

# news

*Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs  
Morris K. Udall, Chairman*

*House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515*

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## RAHALL ANNOUNCES SOUTH AFRICAN MINERALS HEARING

Congressman Nick J. Rahall, D-West Virginia, announced today that the Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources will conduct an oversight hearing on the dependency of the United States on strategic and critical minerals from South Africa.

Due to South Africa's dominance in the production of several minerals such as chromium and platinum, and the essential role played by these imports in the economy and security of the U.S., the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 exempted strategic and critical minerals from the trade sanctions it imposed.

"Basically, the foremost industrial nation in the world is heavily dependent on a politically unstable country for its very defensive and industrial base," Rahall, the Subcommittee chairman, said.

"While policy makers often use our dependency on commodities such as platinum as the reason to exempt strategic and critical minerals from any sanctions measure, I believe that with greater emphasis on finding substitute materials and alternative supplies, we may be in a better position to free ourselves from the minerals stranglehold the apartheid regime has over the U.S. This will be the focus of the hearing," Rahall said.

As an example of the importance of these minerals, Rahall noted, "almost every car on the road today is carrying around a piece of South Africa in its pollution control system." Platinum group metals are a primary substance in automobile catalytic converters and the U.S. is directly dependent upon South Africa for more than 45% of the platinum used in this country.

"In one sense, there is a linkage between clean air in this country and racism in South Africa. By exempting South African platinum imports from the trade sanctions, in effect we are saying that it is alright to do business with a government which practices blatant basic human rights violations because we want to reduce automobile pollution," Rahall said.

In addition to platinum, the U.S. is greatly dependent on South Africa for chromium, manganese, vanadium and gold. Chromium is what makes stainless steel "stainless," and steel cannot be produced without manganese. The U.S. depends directly on South Africa for 56% and 33% of all chromium and manganese used respectively. Meanwhile, the U.S. produces no chromium and trivial amounts of manganese and platinum group metals.

The hearing will be held on December 10 at 9:45 a.m. in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building.