

**Decision Memos to the West Wing
(Maria Echaveste)**





1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW #701 Washington, D.C. 20036 • phone (202) 667-8227 • email ia@interaction.org

VIA FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION - Total pages 3 (including cover)

DATE: October 16, 2000

TO: Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff, The White House
(202) 456-1121

FROM: InterAction, Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs

RE: Funding for Migration and Refugee Account

Message:

See attached letter.

If there are problems with this fax, please contact:

Marissa Maurer
Senior Program Manager
Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs, InterAction
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 701
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202.667.8227 ext. 103
Fax: 202.667.8236
Email: mmaurer@interaction.org

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Meredith Richardson,
Pearl S. Buck International Inc.
Richard Ryscavage, Jesuit Refugee Service
Pat Scheid, Aga Khan Foundation
Paul Thompson, Project Concern International

1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Suite 701
Washington, DC 20036
PHONE: (202) 667-8227
FAX: (202) 667-8236
(202) 667-4131
E-MAIL: la@interaction.org
<http://www.interaction.org>

October 16, 2000

William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

On behalf of InterAction members working on migration and refugee issues, we are writing for your support on increased funding for the Migration and Refugee Account (MRA) in the FY2001 Foreign Operations bill. In recent weeks, we requested that a minimum of \$700 million be allocated to the MRA, as the bare minimum required to reverse the cuts in overseas assistance and refugee admissions.

We are encouraged by the recent letter to the Foreign Operations Conference Committee from Representatives Christopher Smith (R-NJ) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), endorsed by 55 members and supported by 9 others, that requested an authorization of \$750 million. As you know from a recent letter you received, Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and Bob Graham (D-FL) also support this figure.

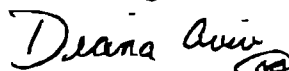
We hope that you will support these efforts to increase funds for the MRA account. Following the Administration's request in January, evidence has emerged that the world refugee situation has deteriorated dramatically. In June of this year the number of refugees in the world climbed considerably, and in the first eight months of this year, at least 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted. Resources need to be in place that adequately address this trend.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Father Richard Ryscavage, SJ
Chair, Committee on Migration
and Refugee Affairs



Diana Aviv,
Vice Chair, Committee on
Migration and Refugee Affairs

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InterAction is a membership association of US private voluntary organizations engaged in international humanitarian efforts including relief, development, refugee assistance, environment, population, public policy, and global education.

cc: John Podesta, Chief of Staff
The White House

Jacob J. Lew, Director
Office of Management and Budget

Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House

Eric Schwartz, Senior Director for Multilateral and
Humanitarian Affairs
National Security Council

Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
Department of State

Refugee Council USA

3211 4th Street NE
Washington, DC 20017-1194
Tel: 202-541-5402/04 Fax: 202-722-8800

FAX Memorandum

Date: October 13, 2000

Total pages: 3 (including cover)

To: Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff

Fax #: 456-1121

From: Merrill Smith, LIRS
Washington Representative

RE: Letter to President Clinton on Migration and Refugee Assistance

If you have any problems with this transmittal, please contact the Refugee Council USA at (202) 541-5404.

Thank you.

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA

3211 4TH Street, NE Washington, DC 20017-1194
Tel: 202-541-5402 Fax: 202-722-8800

October 13, 2000

William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I write in the final days of budget negotiations to reiterate the request of the Refugee Council USA that at least \$700 million be allocated to the Migration and Refugee Assistance account (MRA) in foreign operations appropriations legislation for FY 2001. As we have noted, this amount is the bare minimum required to reverse the cuts in overseas assistance and refugee admissions necessitated by the State Department's initial budget proposal.

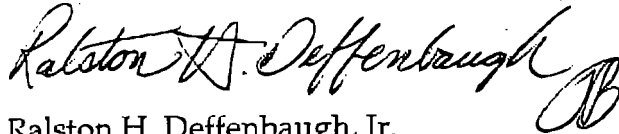
Following both the Administration's proposal and RCUSA's request, however, evidence emerged that the world refugee situation had not remained static but instead had deteriorated dramatically. To cite just two prominent examples: we learned in only in June of this year that the number of refugees in the world climbed 600,000 by the end of 1999 to 14.1 million; we also learned only in September that at least 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted in just the first eight months of this year.

We are, therefore, encouraged and gratified by the bi-partisan response of leaders on refugee issues in the House and Senate, to re-iterate their initial request for MRA in FY 2001 – specifically, that it be funded at the authorized level of \$750 million. Fifty-five Members of the House endorsed the letter of Representatives Christopher Smith and Cynthia McKinney requesting this amount. (Nine more Members, including three more Republicans, called in to endorse the letter after the cutoff date had passed.) In addition, Senators Edward Kennedy, Paul Wellstone and Bob Graham have written to you asking for the authorized amount. Senator Charles E. Grassley also wrote to request that refugee admissions not be cut but instead be raised back at least to their 1995 level of 112,000.

In light of the forgoing, I hope and trust that the Administration will vigorously advocate for an MRA budget that will allow the United States to mount an appropriately robust and humane response to the actual needs of today's refugees.

Thank you very much for your time and kind attention to this matter. As ever, members of the Refugee Council USA stand ready to meet with representatives of your Administration to discuss this further and to render assistance in order to accomplish this objective.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr." with a large, stylized initial "B" at the end.

Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr.
Chair, Refugee Council USA

cc: John Podesta, Chief of Staff
The White House

Jacob J. Lew, Director
Office of Management and Budget

Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House

Eric Schwartz, Senior Director for Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs
National Security Council

Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
Department of State

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Tel: 202-541-5402 Fax: 202-722-8800

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The White House
Washington DC 20500

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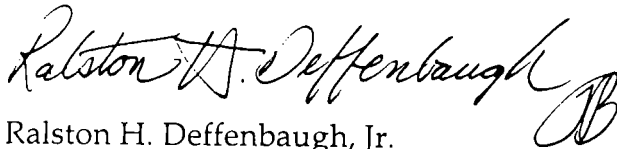
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Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr." with a stylized monogram "RB" at the end.

Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr.
Chair, Refugee Council USA

cc: John Podesta, Chief of Staff
The White House

Jacob J. Lew, Director
Office of Management and Budget

Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House

Eric Schwartz, Senior Director for Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs
National Security Council

Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
Department of State

PAUL D. WELLSTONE
MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA TOLL FREE NUMBER:
1-800-842-6041

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2303

COMMITTEES:
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
SMALL BUSINESS
INDIAN AFFAIRS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS

October 3, 2000

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Clinton,

I am writing to request that you revise your budget request for migration and refugee assistance during end-of-year negotiations with Congress. The Administration's request of \$658 million for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) in the FY 2001 foreign operations budget is woefully inadequate. It would mean a reduction in protection assistance to African refugees by nearly \$14 million and a cut in U.S. refugee admissions of as many as 9,000. Assistance would also be cut by \$4.35 million to refugees in the Near East and by \$1.29 million to those in South Asia. None of these cuts are justified by the present refugee situation in the world or by fiscal realities here in Washington. Instead, the program should receive the full \$750 million authorized by Congress and I ask that you revise your budget request accordingly.

Today there are more than 14 million refugees in the world, an increase of 600,000 in just the last year. More than a third of Africa's three million refugees are seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. Conservative estimates put the number of newly uprooted Africans at 1.5 million in just the past eight months. The disparity between the international community's response to the needs of African refugees and to those in other regions of the world is nothing short of shocking. Also, I remind you that the program of admission of refugees to the United States has been enormously successful. Nevertheless, if the Administration's original budget request for MRA is approved, only 76,000 refugees can be admitted in 2001. This is a decrease from the 85,000 admissions approved by Congress this year and a decrease of nearly a half from the 142,000 admissions funded in FY 1992.

The United States can be proud of its historical role as a champion of refugees and a haven for the oppressed. The present MRA request, on the other hand, can only send the wrong signal to other nations. Please amend the Administration request to reflect a robust and humane American response to the needs of refugees.

Sincerely,



Paul David Wellstone
United States Senator

☐ HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2303
(202) 224-5641

☐ 2550 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, WEST
COURT INTERNATIONAL BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MN 55114-1025
(651) 845-9222

☐ POST OFFICE BOX 281
105 2D AVENUE, SOUTH
VIRGINIA, MN 55782
(218) 741-1074

☐ 417 LITCHFIELD AVENUE, E.V.
WILLMAR, MN 56224
(320) 231-0001



**LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION
AND REFUGEE SERVICE**

122 C Street, NW, Suite 125
Washington, D.C. 20001-2172
202/783-7509

fax: 202/783-7502
lirswdc@aol.com
www.lirs.org

FAX MEMORANDUM

Fax number: _____

Number of pages including cover: 2

DATE: 10/3/00

TO: MARIA ECHAUESTE

FROM: Merrill Smith
(202) 783-7509 (O)
(202) 783-7502 (Fax)

COMMENTS:

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

October 2, 2000

The Honorable Jacob Lew
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Old Executive Office Building, Room 252
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Jack,

I'm writing to urge the Administration to increase its funding request for the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account for FY 2001 to \$750 million and to make this a priority in its budgetary end-game negotiations with Congress. Currently, the Administration's FY 2001 foreign operations budget for MRA is \$658 million. Unfortunately, this amount will translate into a significant reduction in temporary protection assistance to African refugees of approximately \$14 million and a cut in the admissions rolls by as much as 9,000 individuals. Also, under the Administration's current proposal, only 76,000 refugees could be admitted in FY 2001, marking a 46% decline from the 142,000 admissions receiving funding in FY 1992.

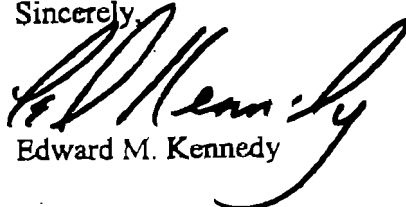
Based on recent reports of a deteriorating global refugee situation, the \$750 million authorized by Congress for FY 2001 is appropriate. The refugee situation in Africa has substantially deteriorated since the Administration's last request, as a result of the recent collapse of the Sierra Leone peace accords and the displacement of more than 1.5 million Africans in the first eight months of this calendar year. The disparity between the international community's response to the increased needs of African refugees in comparison to the needs of other refugees is an issue of growing concern.

Strong bi-partisan support has long existed in Congress for a fair refugee program. The U.S. has been a historic champion of refugees and a haven for the oppressed. Refugees are not a burden to our country – they are an asset.

As a leader in refugee policy, the United States has an obligation to maintain a strong and humane refugee program. Inadequate funding for our refugee program, on the other hand, would send the wrong signal to all other countries.

I look forward to working with you to achieve a fairer and more effective American response to the dire needs of refugees worldwide.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy

Refugee Funding - 2/2

Fund = Endgame strategy on funding for refugee assistance funding.
Need Admin to make funding a priority.
~~the~~ Grassroots level advocacy on the bill.
Mitt ~~and~~ McConnell now supportive
How can we work w/ the WH

- Admin does not push for MRA in final negotiations
- MRA - last 4 yrs - \$133m - 17% cut in 4 yrs.
- Imports of shortfalls -
- 1 page ~~list~~ of the import of cuts
- MRA only not keeping up.

