recent years has chaired a subcommittee, comprehensive studies of these subcommittees are urgently needed.

In sum, the theoretical propositions reviewed in this section are clearly not definitive in their discourse on the congressional committee system. The discussions engendered in these studies, nonetheless, act as stimuli to more research that will undoubtedly add to the cumulative knowledge already established on the congressional committee system. This book will, therefore, give considerable attention to the institutional framework within which African affairs were handled prior to the establishment of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

**METHODODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The research methodology employed for this research is a Case Study approach. In a case study, the researcher examines one or a few cases of a phenomenon in considerable detail, typically using a number of data collection methods, such as personal interviews, document analysis, and observation. As indicated earlier, the particular foreign policy issue examined in this book is United States foreign policy toward South Africa. The following discussion highlights the case study tools used for investigating this foreign policy issue.

Given Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek's propositions pointed out earlier and the major objectives of this book, the following hypotheses are probed:

1. The complexity of the South African situation determined the type of policy position the African Affairs Subcommittee took.
2. The demands of interest groups that called for the Subcommittee to handle these issues determined the manner in which it did so.
3. The desires of members to chair the Subcommittee in order to initiate lawmaking and oversight, augment personal prestige and influence, gain staff and office space, and gain a national platform influenced the type of policy position the Subcommittee took.
4. The desire of a majority of congressional representatives to circumscribe the subcommittee chairman helped to shape the type of policy position the sub-committee took.

The theoretical framework used to guide the analysis in this book is David Easton’s “framework for political analysis.” This framework is diagrammatically represented as follows:

**Figure 1: The Political System provided by David Easton in *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965:112).**

Easton’s theoretical framework rests on four premises. The first is the *System*: that is, “it is useful to view political life as a system of behavior” (1965:25). For this book, this calls for the examination of the American political system in terms of the bargaining process that took place within Congress and between Congress and the Executive branch in shaping United States foreign policy towards South Africa.

The second premise of Easton’s framework is the *Environment*. As he put it, “A system is distinguished from the environment in which it exists and open to influences from it” (1965:25). In terms of this book, it means that the political, economic, social, and cultural environment within which the politics of shaping United States foreign policy toward South Africa was framed is analyzed.

The third premise in Easton’s framework is *Response*. As Easton described it, response is “[v]ariations in the structures and processes within a system may usefully be interpreted as constructive or positive alternative efforts by members of a system to regulate or cope with stress flowing from environmental as well as internal sources” (1965:26). For this book, this means that an examination of the manner in which the Subcommittee coped with conditions of the environment, in light of the sources that were available to it when it embarked upon formulating its position on the South African issue, is conducted.

The fourth premise is *Feedback*. According to Easton, feedback is “[t]he capacity of a system to persist in the face of stress is a function of the presence and nature of the information and other influences that return to its actors and decision-makers” (1965:26). This
calls for analyzing various responses and/or actions of various groups that were affected by
United States foreign policy toward South Africa.

Following Easton's conception, the systems analysis approach is beneficial for examin-
ing the role of the Subcommittee in shaping United States foreign policy towards South
Africa, because the framework takes its departure from the notion of political life as a
boundary-maintaining set of interactions imbedded in and surrounded by other social
systems to the influence of which it is constantly exposed. As such, it is helpful to inter-
pret political phenomena as constituting an open system, one that must cope with the
problems generated by its exposure to influences from these environmental systems. If a
system of this kind is to persist through time, it must obtain adequate feedback about its
past performances, and it must be able to take measures that regulate its future behavior
(Easton 1965:25).

The pattern of analysis, then, involves the examination of the following variables:

1. the nature of the inputs,
2. the variable conditions under which they will constitute a stressful disturbance on
   the system,
3. the environmental and systemic conditions that generate such stressful conditions,
4. the typical ways in which systems have sought to cope with stress,
5. the role of information feedback, and finally,
6. the part that outputs play in these conversion and coping processes (Easton
   1965:132).

In sum, the systems analysis framework allows a researcher to conceive public policy as
a response of a political system to forces brought to bear upon it from the environment.
Forces generated in the environment, which affect the political system, are viewed as
the inputs. The environment is any condition or circumstance defined as external to the
boundaries of the political system. The political system represents that group of interrelated
structures and processes which functions authoritatively to allocate values for a society.
Outputs of the political system are authoritative value allocations of the system, and these
allocations constitute public policy.

Two types of data were collected for this book: primary and secondary data. For the
primary data, face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to solicit various perspec-
tives on the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The
instrument employed to collect the data during the interviews generally entailed the fol-
lowing questions:

1. How would you describe the assignment process of the African Affairs Subcommittee
   of the House Foreign Affairs Committee from 1981 to 1992?
2. How would you characterize the leadership of this Subcommittee from 1981 to 1992?
3. How were policies made within this Subcommittee?
4. What Changes are taking place within this Subcommittee?
5. How would you characterize the Subcommittee’s role in shaping United States foreign policy towards Africa?
6. How would you describe your personal experience in the process of influencing the work of the Subcommittee?
7. What are your predictions for the role of this Subcommittee in the future?

These open-ended questions permit respondents to describe their knowledge, experiences, feelings, beliefs, ideas, predispositions and values about various aspects of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Thus, the preceding instrument encompasses opinion and attitude questions, information questions, and behavior questions. Former and present subcommittee chairmen, their staff, and directors of lobby groups on African affairs were interviewed.

In addition to these interviews, the relevant Congressional Records on proceedings of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee were also used as primary data sources. These records entail congressional debates and testimonies, which allow a researcher to delineate the legislative history as well as the politics of the Subcommittee.

For the secondary data, books, journal articles, newspaper articles, and magazine articles that have dealt with congressional committees’ work from 1981 to 1992 were consulted. These sources allow a researcher to discern other plausible perspectives on the Subcommittee.

The data collected from these sources were analyzed qualitatively. This means that a comprehensive description and explanation of the many data collected were in order.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE REST OF THE BOOK**

The following chapter (two) focuses on the political, social, economic and cultural environment in which United States foreign policy towards South Africa from 1981 to 1992 was shaped. The discussion of these environmental conditions forms the basis for the analysis of the political system. The consequent exercise examines how these environmental forces impacted on the political process in general, and the legislature in particular.

In chapter three, the inputs—i.e. demands, pressures, and support of the various groups within the political system—are examined. This chapter details how these inputs set off the political process that led to shaping United States foreign policy toward South Africa. Attention is given to the key actors that participated in articulating the demands, support, and pressure that came to bear on the legislators.