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Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

February 11, 1983

The Honorable George Shultz
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Secretary Shultz:

We are concerned by the recent decline in funding of Southern African refugee education programs by the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs. For example, as you know, the Bureau's budget for Special Projects (including these education programs) was cut from \$12 million in FY 1982 to 8 million in FY 1983, and a further \$1.5 million reduction is proposed in the FY 1984 request.

A consequence of the recent funding decline is that the refugee education program conducted by American organizations like the Phelps-Stokes Fund and African-American Institute is gradually expiring. From 1976-80, AAI served 645 students and Phelps Stokes enrolled 149 for a total of 794. Most of these students were Zimbabwean but about a fifth were South African and Namibian. The yearly intake for 1976-78 averaged approximately 225, and for the academic year 1979-80 it was 122. However, since Zimbabwe's independence in early 1980, the only new intake of students has been AAI's 50 slots in 1982 for Namibians and South Africans.

Even if one just counts the South Africans and Namibians entering these programs over the years, it is clear that there has been a definite decline. The average intake of these students was about 45 per year in 1976-78 and 30 for the 1979-80 academic year. There was no new intake between February 1980 and February 1982 when AAI finally obtained 50 slots which it stretched to accommodate 75 students.

There is some concern among the above-mentioned, relevant organizations and a number of black South African leaders that the State Department is intent upon lessening its commitment to the Southern African Refugee Education programs because of the newly-launched, AID-administered, South African Scholarship Program funded at \$4 million in FYs 1982 and 1983. So far, our inquiries have determined that there may be no linkage between these two programs. Still, there appears to be a growing perception that even separate funding decisions signify a decision to downgrade educational assistance to refugees in favor of aid to residents of South Africa.

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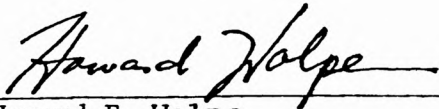
Since 1961 the U.S. Government has been involved in training efforts in the U.S. and Africa for Southern African refugees. Fields of training have included agriculture, education, health, rural development, public administration, economic planning and other areas to meet priority development needs. Zimbabwe provides an excellent example of the developmental and political value of this educational assistance when one considers the number of American-trained Zimbabweans who were once refugees and who returned within the first two years of independence to take up a variety of important positions in their new Government.

Continuing war and strife in Namibia and South Africa have recently increased the flow of refugees in Southern Africa. According to UNHCR figures, there are over 80,000 Namibian and South African refugees, primarily based in other Southern African countries.

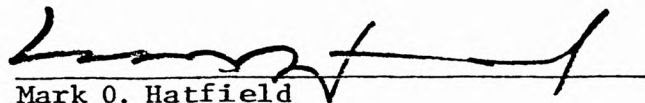
We believe that continuing U.S. Government assistance to refugee education through a substantial new intake of Namibians and South Africans annually will help us to build strong political relations with future leaders of these countries and contribute to their future national development--as we have done in Zimbabwe.

In conclusion we strongly support the provision of the House Subcommittee on Africa's Report on the Administration's Foreign Assistance request for Fiscal Year 1982, which stated:

The Subcommittee strongly recommends that the Administration continue to support those educational and scholarship programs which are designed to assist Southern Africans who are forced into political exile. Many of these refugees are young student leaders who will one day play a meaningful role in the future to their country. To the extent we can demonstrate our support for them, our overall interests will be better served.




Howard E. Wolpe
Chairman
Subcommittee on Africa



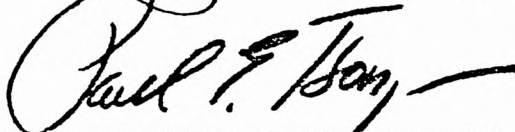
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