New crisis in African states further hampers level of devlop

-Mort rent \$700 m, Home \$645, Site \$615

Merill - ~~with~~ $\rightarrow$ \$655 will take
 cutback - Focused on the Hill first - Callahan, KY (Edmond)
 - McConnell will push for - claim

- Frank Wolf - will put for \$7500 should they go to Europe

- Chris Smith + me King when 2 collaterals = \$750 m2

- United Alaska, Miss.

- Presentation in Delgo House,

- things ~~are~~ have softened up for Admin to ~~push~~ push to avoid cuts in Apr

Human
catastrophe - increase # of refugees -
• Bishops visited Athens
• Refugees are staying in camp

- State Dept - has been & gets in ~~the state~~ more requests.

Waters

(2)

State Dept - have spoken to PRM

- Longest notification requirement in state bill - ^{PRM} ~~protect~~ ~~same~~ ~~that~~ focused, they don't like it either. Over not seen focused on \$ a million or so they say they are.

Eric S. - Not at the top of the list b/c

\$850m Perceksky linked to refugee effort.

- However, could be tried to seek to ~~lose~~ ~~the~~ \$

- Getting beyond \$658m is much more difficult b/c need a budget awarded for State Dept.

(1) Admission \$5 - can't raise \$ without more \$

(2) MRA - Eric will make sure on lot

(3) Balance budget to \$700M - will down w/ State Dept to make a deficit or necessary.

- FY2002 - \$700 million minimum.

September 20, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Migration and Refugee Assistance Account

Dear President Clinton:

The undersigned respectfully request that you amend your Administration's FY 2001 budget request for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), part of the larger foreign operations budget, from \$658 million to at least \$700 million. The original request would reduce overseas assistance to African refugees by nearly \$14 million and cut funded U.S. refugee admissions by as many as 9,000. Neither is an acceptable response to present refugee needs which, in light of present fiscal resources, compel the conclusion that both refugee admissions and overseas refugee assistance, especially in Africa, can and should be increased.

The number of refugees in the world has increased by about 600,000 to more than 14 million last year. Of Africa's more than 3 million refugees, more than one third are presently seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. Moreover, by conservative estimates, 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted just in the first eight months of this year alone.

Even without the envisioned cuts in assistance for African refugees, serious disparities in our response to the needs of refugees around the world beg for redress. Our response to the plight of European refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has been admirable. Protection assistance to similarly situated African refugees fleeing terrible atrocities in Sierra Leone, on the other hand, reportedly amounted to as little as 11 cents per refugee per day.

Also, the proposal of a ceiling as low as 76,000 for refugee admissions in FY 2001 represents not only a dramatic cut from the 85,000 funded this year, but a more than 46% overall decline from the 142,000 funded in 1992.

Although the Senate and the House have passed substantially lower MRA budgets, Budget Committee leaders in both chambers have announced their willingness to lift confining budgetary caps in order to reach agreement with the Administration. It is our hope that the FY 2001 budget will set a shining standard for refugee protection as part of the Clinton legacy and not a further and unjustifiable decline.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of our views.

Respectfully yours,

Endorsing Agencies:

Africa Faith & Justice Network
Africare
Alliance for Justice, Medical Mission Sisters
American Friends Service Committee
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Batey Relief Alliance
Bethany Christian Services
B'nai B'rith International
Catholic Charities/Community & Immigrant Services, HI.
Centro Latino
Church World Service/Immigration & Refugee Program
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Colorado Refugee Network Council
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Eritrean Development Foundation
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Inc.
Grupo Quetzal
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Interfaith Service Bureau, Sacramento
International Aid
International Rescue Committee
International Women's Health Coalition
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Kurdish Human Rights Watch
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service
Lutheran Refugee Services of Colorado
Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
MAP International
Mobile Coalition for Refugees
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Coalition for Haitian Rights
National Immigration Forum

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of our views.

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Africare
Alliance for Justice, Medical Mission Sisters
American Friends Service Committee
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Batey Relief Alliance
Bethany Christian Services
B'nai B'rith International
Catholic Charities/Community & Immigrant Services, HI.
Centro Latino
Church World Service/Immigration & Refugee Program
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Colorado Refugee Network Council
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Eritrean Development Foundation
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Inc.
Grupo Quetzal
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Interfaith Service Bureau, Sacramento
International Aid
International Rescue Committee
International Women's Health Coalition
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Kurdish Human Rights Watch
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service
Lutheran Refugee Services of Colorado
Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
MAP International
Mobile Coalition for Refugees
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Coalition for Haitian Rights
National Immigration Forum

New York Times, Saturday, September 16, 2000.

Religion Journal: Back From Africa With Cry for Help

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

A month ago, three Roman Catholic bishops from the United States embarked on a fact-finding journey through the Great Lakes region of eastern and central Africa, an area that for several years has seemed to produce only bad news.

Their purpose was to assess the situation of refugees displaced by civil war and regional conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. There may be as many as two million of these people, some of them children living in vast camps without adult relatives.

Since their return to the United States about two weeks ago, the bishops have begun calling greater attention to the refugees, for the sake of persuading government policy makers and the public that much more can be done to help.

"This seems to be like a very large region of the world that people are willing to let fall off the map," said Thomas G. Wenski, auxiliary bishop of Miami, one of those who made the journey. "We talk about globalization, and the Great Lakes region of Africa seems to be written out of the equation."

Speaking in an interview on Thursday, Bishop Wenski paraphrased a statement of Pope John Paul II that globalization ought to mean solidarity with other human beings, and added, "Solidarity means no one left behind."

Bishop Wenski was accompanied on the two-week trip by Bishop Phillip F. Straling of Reno, Nev., and Bishop Donald E. Pelotte of Gallup, N.M., a board member of Catholic Relief Services, which aids people overseas. Four officials who work with refugees for the Vatican or the United States Catholic Conference also made the journey.

"The delegation was split up at times, and not everybody was at every camp," Bishop Wenski said. But in all, the bishops and their support staff visited refugee camps in five countries. One camp, Kukama, in Kenya, is home to about 5,000 unaccompanied children, among many other people.

A report on the bishops' journey is being prepared, but in the meantime they have issued recommendations, among them that concerted

international efforts be made to bring peace to the region; that Congress increase, to at least \$700 million, refugee assistance to the area in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1; and that the United States and other nations increase the number of African refugees they will themselves admit. (It is to the United States' credit, the bishops say, that it has accepted as many as 18,000 African refugees this year, up from 7,000 in 1998.)

"By having bishops travel to the region, you raise the profile of the area," Bishop Wenski said hopefully.

"Each place we visited, the local bishops were very appreciative of our coming," he said. "When we got to Burundi, the bishop said, 'Nobody comes here, because it is so dangerous.' "

Another prelate, he recalled, quoted an African proverb to the effect that you know who your true friends are because they come to you when you are endangered.

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RICHARD J. GARON
CHIEF OF STAFF

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5021

September 22, 2000

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KATHLEEN BERTELSEN MOAZED
DEMOCRATIC CHIEF OF STAFF

The Honorable Sonny Callahan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Export Financing, and Related Programs
H150 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Callahan:

We are writing to urge your support in the Foreign Operations Conference Committee for an increase in funding for refugee protection.

In recent years, the Migration and Refugee Account (MRA) has been the only major State Department account to undergo a substantial real-dollar cut. The MRA appropriation in FY 1995 was \$671 million, plus an additional \$12 million in salaries and expenses. So both the \$645 million in this year's House-passed bill and the \$615 million in the Senate bill are significantly lower than what we were spending on refugees six years ago, even in unadjusted dollars.

The cut is far more dramatic, of course, when the effects of inflation are taken into account. The inflation-adjusted equivalent of our FY 1995 support for refugee protection is about \$815 million. The amounts currently under consideration by the Conference represent a reduction in the range of 18% to 25% below this amount. Over the same period, the number of refugees in the world and the scope of their needs have increased rather than decreased.

Last year Congress enacted the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, which addressed this dramatic shortfall by authorizing \$750 for the MRA account in FY 2001. Unfortunately, the Administration's budget request of \$658 million fell substantially short of the authorized level, and the House and the Senate figures are even lower.

The numbers, however, do not even begin to tell the whole story. As you know, the MRA account provides emergency food, shelter, and resettlement assistance for victims of religious, racial, and political persecution, as well as repatriation assistance for those who can

safely return to their home countries. Some of the practical consequences of the cuts in refugee spending over the past five years include the following:

- Somali women in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya are regularly raped by gangs of local thugs when they gather firewood outside the camp. In other camps around the world cooking fuel is provided for the refugees, but there is no room for it in the Dadaab budget. In 1997 U.S. refugee officials announced a \$1 million emergency grant --- enough to provide firewood for the refugee women and their families for a year --- but then quietly decided to spend the money over several years, so that only about one-third of the need is being met. Predictably, the number of rapes has decreased, but not by much. Refugee women are still forced to venture outside the camp, where they are still being raped in large numbers.
- In the Kakuma camp, also in Kenya, food for the refugees has been cut by a third, to about 1400 calories per person per day. According to health workers in the camp, the number of malnutrition-related deaths of children under the age of five has increased tenfold, from two or three per month to over twenty.
- In Congo-Brazzaville, up to 40,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa are beyond the reach of humanitarian aid workers in part because the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) needs \$1.6 million for barges or aircraft to reach them along a remote river.
- In Pakistan and Iran, erosion of international financial support for refugee programs has resulted in the premature repatriation of several thousand Afghan refugees to regions in which there is inadequate food and water and where they are still in danger of persecution.
- In Armenia, half of the refugees from Azerbaijan live in hazardous and substandard housing because there are no funds to repair or replace their shelters. Meanwhile, refugees who have fled from Armenia to Azerbaijan find themselves in the same situation for the same reason: lack of funds.
- In the Russian Federation, a training program for local authorities to encourage them to respect the rights of 100,000 refugees residing in the country has been cancelled because the UNHCR country program is facing a 63 percent funding shortfall.
- In Turkey, 2,400 asylum seekers who arrived last year are still waiting for refugee interviews or status decisions because of a \$2.5 million shortfall which has prevented UNHCR from filling vacant positions for protection officers.

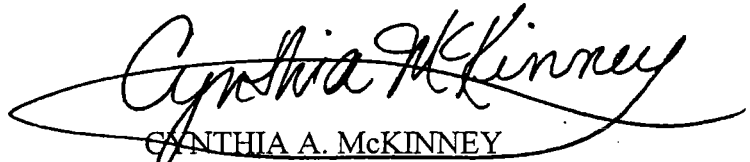
- UNHCR has instructed many of its offices around the world to cut their calendar year 2000 budgets because of an anticipated operating budget shortfall of about \$125 million. Unfortunately, these budgets had already been cut far below anticipated needs due to an instruction that budgets should be based on anticipated contributions from donors rather than on an assessment of the needs of refugees. The budget for Africa --- where per capita spending on refugee protection and assistance is already the lowest in the world, even after adjustment for variations in the cost of living --- will have to be cut by an additional 20% if more money is not found before the end of the year.
- Meanwhile, the number of refugees resettled in the United States is scheduled to drop to only 76,000 next year --- 9000 fewer than last year, and only about half the number admitted each year during the early 1990s. The Clinton administration's budget also includes a \$14 million cut in support for refugees in Africa.

We therefore urge that the Foreign Operations conference report include \$750 million for the Migration and Refugee Account, the full amount already authorized by Congress for FY 2001.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Chairman, Subcommittee on
International Operations and
Human Rights



CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
International Operations and
Human Rights



LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICE

122 C Street, NW, Suite 125
Washington, D.C. 20001-2172
202/783-7509

fax: 202/783-7502
lirswdc@aol.com
www.lirs.org

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE ASSISTANCE INFORMATION PACKET

Contents

Congressional and Administrative Documentation

1. United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, *Congressional Budget Presentation*, pp. 13, 13 fn. /a, 30.

\$658 million is proposed for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), in the FY 2001 foreign operations budget dealing with protection assistance to refugees overseas and the selection and processing of refugees for admission to the U.S.:

- nearly \$14 million will be cut from assistance to African refugees;
- as many as 9,000 funded refugees admissions will be cut;
- \$790 million was available for MRA in FY 2000 (\$623 million plus \$167 million from the 1999 Kosovo supplemental).

2. Letter from Reps. Christopher Smith and Cynthia McKinney, Chair and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, to the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, September 22, 2000

- MRA has been dramatically cut since 1995 in nominal and inflation-adjusted terms;
- dire consequences of MRA funding shortfalls itemized;
- authorized amount of \$750 million for FY 2001 MRA should be appropriated.

3. Letter from Sens. Spencer Abraham and Edward Kennedy, Chair and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration, to the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations Appropriations, July 25, 2000 (*Administration MRA budget proposal decried as "inadequate"*).

4. Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley of the Immigration Subcommittee to Sen. Mitch McConnell, Chair of Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, September 15, 2000

- over 14 million refugees in the world today, up over 500,000 in last year;

- Administration's proposed admissions cuts "dismay[ing]"; admissions should be instead be increased at least to 1995 level of 112,000.

U.S. Committee for Refugees Documentation

5. *Refugee Reports*, December 1999, p. 9 (142,000 refugee admissions to the U.S. were funded in 1992; 76,000 funded admissions in 2001 would be lowest level since 1987).
6. World Refugee Survey 2000, p. 10. (United States ranks eighth in the world in terms of per capita contributions to international refugee relief: \$1.63 per year per American; average Norwegian contributes \$15.62).
7. "Africa's Refugee Numbers Climb As New Violence Uproots 3 Million People," Press Release, June 13, 2000 (more than a third of Africa's 3.1 million refugees are seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict).
8. "1.5 Million Africans Flee in Search of Safety During First Eight Months of 2000," *September Update*, September 6, 2000.

Newspaper Articles and Editorials

9. "Increase amount of aid for refugees," *Bowling Green Daily News*, Editorial, August 2, 2000 (comprehensive endorsement of Refugee Council USA's request).
10. Gustave Niebuhr, "3 Prelates Return from Africa With a Cry for Help," *New York Times*, September 16, 2000, p. A14 (U.S. Catholic Bishops call for at least \$700 million in refugee assistance and increased African refugee resettlement).
11. U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Interview: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Julia Taft," *Refugees*, Vol. 2, No. 119, 2000, p. 17 (on the disparity in assistance to African and European refugees: "It is not fair and it's not right").
12. "Africa's Swelling Refugee Crisis," *New York Times*, Editorial, June 17, 2000 (assistance to African refugees amounts to as little as 11 cents a day per refugee).
13. Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr., "Aid for Refugees," Letter, *New York Times*, June 24, 2000, p. A26 (LIRS President deplores Administration budget for assistance to and admission of refugees).
- 14-15. Lauralyn Avallone, "Baldwin resident fights for rights of refugees," *Baldwin Herald*, September 7, 2000, p. 5; Joan Delaney, "Baldwinite helps refugees," *Freeport-Baldwin Leader*, August 31, 2000, p. 5 (one refugee's crusade to save MRA for others in need).

United States Department of State



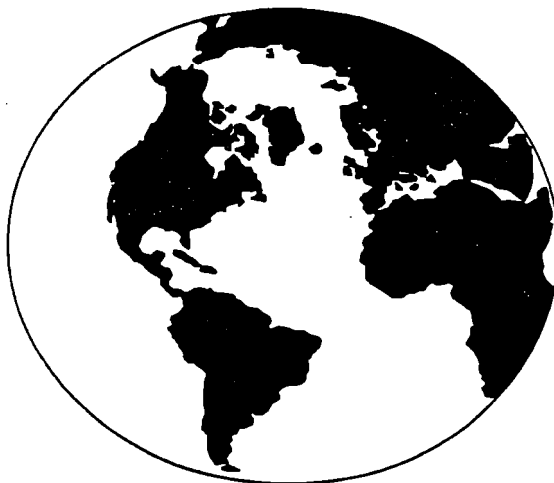
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Fiscal Year 2001

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET PRESENTATION

AND

BUREAU PERFORMANCE PLAN



MRA PROGRAM SUMMARY

(dollars in thousands)

	FY 1999 Enacted	FY 2000 Estimate/b	FY 2001 Request	Inc./Dec. (-)
Overseas Assistance	\$680,140	\$455,925	\$457,360	\$1,435
Africa	\$144,235	\$151,845	\$138,000	\$(13,845)
East Asia	18,456	16,050	15,000	(1,050)
Western Hemisphere	14,713	19,110	15,300	(3,810)
Near East/North Africa	97,963	107,450	103,100	(4,350)
South Asia	27,475	30,790	29,500	(1,290)
Europe /a	310,083	57,443	88,460	31,017
MRA	84,583	57,443	88,460	31,017
MRA Supplemental /a	225,500	0	0	0
Multiregional Activities	67,215	73,237	68,000	(5,237)
Refugee Admissions	142,360	92,900	126,000	33,100
MRA	102,360	92,900	126,000	33,100
MRA Supplemental /a	40,000	132,900 (actually available)	0	0
Refugees to Israel	70,000	60,000	60,000	-0-
Administrative Expenses	13,470	13,800	14,852	1,052
MRA	12,970	13,800	14,852	1,052
MRA Supplemental /a	500	0	0	0
MRA Appropriation Total	\$905,970	\$622,625	\$658,212	\$35,587
MRA	639,970	622,625	658,212	35,587
MRA Supplemental /a	266,000	0	0	0

/a The Kosovo Emergency Supplemental (P.L.106-31) was appropriated during FY 1999 and was made available for obligation until September 30, 2000. Of this amount \$1,500,000 was transferred to USIA, \$97,902,638 was obligated in FY 1999 and \$166,597,362 is available for obligation until September 30, 2000.

/b The FY 2000 estimate includes a technical adjustment to the regional distribution from that displayed in the Department's Budget in Brief of February 2000.

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

PROGRAM SUMMARY

(dollars in thousands)

	FY 1999 Enacted	FY 2000 Estimate	FY 2001 Request	Inc./Dec.(-)
MRA	102,360	92,900	126,000	33,100
MRA Supplemental	40,000	0	0	0
Total	\$142,360	\$92,900	\$126,000	\$33,100

132,900

The Administration requests \$126,000,000 to support the Refugee Admissions program in FY 2001. While this level is an increase of \$33,100,000 over the FY 2000 enacted level, \$40,000,000 from the FY 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriation³ will still be available in FY 2000 for refugee admissions. Programmatically, the FY 2001 request is a decrease of \$6,900,000 from the amount available for refugee admissions in FY 2000.

This request will support a minimum of 76,000 refugees to the United States; if cost savings are achieved, 80,000 admissions could be supported. The President, following the annual consultation process with Congress later in FY 2000, will determine the final number of refugee admissions and the regional allocations. The specific regional ceilings established in the consultations process will be based on an assessment of worldwide refugee needs at that time. The request funds all related refugee admissions activities and the processing and transportation of a small number of Amerasian Immigrants. In FY 2001, PRM will continue to give priority to enhancing accessibility to the refugee admissions program for individuals in need of the protection afforded by resettlement.

Actual U.S. refugee admissions for FY 1999 and the established FY 2000 ceilings are shown in the table below:

U.S. Refugee Admissions Levels

Geographic Region	FY 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Ceiling
Africa	13,038	18,000
East Asia	10,204	8,000
Europe	55,576	47,000
Latin America/Caribbean	2,110	3,000
Near East/South Asia	4,078	8,000
Unallocated *	0	6,000
TOTAL - FUNDED	85,006	90,000

In FY 2000, the funded admissions level is 85,000 and 5,000 admissions numbers of the unallocated reserve are available for refugees, (if needed, and if necessary funding can be identified within existing appropriations for the Departments of State and Health and Human Services. The Department will notify Congress should use of this contingency become necessary.

³ The Kosovo Emergency Supplemental (P.L. 106-31) was appropriated during FY 1999 and was made available for obligation until September 30, 2000.

WILLIAM F. GOODLING, PENNSYLVANIA
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TOM TANCREDO, COLORADO

RICHARD J. GARON
CHIEF OF STAFF

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5021

September 22, 2000

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HOWARD L. BERMAN, CALIFORNIA
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JOSEPH M. HOEFFEL, PENNSYLVANIA
[VACANCY]

KATHLEEN BERTELSEN MOAZED
DEMOCRATIC CHIEF OF STAFF

The Honorable Sonny Callahan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Export Financing, and Related Programs
H150 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Callahan:

We are writing to urge your support in the Foreign Operations Conference Committee for an increase in funding for refugee protection.

In recent years, the Migration and Refugee Account (MRA) has been the only major State Department account to undergo a substantial real-dollar cut. The MRA appropriation in FY 1995 was \$671 million, plus an additional \$12 million in salaries and expenses. So both the \$645 million in this year's House-passed bill and the \$615 million in the Senate bill are significantly lower than what we were spending on refugees six years ago, even in unadjusted dollars.

The cut is far more dramatic, of course, when the effects of inflation are taken into account. The inflation-adjusted equivalent of our FY 1995 support for refugee protection is about \$815 million. The amounts currently under consideration by the Conference represent a reduction in the range of 18% to 25% below this amount. Over the same period, the number of refugees in the world and the scope of their needs have increased rather than decreased.

Last year Congress enacted the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, which addressed this dramatic shortfall by authorizing \$750 for the MRA account in FY 2001. Unfortunately, the Administration's budget request of \$658 million fell substantially short of the authorized level, and the House and the Senate figures are even lower.

The numbers, however, do not even begin to tell the whole story. As you know, the MRA account provides emergency food, shelter, and resettlement assistance for victims of religious, racial, and political persecution, as well as repatriation assistance for those who can

[TO ENDORSE, PLEASE
CALL SUBCOMMITTEE
AT 225-5748
A.S.A.P.]

safely return to their home countries. Some of the practical consequences of the cuts in refugee spending over the past five years include the following:

- Somali women in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya are regularly raped by gangs of local thugs when they gather firewood outside the camp. In other camps around the world cooking fuel is provided for the refugees, but there is no room for it in the Dadaab budget. In 1997 U.S. refugee officials announced a \$1 million emergency grant --- enough to provide firewood for the refugee women and their families for a year --- but then quietly decided to spend the money over several years, so that only about one-third of the need is being met. Predictably, the number of rapes has decreased, but not by much. Refugee women are still forced to venture outside the camp, where they are still being raped in large numbers.
- In the Kakuma camp, also in Kenya, food for the refugees has been cut by a third, to about 1400 calories per person per day. According to health workers in the camp, the number of malnutrition-related deaths of children under the age of five has increased tenfold, from two or three per month to over twenty.
- In Congo-Brazzaville, up to 40,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa are beyond the reach of humanitarian aid workers in part because the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) needs \$1.6 million for barges or aircraft to reach them along a remote river.
- In Pakistan and Iran, erosion of international financial support for refugee programs has resulted in the premature repatriation of several thousand Afghan refugees to regions in which there is inadequate food and water and where they are still in danger of persecution.
- In Armenia, half of the refugees from Azerbaijan live in hazardous and substandard housing because there are no funds to repair or replace their shelters. Meanwhile, refugees who have fled from Armenia to Azerbaijan find themselves in the same situation for the same reason: lack of funds.
- In the Russian Federation, a training program for local authorities to encourage them to respect the rights of 100,000 refugees residing in the country has been cancelled because the UNHCR country program is facing a 63 percent funding shortfall.
- In Turkey, 2,400 asylum seekers who arrived last year are still waiting for refugee interviews or status decisions because of a \$2.5 million shortfall which has prevented UNHCR from filling vacant positions for protection officers.

- UNHCR has instructed many of its offices around the world to cut their calendar year 2000 budgets because of an anticipated operating budget shortfall of about \$125 million. Unfortunately, these budgets had already been cut far below anticipated needs due to an instruction that budgets should be based on anticipated — contributions from donors rather than on an assessment of the needs of refugees. The budget for Africa --- where per capita spending on refugee protection and assistance is already the lowest in the world, even after adjustment for variations in the cost of living --- will have to be cut by an additional 20% if more money is not found before the end of the year.
- Meanwhile, the number of refugees resettled in the United States is scheduled to drop to only 76,000 next year --- 9000 fewer than last year, and only about half the number admitted each year during the early 1990s. The Clinton administration's budget also includes a \$14 million cut in support for refugees in Africa.

We therefore urge that the Foreign Operations conference report include \$750 million for the Migration and Refugee Account, the full amount already authorized by Congress for FY 2001.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Chairman, Subcommittee on
International Operations and
Human Rights

CYNTHIA A. McKINNEY
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
International Operations and
Human Rights

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH, CHAIRMAN

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ROBERT G. TORRICELLI, NEW JERSEY
CHARLES E. SCHUMER, NEW YORK

MANUS COONEY, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*
BRUCE A. COHEN, *Minority Chief Counsel*

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

July 25, 2000

Senator Mitch McConnell
Chair, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
SD 142
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
SH 123
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Leahy:

You have provided extraordinarily important leadership on numerous international issues vital to America's interests around the world. We wanted to bring to your attention an important humanitarian and foreign policy issue.

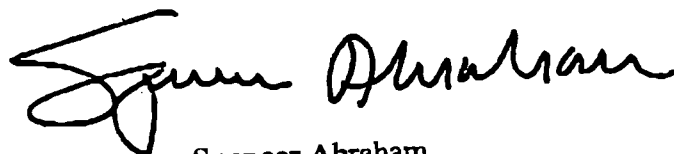
We believe the amount proposed to fund the Migration and Refugee Assistance account in the Senate and House versions of the foreign operations appropriations bill, as well as the amount proposed by the Administration, unfortunately is inadequate to the challenges we face today.

Since 1993, we have seen a 40 percent drop in proposed refugee admissions. We were pleased last year to see the Administration raise the FY 2000 refugee ceiling to 90,000 (85,000 of which were finally funded) and expressed our hope that this would be part of a sustained and consistent effort to advance America's leadership in refugee policy.

Our policy on refugees is important not only for its effect on the United States, but also in terms of its effect on other countries' decisions. As a leader in refugee policy, the United States has an obligation to maintain a strong refugee program. By maintaining a vigorous refugee resettlement program, we set an example that other nations follow. Conversely, by reducing refugee funding, America falls short of its traditional leadership role, creating unfortunate consequences for international refugee policy.

We ask the conferees on foreign operations to ensure through report language (and adequate funding levels) that U.S. refugee admissions be at least sustained at the FY 2000 level of 85,000 funded admission slots, if not augmented.

Sincerely,



Spencer Abraham
Chair
Immigration Subcommittee



Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Member
Immigration Subcommittee

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH, CHAIRMAN

STROM THURMOND, SOUTH CAROLINA
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BRUCE A. COHEN, *Minority Chief Counsel*

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

September 15, 2000

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Chair
Senate Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 142
Washington DC 20510

Re: Migration and Refugee Assistance

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am dismayed by the Administration's proposal for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) in the foreign operations budget for FY 2001 to further reduce funded refugee admissions to the United States to as little as 76,000. Based on the present refugee situation, such admissions should instead be increased at least to their 1995 level of 112,000.

There are over 14 million refugees in the world today, up over half a million in the last calendar year. In just the first eight months of this year, more than 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted. More than a third of African refugees are presently seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. If the Administration's inadequate budget for MRA is approved, this will mark a 46% overall decline in refugee admissions under this Administration from the 142,000 admissions approved in 1992.

Worse, the Administration has shown a disturbing inability to effectively process and admit the numbers Congress has authorized and appropriated funds for. This year, for example, 85,000 admissions were approved and yet it appears that as few as 72,000 or fewer will actually be admitted. That is a 15% shortfall, the worst in 14 years save 1996 when the Administration fell nearly 16% short of the admissions approved by Congress. We are not talking about abstract performance standards here. We are talking about squandered opportunities for new hope and new life for human beings who have suffered enough.

Languishing for years in squalid camps is not a "durable solution" for refugees. Refugees do not seek dependency on hand-outs. They seek, as all people do, to breathe free and to support their families with honest work. They are not a burden to our country. They are an asset - to our economy, to our culture, and to our political traditions of liberty and tolerance. Historically, the United States has been the proud world leader in refugee protection. The decline in this commitment in recent years can only send the wrong signal to other nations.

SEP 15 1998 10:00 AM SENT BY FAX

Please do what you can to reverse this disturbing trend. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Senator Charles E. Grassley, Member
Senate Subcommittee on Immigration

REGIONAL REFUGEE CEILINGS AND ADMISSIONS TO THE UNITED STATES, FY 87-2000

	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 2000	TOTAL
AFRICA (Actual Admissions)	1,994	1,588	1,922	3,494	4,424	5,491	6,969	5,856	4,779	7,512	6,069	6,662	13,038		69,798
(Ceilings)	2,000	3,000	2,000	3,500	4,900	6,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,700	7,000	7,000	12,000	18,000	
EAST ASIA^a	40,112	35,015	45,680	51,611	53,486	51,848	49,858	43,581	36,926	19,235	8,590	10,848	10,204		456,994
	40,500	38,000	50,000	51,800	53,500	51,850	51,000	45,000	40,000	25,000	10,000	14,000	9,000	8,000	
EASTERN EUROPE^b	8,606	7,818	8,948	6,196	6,855	2,886	2,651	7,477	9,987	12,081	21,378	30,911	38,654		164,448
							7,000	2,900	2,725				*38,000	**27,000	
USSR/FORMER USSR^b	3,694	20,421	39,553	50,716	38,661	61,298	48,627	43,470	35,716	29,536	27,072	23,349	16,922		439,035
	12,300	30,000	50,000	58,300	46,500	61,400	49,775	53,000	48,000	45,000	48,000	51,000	23,000	20,000	
LATIN AMERICA	315	2,497	2,605	2,309	2,237	2,924	4,126	6,437	7,618	3,541	2,986	1,587	2,110		41,292
	1,000	3,500	3,500	2,400	3,100	3,000	4,500	9,000	8,000	6,000	4,000	4,000	3,000	3,000	
NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA	10,107	8,415	6,980	4,991	5,359	6,844	7,000	5,861	4,464	3,788	3,990	3,197	4,078		75,074
	10,200	9,000	7,000	5,000	6,000	6,850	7,000	6,000	5,000	4,300	4,000	4,000	4,000	8,000	
UNALLOCATED RESERVE^c															
						1,000	1,000	3,000	2,000	2,000	5,000	3,000	2,000	***6,000	
PRIVATELY FUNDED (UNALLOCATED)	0	733	1,550	3,009	1,789	882	251	0	0	0	0	0	0		8,214
	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	1,000	2,000	0	0	0	0		
TOTAL	64,828	76,487	107,238	122,326	112,811	132,173	119,482	112,682	99,490	75,693	70,085	76,554	85,006		1,254,855
	70,000	87,500	116,500	125,000	131,000	142,000	132,000	121,000	112,000	90,000	78,000	83,000	*91,000	**90,000	

Note: During the period FY 75-FY 86, the United States admitted 1,068,182 refugees from the following regions: Africa—15,063; East Asia—809,347; Eastern Europe—74,036; Soviet Union—105,184; Latin America—29,420; and the Near East/South Asia—35,132. These persons do not appear in this table. This chart shows the adjusted regional ceilings that were established at mid-year consultations in FY 87—FY 94, FY 96, and FY 99. The worldwide annual ceilings did not change, except in FY 88, FY 89, FY 92, and FY 99.

^a Ceilings and actual admissions for East Asia include first-asylum resettlement and the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) from Vietnam. ODP figures include Amerasian immigrants. In FY 91, FY 92, and FY 93, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had separate ceilings. In all other years, the regions have a combined ceiling. (The FY 99 and FY 2000 subregional ceilings are represented.)

^c Beginning in FY 92, admissions numbers included an unallocated reserve. These unallocated places were incorporated into the adjusted regional ceilings, maintaining the overall admissions ceiling. For FY 97, FY 98, FY 99, and FY 2000 these unallocated reserve numbers could be used only if funding could be identified within existing appropriations.

^{*} Includes 13,000 admissions for "Kosovo-affected" refugees appropriated mid-year. (A total of 14,156 Kosovars and 24,498 Eastern European refugees—mostly Bosnians—resettled in FY 99.)

^{**} Includes 10,000 admissions spaces for "Kosovo-affected" refugees provided that existing resources are available from the 1999 Kosovo Emergency Supplemental fund.

^{***} Due to a funding shortfall in its Migration and Refugee Assistance account, PRM reduced the FY 2000 unallocated reserve from 6,000 to 1,000. The "unofficial" ceiling for FY 2000 is 85,000.

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. Tabulated by the U.S. Committee for Refugees.

1999 Contributions to International Refugee Aid Agencies

Table 6 \$ TOP 20 DONOR COUNTRIES

Contribution in U.S.
Dollars Per Capita

Norway	\$ 15.62
Denmark	10.63
Sweden	7.67
Switzerland	7.01
Luxembourg	5.97
Netherlands	3.86
Finland	3.47
United States	1.63
Australia	1.41
Canada	1.27
Japan	1.26
Ireland	1.10
Belgium	0.89
Kuwait	0.71
Germany	0.64
United Kingdom	0.61
Austria	0.60
Guatemala	0.46
New Zealand	0.46
United Arab Emirates	0.36

Table 7 TOP 20 DONORS

Contribution In Millions
of U.S. Dollars

United States	\$ 444.9
Japan	160.1
European Commission	138.9
Norway	70.3
Sweden	68.3
Netherlands	60.9
Denmark	56.4
Germany	52.9
Switzerland	49.8
Canada	38.8
United Kingdom	36.3
Australia	26.8
Finland	18.0
France	14.5
Italy	13.2
Belgium	9.1
Spain	6.2
Guatemala	5.7
Austria	4.8
Argentina	4.2



The world's developed countries contribute most of the funding for programs that assist refugees. This page shows the amount of financial assistance provided during 1999 to three international agencies: UNHCR, IOM, and UNRWA. Many European countries contribute both through the European Commission as well as individually. Bilateral aid and aid provided through agencies such as the World Bank and the World Food Program that may benefit refugees are also not included here.

Source: UNHCR, IOM, and UNRWA; tabulated by USCR.

June 13, 2000

Contact: Melissa Wyers
202-347-3507, ext. 3032
301-785-0741 (cell phone)

Africa Summary

Africa's Refugee Numbers Climb As New Violence Uproots 3 Million People

More than 3 million people in 15 African countries were forced to flee their homes because of war, insurgencies, and repression during 1999, driving up the number of uprooted people on the African continent to 13.7 million, according to a new report issued by the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR).

Although some newly uprooted people subsequently returned home safely, about 3.1 million Africans remain refugees and some 10.6 million are displaced within their own countries, according to the USCR report, *World Refugee Survey 2000*.

The 328-page annual report contains summaries of refugee-related events in 36 African countries and 90 other countries around the world.

"Events during the past year have triggered extraordinary population upheaval in Africa," said Jeff Drumtra, senior Africa policy analyst at USCR. "When crises force African families to run for their lives, they have very little margin for survival. It is particularly sad that in poor African countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola, and Congo-Kinshasa, warfare for control over local diamonds, gold, and oil have produced added misery for so many of the world's most impoverished people."

Last year alone, an estimated 800,000 people fled their homes because of political violence in Congo-Brazzaville; at least a half-million people became newly displaced by a resurgence of Angola's long-running civil war; more than 400,000 were newly uprooted in both Burundi and Congo-Kinshasa; and a combined 350,000 people fled because of the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Violence and repression also forced large populations to flee last year in Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, and five other African countries.

(more)



Additional information about Africa contained in *World Refugee Survey 2000*:

■ Sixty percent of Africa's uprooted people are from four countries: Sudan (4.4 million uprooted); Angola (1.8 million or more); Burundi (1.1 million); and Congo-Kinshasa (1 million). Violence and other dangers have pushed a half-million or more people from their homes over the years in Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Somalia, Rwanda, and Congo-Brazzaville. Population flight is pervasive in Africa: A total of 20 countries on the continent are each the source of 10,000 or more uprooted people.

■ Five countries are providing asylum to more than half of Africa's 3.1 million refugees. The five major refugee-hosting countries are: Guinea (hosts 450,000 refugees); Tanzania (hosts 410,000 refugees); Sudan (hosts 360,000); Kenya (255,000); and Ethiopia (245,000). A total of 27 African countries—more than half of all countries on the continent—are hosting significant numbers of refugees.

■ Nearly one-third of all African refugees are seeking asylum in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. This means that 1.2 million African refugees have fled to potentially unsafe asylum countries.

■ About a quarter-million African refugees voluntarily repatriated to their home countries during 1999 in hopes that peace would prevail. Significant numbers of refugees returned home last year to Liberia, Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, and six other countries. Some 1.2 million African refugees have voluntarily repatriated during the past three years. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons also returned home.

[The U.S. Committee for Refugees is a nonprofit humanitarian organization that works for the protection and assistance of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons around the world. Visit the USCR web site at www.refugees.org]



September 6, 2000
 U.S. Committee for Refugees
 Contact: Jeff Drumtra
 202-347-3507, ext. 3024

September Update

1.5 Million Africans Flee in Search of Safety During First Eight Months of 2000

At least 1.5 million people in Africa fled their homes during the first eight months of this year because of war, violence, or political repression, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) announced today.

The USCR estimate of 1.5 million newly uprooted Africans is very conservative and might well undercount hundreds of thousands of newly uprooted people at locations in Africa where inadequate reporting makes estimates difficult.

Africa's newly uprooted population is equivalent to nearly 50,000 new refugees and internally displaced people per week. At least 10 African countries suffered significant population flight during January to August of 2000. The newly uprooted people join millions of other Africans who remain refugees or internally displaced from previous years; a cumulative total of some 14.2 million Africans are currently uprooted and unable to return home.

The estimate of newly uprooted Africans is based on extensive monitoring of public and private field reports by UN humanitarian agencies, private international relief organizations, and other sources in Africa. Although initial reports of new population upheavals are often inaccurate and frequently are exaggerated because of chaos on the ground, USCR has analyzed the field data to arrive at conservative minimum estimates.

The international community has responded poorly to Africa's new emergencies by curtailing food deliveries this year and leaving major relief programs drastically under-funded. The U.S. Congress is poised to pass an appropriations bill in the next few days that would cut assistance to African refugees to its lowest level in more than a decade. Congress is also prepared to reduce funding for humanitarian relief to internally displaced persons worldwide by as much as \$60 million—a cut of more than 25 percent. Moreover, an appropriations bill passed by the House, and pending in a House-Senate conference committee, would eliminate U.S. funding for all UN peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

Following is a summary of significant new population upheavals in Africa during the first two-thirds of this year: *(more)*

(U.S. Committee for Refugees / page 2 of 3)

Eritrea

- **Newly uprooted = 500,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 650,000]
- **Cause = border war with Ethiopia.**
- **Minimum estimate includes** populations uprooted during military offensive by Ethiopian troops in May-June.
- **Minimum estimate does not** include several thousand Eritreans who fled in August from areas occupied by Ethiopian troops; does not include larger displacement estimates by Eritrean authorities.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1 million.** [Higher estimates = 1.25 million]

Congo-Kinshasa (DRC)

- **Newly uprooted = 430,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 540,000]
- **Cause = civil war; war with neighboring countries.**
- **Minimum estimate includes** UN assessment that more than 400,000 Congolese became internally displaced in first half of year; 30,000 new Congolese refugees to Tanzania, Zambia, and Congo-Brazzaville.
- **Minimum estimate does not** include higher UN estimate of possible 100,000 additional newly displaced Congolese; does not include reports of an additional 20,000 new Congolese refugees in Congo-Brazzaville.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1.4 million.** [Higher estimates = 1.7 million]

Angola

- **Newly uprooted = 200,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 250,000]
- **Cause = civil war; current violence in eight of country's 15 provinces.**
- **Minimum estimate includes** approximately 200,000 new internally displaced persons; 10,000 to 15,000 new Angolan refugees in Zambia.
- **Minimum estimate does not** include sizable but uncounted August population movements into central cities of Kuito and Uige; does not include reports of uncounted numbers recently uprooted in contested border areas.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1.8 million to 2.5 million.**

Sierra Leone

- **Newly uprooted = 160,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 270,000]
- **Cause = renewed civil war.**
- **Minimum estimate includes** at least 100,000 newly uprooted persons registered by aid agencies nationwide; at least 50,000 newly displaced living on their own nationwide; 7,000 newly displaced in northern town of Bubuna in August; at least 6,000 new Sierra Leonean refugees to Guinea. (more)

(U.S. Committee for Refugees / page 3 of 4)

- Minimum estimate does *not* include additional 50,000 newly uprooted people reported but not confirmed by aid agencies; does not include reports of several thousand additional new uncounted refugees in Guinea; does not include highest estimates for newly displaced population congregated at Mile 91 in central Sierra Leone or Port Loko in the north.
- **Total uprooted, including from previous years = 750,000.** [Higher estimates = 1 million]

Sudan

- **Newly uprooted = 60,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 150,000]
- Cause = civil war; government policies.
- **Minimum estimate includes** nearly 50,000 new internally displaced persons in southern Bentiu oil-producing area in August; 10,000 new Sudanese refugees in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include unconfirmed reports of tens of thousands of newly displaced persons in inaccessible areas of Western Upper Nile Province; does not include possible new population displacement in central Sudan's Nuba Mountain area; does not include unconfirmed reports of recent population flight from government-controlled southern town of Wau; does not include uncounted numbers of newly uprooted people near northeastern town of Kassala; does not include reports of newly uprooted people in western Darfur Province.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 4.4 million.**

Burundi

- **Newly uprooted = 60,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 100,000+]
- Cause = civil war.
- **Minimum estimate includes** nearly 40,000 new Burundian refugees to Tanzania; 30,000 new internally displaced in southern Makamba Province.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include new internal displacement in eastern provinces where violence is ongoing; does not include newest displacement caused by violence and government policies near Bujumbura, the capital.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1 million.**

Uganda

- **Newly uprooted = 50,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 200,000]
- Cause = armed insurgencies in north and southwest.
- **Minimum estimate includes** new displacement of 50,000 people in northern districts of Kitgum and Gulu.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher government estimates for displacement in Gulu and Kitgum; does not include possible new population displacement caused by insurgent attacks early in year near southern town of Bundibugyo; does

(more)

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not include population displacement caused by recent insurgent attacks in central Uganda; does not include uncounted displacement triggered by ethnic violence in northern Karamoja area.

- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 510,000.** [Higher estimates = 840,000]

Nigeria

- **Newly uprooted = 50,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 80,000]
- Cause = religious and political violence.
- **Minimum estimate includes** Nigerians uprooted in northern central city of Kaduna and nearby areas by violence that reportedly killed 600.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher unconfirmed estimates of population displacement in northern Nigeria; does not include possible new displacement caused by political tensions in southern oil regions.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 50,000 to 100,000.**

Liberia

- **Newly uprooted = 30,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 40,000]
- Cause = civil strife; alleged armed insurgency.
- **Minimum estimate includes** reports of 30,000 or more internally displaced persons since July in Lofa County.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher government estimates for population displacement in Lofa County.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 230,000.** [Higher estimates = 270,000]

Somalia

- **Newly uprooted = 5,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 25,000]
- Cause = civil strife.
- **Minimum estimate includes** new internally displaced persons in south central Somalia in March.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include likely displacement caused by violence in key town of Belet Wein in August, fighting south of Mogadishu in July, violence in Baidoa in June, and violence north of Mogadishu in Jowhar.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 780,000.** [Higher estimates = 850,000]

Africa Total

- **Total newly uprooted = 1.54 million minimum.** [Higher estimates = 2.3 million.]
- **Total now uprooted in Africa, including from previous years = 14.2 million** (includes uprooted populations from African countries not listed above).

End

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Increase amount of aid for refugees

With the current prosperity, it's time to recognize the need to help the world's 14 million displaced refugees find stability and freedom.

Both the Clinton administration and Republican Congress have proposed deep cuts in federal funding for refugee protection and assistance.

Next year, President Clinton plans to admit only 76,000 refugees into the country, which is 9,000 fewer than last year. The Clinton administration's proposal also recommends a \$14 million cut in protection assistance for refugees in Africa, one of the hardest hit areas.

The Senate subcommittee on foreign operations, headed by Sen. Mitch McConnell, is proposing spending \$43 million less than the administration, or \$615 million. Perhaps both parties could look for less politically expedient yet needed areas to cut – those \$700 toilet seats in the Defense Department's budget, for example.

We don't think the Refugee Council USA's request for \$700 million in the next Migration and Refugee Assistance budget is unreasonable. The council is comprised of a coalition of faith-based and humanitarian agencies involved in protecting and resettling refugees and is doing important work.

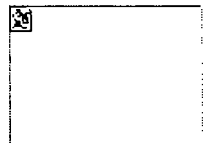
But, alas, it's easier to cut aid for refugees

Picture the options.









because they are a politically expedient commodity, in the eyes of many. It's easy enough to say, "Take care of our own and keep those foreigners out; we've got too many already."

Lest we forget, America is a country of immigrants founded in large part by refugees – people who fled persecution to make a new life. The fact that so many of our nation's founders faced religious and political persecution in Europe accounts in no small part for the values of liberty and tolerance enshrined in our Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

There are 14 million refugees in the world today; many are victims of political intolerance and civil strife. Three million of those are in Africa. These are people threatened for having the "wrong" religion or political opinion; people at risk for having the wrong race or nationality.

Take temporary protection assistance for Africans; it's already about 11 cents a day. Does the administration or McConnell and his subcommittee seriously think there is any "fat" here to be cut?

Many refugees just need temporary protection until it's safe to go back. For others, permanent resettlement is the only durable, humane solution.

America is experiencing a period of unparalleled prosperity, budget surpluses and labor shortages. This is not time to be cutting back on this worthwhile program.

We are not going to deny that the refugee admissions program in America does cost money. But the \$1,800 cost of processing and resettling each refugee is not a welfare program. Most of the cost is to cover the INS's rigorous screening process.

According to Ralston H. Deffenbaugh Jr., chairman of Refugee Council USA and president of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, "90 percent of individual cases admitted to the U.S. are gainfully employed in six months. And the refugees themselves are obliged to pay their airfare."

The people of Bowling Green know

firsthand – from the work of Martha Deputy and others – that the refugee assistance program is a success. We have welcomed hundreds of Cambodians, Bosnians, Africans and others over the years, and they have added diversity and new life to our community. Let's make sure that continues to happen.



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Religion Journal

3 Prelates Return From Africa With a Cry for Help

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

A month ago, three Roman Catholic bishops from the United States embarked on a fact-finding journey through the Great Lakes region of eastern and central Africa, an area that for several years has seemed to produce only bad news.

Their purpose was to assess the situation of refugees displaced by civil war and regional conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. There may be as many as two million of these people, some of them children living in vast camps without adult relatives.

Since their return to the United States about two weeks ago, the bishops have begun calling greater attention to the refugees, for the sake of persuading government policy makers and the public that much more can be done to help.

"This seems to be like a very large region of the world that people are willing to let fall off the map," said Thomas G. Wenski, auxiliary bishop of Miami, one of those who made the journey. "We talk about globalization, and the Great Lakes region of Africa seems to be written out of the equation."

Speaking in an interview on Thursday, Bishop Wenski paraphrased a statement of Pope John Paul II that

A region 'that people are willing to let fall off the map.'

globalization ought to mean solidarity with other human beings, and added, "Solidarity means no one left behind."

Bishop Wenski was accompanied on the two-week trip by Bishop Philip F. Straling of Reno, Nev., and Bishop Donald E. Pelotte of Gallup, N.M., a board member of Catholic Relief Services, which aids people overseas. Four officials who work with refugees for the Vatican or the United States Catholic Conference also made the journey.

"The delegation was split up at times, and not everybody was at every camp," Bishop Wenski said. But in all, the bishops and their support staff visited refugee camps in five countries. One camp, Kukama, in Kenya, is home to about 5,000 unaccompanied children, among many other people.

A report on the bishops' journey is

being prepared, but in the meantime they have issued recommendations, among them that concerted international efforts be made to bring peace to the region; that Congress increase, to at least \$700 million, refugee assistance to the area in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1; and that the United States and other nations increase the number of African refugees they will themselves admit. (It is to the United States' credit, the bishops say, that it has accepted as many as 18,000 African refugees this year, up from 7,000 in 1998.)

"By having bishops travel to the region, you raise the profile of the area," Bishop Wenski said hopefully.

"Each place we visited, the local bishops were very appreciative of our coming," he said. "When we got to Burundi, the bishop said, 'Nobody comes here, because it is so dangerous.'"

Another prelate, he recalled, quoted an African proverb to the effect that you know who your true friends are because they come to you when you are endangered.

"How refugees from Kosovo with, say, those in Guinea,

JULIA TAFT has worked in humanitarian affairs for more than a quarter century. Currently, she is the senior United States official for refugee issues in her position as Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. She recently sat down with REFUGEES in her Washington office to discuss domestic and international humanitarian challenges.



Refugees Magazine: What are the major challenges as this new millennium begins for America's domestic asylum and international refugee policies?

Julia Taft: My hope is that we will develop

a broader international conscience and capability to receive people, even on a temporary basis, who are in really bad situations—that we do more burden sharing as happened with the Kosovar Albanians. My second hope is that we will be able to study more conditions in countries of origin which produce refugees and work with development agencies, banks and others to get at the root causes of crises. This takes political will, diplomatic involvement within the U.N. and within governments. We've got to find more and better ways to work together to tackle these root causes.

Q. A persistent problem in international crises is the so-called gap, the void between the end of emergency assistance to refugees and the start of long-term development aid. How can this problem be tackled?

A. All donors until now have invested heavily in the 'front end' of a crisis, helping in emergency relief. We've never really had a system of coordinated aid when it comes to putting the pieces back together again in a country. We need to pinpoint which agencies have the expertise in specific areas—water, sanitation, demobilization, justice—to help countries rebuild shattered infrastructures. From lessons learned in Kosovo and East Timor we should have very good road maps that will probably tell

us that from day one of a crisis, the development agencies must be on the ground at the same time as relief agencies. The planning for different stages of a crisis will take different periods of time, but you've got to get started at the same time to produce a more seamless transition.

Q. What did you and your Bureau learn from the Kosovo crisis?

A. Even though I have been in this field for more than 25 years, I never could have predicted how rapid the exodus would be and how rapid the return has been. I got it all wrong, so it's been a humbling experience. Trying to provide relief in an environment such as Kosovo where there is very little infrastructure, we have to provide more technical support for the local population and government. In Macedonia the government wasn't sure what it was supposed to do or how it was supposed to cope with the influx that came. We need a cadre of senior advisers who can be deployed to work with the ministries. I have recommended this to UNHCR.

Q. What about when refugees return home as they did so quickly in Kosovo?

A. We need to make sure that our 'follow-on' systems actually follow the lead of what these people want. We have to consult better and develop much leaner response mechanisms, particularly among

NGOs. In 1998 there were about 25 international organizations working inside Kosovo. During the return in 1999 there were 300 NGOs. This is unbelievable. I'm very respectful of the contributions NGOs can make. But where you get a situation where the international community needs so much assistance just for them to function that you drain the capacity of the indigenous ministries to help the refugees—craziness. We need to do a post mortem among NGOs to think how we can help them organize in a more efficient way.

Q. The plight of the world's internally displaced persons (IDPs) and how to more effectively help them has recently become an issue. What is the United States' position?

A. We are (still) struggling with this. The basic problem has been the lack of real institutional backbone to carve out how various agencies should respond to IDPs and

we've (all) been running around trying to figure out what we're doing. There are two main elements: defining which internally displaced persons are of concern to the international community and looking at the core competencies of various agencies—what does the Red Cross do universally, where is there overlap with refugees in similar situations? What are the protection and assistance requirements? What are the international community's requirements of countries which generate IDPs and are un-

"From day one development agencies must be on the ground at the same time as relief agencies."

were treated compared is totally unacceptable...”

able or unwilling to protect these people? This is a political issue that needs to be referred to the Security Council and I do not believe it is going to be solved by any one U.N. agency being designated as the ‘lead agency’ on this issue.

Q. There is criticism of America’s domestic asylum policies. What are your comments on the immigration system and how this criticism affects the country’s international role in refugee issues?

A. It is quite striking how proportionately few refugees we take in compared to our normal immigrations—around 85,000 annually or eight percent. Some of the criticisms of our immigration law are about the treatment of people who are summarily deported for illegal entry or who have not been able to have asylum claims dealt with quickly. Most of the problems with the law have been identified and the administration is trying to do amendments which would soften the provisions of the 1996 Act which we think are overdue. But I don’t sense that our country is ungenerous in its immigration, asylum or refugee admissions. Maybe that’s because the economy is so good. Now if the economy tanks, there will probably be a backlash.

Q. But what about overseas backlash? The perception that Washington may be preaching to others about fairness, but its own house is not in order?

A. I think this comes up with the Cubans and Haitians (the more generous policy the United States has adopted towards Cubans than people from Haiti). We still have some problems here. We don’t try to preach to Europe, but it is quite striking if you look at the number of refugees we brought in last year and this year, including quite a lot of Bosnians and Croats from Germany. It does seem odd that this wonderful country of Germany is having us process some of their refugees, but we believe our immigration policies have created a dynamic environment here. We just think they’re missing out and they ought to

consider a more forward leaning immigration policy.

Q. The United States has the world’s largest resettlement program for refugees, but figures have been falling in recent years.

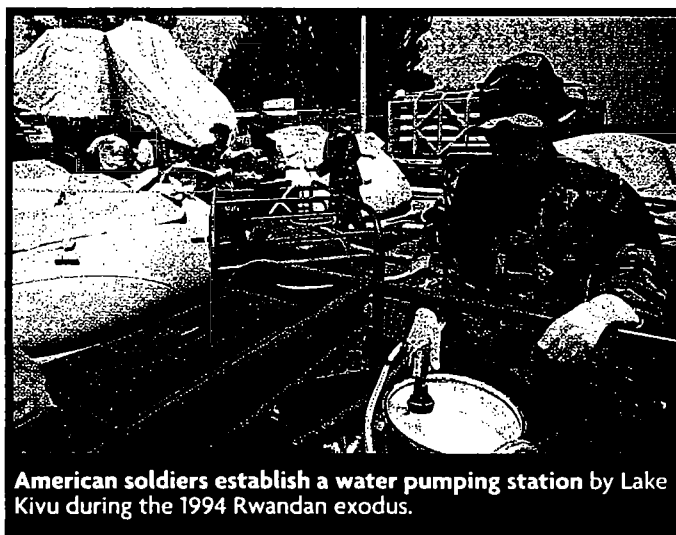
A. You cannot judge the program on numbers alone. When the numbers were very high we had hundreds of thousands of boat people from South-East Asia and then evangelicals and Jews from the former Soviet Union. These large caseloads have been declining. What we have today are many more nationalities involved, for instance something like 24 different African nationalities from over 40 countries. We’re being more selective, working with UNHCR and others to find people who are really at risk who need to be moved more quickly. But it’s more difficult to have a network that processes refugees from so many different locations than one that just processes from two or three areas.

Q. You are passionately involved in the plight of refugee women.

A. I once did a study on refugee women which absolutely blew my mind because all of a sudden I realised that refugees are (overwhelmingly) women and children. I sometimes think our refugee programs should be for women and then we can have a satellite program for men and a special coordinator for men. But the mainstream should be for women and children. I still believe this! We keep prodding UNHCR

to do more, it should be mainstreamed, no question. The other way we have approached the issue is to have special women’s initiatives such as we have launched in Bosnia, Timor and Kosovo.

Q. But all of this takes extra money at a time of reduced budgets.



American soldiers establish a water pumping station by Lake Kivu during the 1994 Rwandan exodus.

A. The dichotomy of how refugees were treated in, say, Guinea, versus how those from Kosovo were treated was totally unacceptable to all of us; unacceptable to spend less than \$20 million on 500,000 refugees from Sierra Leone and then ask for \$240 million for an equivalent number of refugees in Kosovo. It is not fair and it’s not right. If necessary, the donors should be the bad guys—UNHCR ought to tell us what is really needed and force the donors to say ‘we can’t afford that’ rather than setting the standard to what you think donors will be willing to give.

Q. But isn’t that just reality? In Africa even many of these ‘reduced’ demands are not even met.

A. I think there will be more funding if we (the donors) are sure the funding is actually buying a level of assistance that is adequate. ■

Africa's Swelling Refugee Crisis

The recent fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the war in Sierra Leone are adding to Africa's outcast multitudes. Refugees and the internally displaced — those who flee their homes without crossing borders — are among the saddest byproducts of the continent's wars. Africa has more than 3 million refugees, and some 15 million internally displaced, a much higher number than 10 years ago. These outcasts are straining the resources of their host communities and the good will of donors, and yet there is no end to the stream of people fleeing for their lives.

The average refugee from Kosovo received more than \$1 a day from the international community. In Africa, the average refugee gets 11 cents. The internally displaced, who are only now starting to receive assistance from the outside world, most often get nothing. In many refugee camps, the only nourishment provided by the World Food Program and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is flour and oil. Powdered milk is sometimes available, and nutritional biscuits are given to malnourished children. Because donor nations are giving less, the refugee agency has had to cut back on health care and education, which only goes through age 10 or 12. Some refugees from Somalia and Sudan have lived in these conditions for 20 years, unable to return until their homelands are at peace.

Yet some of these refugees are not much worse off than their hosts. Guinea, a very poor country, now has more refugees per capita than any other nation. Some countries, such as Sudan, produce refugees in one region and shelter them in another. Host nations get some reimbursement from the U.N. and sometimes get food aid, but they must provide land and some social services and keep order in the camps. African countries, historically generous to refugees — especially when they were fleeing colonial oppression — are now balking at the burden. Many politicians are finding it profitable to restrict refugees' rights and blame them, rightly or wrongly, for problems like crime.

The exodus from the Rwandan genocide in 1994 illustrated a new, debilitating obstacle to protecting refugees. Perpetrators of the genocide fled to the camps across the border, turning them into internationally funded military bases. Rwanda was an extreme example, but many camps — which host countries tend to build on the border to emphasize their temporary nature — become recruiting zones or rest stops for combatants. It is common for camps to be controlled by one side in the conflict. Some camps of refugees from Sudan in Ethiopia, for example, are essentially run by the Sudan People's Liberation Army, and relief workers must carefully negotiate their access.

The U.N.'s refugee relief agency is weakly managed and needs more oversight — in part because member nations use it as a patronage pit — and its dependence on host countries to provide services is another breeding ground for corruption. But the agency is struggling with a difficult and dangerous mission: 24 members of its staff, and 23 workers for the World Food Program, have been killed since 1992. The reluctance of donors has also crippled the agency, which finds it easier to raise money for emergency appeals than to alleviate the chronic miseries of most African refugees.

Although current refugee aid is meager, its most important shortcoming is that it does not go to the vast majority who have not crossed a border. The internally displaced should get aid when countries request it, or when a state has collapsed to the point where no one can give permission.

Improving the lives of refugees also requires new attitudes within Africa. Host governments should not build camps close to borders. Countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa have joined many European nations and the United States in passing or considering laws that would turn away refugees or restrict their rights. These laws are pernicious everywhere. But what refugees need most is what all Africans need most — an end to the wars that have diverted the continent's resources and created so much suffering.

Aid for Refugees

To the Editor:

I hope "Africa's Swelling Refugee Crisis" (editorial, June 17) increases awareness of this problem and the parsimony of the international response. The Clinton administration has made a deplorably inadequate budget proposal that would cut overseas assistance to protect African refugees by nearly \$14 million.

The administration would also continue the steady decline in resettlement admissions, reducing by up to 9,000 the number of refugees from around the world who would be able to start a new life in this country when returning to their own is not a viable option. Republican counterproposals threaten to cut refugee protection and resettlement even further.

RALSTON H. DEFFENBAUGH JR.

Baltimore, June 19, 2000

The writer is president of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Baldwin resident fights for rights of refugees

By LAURALYN AVALLONE

Kamy Moghebli cannot go back to his country to visit family left behind. In Iran, his native land, Muslim Law does not permit religious freedom. Mr. Moghebli, who is a Lutheran, will be sentenced to death if he returns to his country because he is a Christian. He is a refugee.

There are currently 14 million refugees around the world who are seeking freedom from countries stricken with war; countries where people are persecuted for holding certain political beliefs, religious preferences, or for being a certain race or nationality. Here in America, it is easy to take for granted inalienable rights guaranteed under the Constitution and Bill of Rights. A recent proposal from the Clinton administration is stirring the question: Is America willing to share those freedoms?

The administration's proposal recommends a \$14 million dollar cut in protection assistance for refugees in Africa, whose fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the war in Sierra Leone has generated a multitude of outcasts. President Clinton also plans to admit only 76,000 refugees into the country — 9,000 fewer than last year. With a prosperous economy, many find it hard to understand why the amount of help being offered is decreasing as opposed to increasing.

Mr. Moghebli, who is Ambassador to the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee services, has joined efforts with other religious and humanitarian organizations forming the Refugee Council USA. The Council is writing letters to President Clinton and senators requesting a \$700 million budget for



KAMY MOGHEBELI with wife Terry and daughter Jasmi. Son Kaveh is not pictured.

Migration and Refugee Assistance.

The engineer, who holds a master's degree in architecture and town planning from the National University of Iran, believes misconceptions pertaining to immigrants may play a role in the tightening of the country's purse strings.

"It's so sad that in this country there is a negative view toward immigrants," said Mr. Moghebli, who is a 12 year resident of Baldwin. "This country has been built by immigrants."

When the former builder joined his congregation in Baldwin, he says the refugee problem was considered a non-issue by his peers.

"They said to me, 'why do we need them?' I said, 'look at me. I came here and I

made it. Why not have others come?'" His church's views have changed since then and have become supportive. "[Americans] are the best of the best so why not help other people?"

Common beliefs held toward immigrants, according to Mr. Moghebli, are that they become a financial burden on taxpayers for education and by relying on governmental agencies to get by. The reality is that the majority of immigrants, more than 70 percent, are over the age of 18 when they come to the United States and have been educated in their own countries. According to the National Immigration Forum compiled by the Cato Institute in Washington D.C., although immigrants earn a lower wage than native born U.S. citizens when

they first arrive in the states, within 10-15 years they generate a higher income and pay more taxes — as much as \$162 billion.

It is also important to distinguish refugees from illegal immigrants who jump borders to enter the country. The process of a refugee leaving his or her country is a well documented one, with a paper trail of applications.

Mr. Moghebli knows all too well how difficult the transition can be when coming to America. Learning a new language, adapting to a new culture and building a career does not come easily to displaced people.

After working 25 years on the same job in Iran, he was dismissed when the regime changed hands to conservative Muslim clerics who did not tolerate the previous political beliefs. When Mr. Moghebli and his family first came to the states, no one would reply to his resumes. He, his wife, who also holds a master's degree in architecture, and his two children were forced to go on welfare. Like other refugees who arrive in the U.S. work force, within six months, Mr. Moghebli had a job.

He started at the bottom of the ladder in construction, but was soon offered a partnership in the company. The next thing he knew, he was building houses all over New York, including his own and two others in Baldwin. Mr. Moghebli now works as an engineer for the New York State Department of Transportation.

"My concern is that there is no voice for these people," he said. "Now that I am a U.S. citizen I am using my rights to try to help. We [U.S.] are the role model of the world. If we cut back on funds, other countries will follow."

Baldwinite helps refugees

by Joan Delaney

While Americans focused this summer on the finalists in a concocted show about survivors, one Baldwinite continued his work to aid almost 14 million people who are really fighting for survival in United Nations refugee camps around the world.

Kamy Moghbeli knows first hand the life of a refugee. He came to this country with his wife and two children in 1984 after spending four years in Germany as a refugee. He was a native of Teheran, Iran, but left because he was an activist at a time of rising fundamentalism. A Moslem, he had attended Catholic schools for 12 years and wanted to become a Christian.

Mr. Moghbeli and his family were brought to this country through the auspices of the Tolstoy Foundation and first lived in Forest Hills, Queens. A welcoming flyer from a local Lutheran church was his introduction to Lutheranism and he and his family are now active members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin.

Mr. Moghbeli's efforts to help other refugees have been steadfast and practical and have centered on volunteer work with the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). The organization's Ambassadors Circle recently awarded him its "Salt of the Earth" award, which is a combined honor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and the Latvian Lutheran Church. He serves as a speaker and staffs exhibits at local and national events, trying to help people understand the plight of refugees. He also helps coordinate his church's collecting of clothing and other items that are given to newly arrived refugees who are resettled through the LIRS affiliate for the metropolitan area.

"A refugee," he explains, "is someone who is forced to leave his country because of social, economic, or political upheaval." Mr. Moghbeli says that refugees become legal immigrants and he carefully presents documentation showing that well-educated refugees, with a variety of academic knowledge and skills, are assets in the countries where they are relocated.

He deplors the decline of American

financial aid for refugees and the decrease in the number of refugees America is willing to accept. Since 1992,

there has been a 42 percent reduction in the number of refugees that are allowed into the country, and that number will be down to only 76,000 annually by the year 2001. Reductions in financial aid continue, with the administration advocating approximately \$660 million a year and a Senate committee recommending \$615 million.

The Refugee Council, a coalition of faith-

based and humanitarian agencies involved in protecting and resettling refugees, is advocating that \$700 million be budgeted. The Council points out that the present budget translates into aid of approximately 11 cents a day per African refugee for temporary protection assistance and one dollar a day for other refugees in eastern European countries.

Refugee advocates must overcome a stereotype that is based largely on perceptions of illegal immigrants rather than on refugees who are resettled legally. Documentation shows that 90 percent of the refugees admitted to the United States are gainfully employed within six months. The refugees themselves are obliged to pay their own airfare. Additionally, fees of \$1,800 per refugee must be paid to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the rigorous screening needed to authorize admittance.

Mr. Moghbeli's story is not unlike that of many refugees. He holds a master's degree in architecture and town planning from the National University of Iran, and

he notes that most refugees are over the age of 18 and already educated. "The United States benefits from that education."



A MEMBER OF the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin, Kamy Maghbeli is an active volunteer in awareness of the plight of over 14 million refugees in United Nations refugee camps around the world.

For the first six months in this country, Mr. Moghbeli worked for \$30 a day for a builder. Soon thereafter, he began his own business as a self-employed builder and general contractor and has constructed over 60 houses, including his own home in Baldwin.

He speaks of America as "the best of the best," and has nothing but

praise for Baldwin, which he selected because he wanted a solid middle class community with a good school district. His wife Fery is a civil engineer with the Department of Transportation, where he also now works as a senior engineer technician. His son Kaveh is a student at SUNY Stony Brook and hopes to become a doctor like his grandfather. His daughter Jasmin is entering her senior year in Baldwin Senior High School and hopes to join the Navy and become a pilot.

He speaks passionately about the lives of refugees. "Some of them are born in refugee camps and will die there," he says. He speaks of the limbo others live in, waiting either to go back to their own country or to be relocated. "America is the role model for the world," he says. "If we don't care about refugees, why should other countries?"

He speaks of the success that the Lutheran Church has had in relocating refugees in Utica, New York, and Fargo, North Dakota. "Both of those cities are cold. Their economies were bad. Now that we have relocated

almost 1,300 refugees into these cities, stores are opening and the economies are revitalized. These cities were going to die and now they are prosperous."

He adds that legal immigrants not only improve the economy but provide a growing base to support Social Security and Medicare. He speaks of legal immigration as a key component in solving the long term problem of financing the Social Security system. As an aside, he also deplored resistance to legalizing the many other immigrants who are already here and working in the underground economy. "They are here; they're not going back. They are working, and we should find some way to make them part of the system so that they can pay taxes and also help to shore up Medicare and Social Security."

Interestingly, although immigrants start with a lower earning power than native born Americans, after their assimilation they tend to overtake the average native-born American wage earner.

Although Mr. Moghbeli believes that practical statistics should convince Americans of the value of admitting legal immigrant refugees, his heart is also moved by spiritual sensibilities. He adds, "Please, when you see your neighbors today, disregard who he or she is and what color, language, religion, culture and race they might be.... Extend your hands of love and care for them because they are in real need for your sign of love and peace."

Wherever he speaks, Mr. Moghbeli asks that people write to their elected officials, particularly to the President, senators and congressmen, urging them to increase support for refugees. Most especially, he asks that people specifically request that \$700 million be budgeted this year for refugee support and that America accept 100,000 refugees a year for relocation. "Everyone's eyes are toward America," he says, and he stresses that Americans should not fear legal immigrants. "They have ambition. They are not lazy. There is enough for everyone."



September 26, 2000

\$133 Million Erosion of Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)

The Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account has been eroded by at least four factors in recent years . . .

Factor 1 . . . Lower nominal dollars

The MRA funding level was \$671 million four years ago, in FY96. The Administration has requested \$658.2 million for FY2001.

Factor 2 . . . Lower real (inflation-adjusted) dollars

The MRA funding level in FY96 was \$770 million in current inflation-adjusted dollars. The Administration's budget request for FY2001 is \$658.8 million in current dollars.

Factor 3 . . . Higher administrative expenses

The MRA budget contained zero spending for DOS/PRM administrative expenses in FY96. The Administration's MRA request for FY2001 contains \$14.8 million for administrative expenses. This means that the actual MRA program budget is reduced by \$14.8 million.

Factor 4 . . . Expanded MRA beneficiary caseload (Internally Displaced Persons)

More MRA monies go toward funding relief for internally displaced persons in recent years as donor nations increasingly expand the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in this regard. The budget impact has not yet been estimated.

. . . The result is an Administration MRA budget request in FY2001 that is effectively \$133.6 million less than the MRA program budget of four years ago—a reduction of 17.2 percent).

See table attached



\$133 Million Erosion in MRA

(millions \$)

	FY1996	FY2001
A — MRA Nominal Dollars	671	658.2
B — MRA Administrative Expenses	0	14.8
C — MRA Program Budget (A minus B)	671	643.4
D — MRA Program Budget / Real 2000 Dollars (C in inflation adjusted dollars)	777	643.4
E — Real MRA Program Budget Cut Since 1996 (Cut in D)	x	133.6 (— 17.2%)

September 26, 2000



September 18, 2000
U.S. Committee for Refugees
Contact: Jeff Drumtra / Jana Mason
202-347-3507

Refugee Assistance Funding Shortfalls: Examples of Real Impact on Refugees

Worldwide

► **Worldwide**, UNHCR projects a funding shortfall of **\$125 million**—a shortfall of 13 percent on an already austere operating budget.

Africa

► In **Kenya**, nearly 50,000 Sudanese and Somali refugee families are unable to repair the roofs of their **houses** because UNHCR cannot afford the **\$1.1 million** expense. UNHCR describes refugee housing at one camp as "pathetic."

► In **Kenya**, planned monthly **food distributions** to 66,000 refugee families occur less frequently because of an overall funding shortfall of **\$2.4 million** to two camps.

► In **Kenya**, funding shortfalls prevent construction of additional **classrooms** and desks for Sudanese and Somali students. Many students must sit on the floor in classrooms crowded with 150 students per teacher.

► In **Congo-Brazzaville**, up to 40,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa are beyond the reach of humanitarian aid workers in part because UNHCR needs \$1.6 million to fund specialized **barges or aircraft** to reach them along a remote river.

► In **Zambia**, more than 200,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa and Angola have endured a cutback in **food rations**, leaving the refugees with a diet deficient in protein. Additional food cutbacks are anticipated by year's end.

(more)

► In **Angola**, food distributions stopped to 50,000 internally displaced persons in the town of Luena because of relief shortfalls. The food cutoff forced many displaced families to venture into dangerous zones outside of town in search of food.

► In **Tanzania**, 400,000 refugees have seen their **food rations** cut 40 percent since July because insufficient food has arrived from international donors. Refugees seeking food outside their camps have been detained by local police.

► In **Cote d'Ivoire**, a funding shortfall of \$5.8 million has forced an international relief agency involved in **income-generation** projects for refugees to withdraw from the country.

► In **Guinea**, assistance of food and non-food items to some 400,000 refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia is hampered because bad national roads regularly damage aid trucks. A \$19 million budget shortfall hampers **truck maintenance** and **road improvements** that would improve refugee assistance.

Other Regions

► In **Pakistan** and **Iran**, erosion of international financial support for refugee programs has pushed several thousand Afghan refugees to **repatriate prematurely** in recent months to dangerous and drought-ridden parts of Afghanistan.

► In **Afghanistan**, a funding shortfall of **\$3.5 million** for refugee repatriation and reintegration—water, food, schools, and protection—is forcing thousands of returning Afghan refugees to consider leaving their home areas again for reasons of survival. Such **displacement of new returnees** threatens to expand Afghanistan's already large internally displaced population.

► In **Pakistan**, a funding shortfall of **\$8.6 million** has forced a reduction of **vocational skills training** for vulnerable Afghan refugees and a freeze on aid to non-Afghan refugees.

► In **Pakistan**, thousands of new refugee arrivals expected from Afghanistan cannot receive **full humanitarian aid** because of poor funding.

(more)

- ▶ In **Pakistan**, UNHCR plans to cease its support to **40 health clinics** and **86 primary schools** because of funding problems.

- ▶ In **Iran**, thousands of refugee women from Afghanistan and Iraq who live outside of camps are unable to get **training in income-generation skills** because of financial constraints on training programs as part of an \$11.2 million funding shortfall.

- ▶ In **Armenia**, half of the refugees from Azerbaijan who live in hazardous and substandard housing are unable to **rehabilitate** their **dwellings** because of a \$1.3 million funding shortfall.

- ▶ In **Armenia**, 85 percent of the low-income refugees from Azerbaijan who were scheduled to receive small loans this year have been eliminated from the credit program because of budget constraints.

- ▶ In **Azerbaijan**, many of the 200,000 refugees from Armenia and elsewhere receive only **limited assistance** and aid workers were unable to construct 200 **new shelters** for refugees because of a funding shortfall of \$1.9 million—nearly 50 percent of UNHCR's needed budget in the country.

- ▶ In **Georgia**, hundreds of uprooted people who have recently returned to their homes receive virtually **no protection monitoring** from UNHCR, in part because of a 62 percent funding shortfall equivalent to \$6.8 million.

- ▶ In the **Russian Federation**, much-needed projects to help **train local authorities** about the rights of 100,000 refugees residing in the country have been cancelled because of a 63 percent funding shortfall equaling \$17 million.

- ▶ In **Turkey**, 2,400 asylum seekers who arrived last year still await interviews or decisions on their **legal status** because of a \$2.5 million funding shortfall that has crippled the ability of UNHCR to fill staffing vacancies in the country.

- ▶ In **Turkey**, expansion of **social counseling services** and improved **reproductive health care** for nearly 9,000 refugees have been cancelled because of a \$2.5 million funding shortfall.

(more)

► In **Egypt**, a monthly **cash assistance allowance** to several thousand urban refugees from Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen is being curtailed by 20 percent because of a \$2.3 million budget shortfall. Even before the cutback, monthly allowances in Egypt are inadequate to cover refugees' basic living costs such as food and housing.

► In **Egypt**, payments for local **medical care** of urban refugees have been postponed because of a \$2.3 million budget shortfall.

► In **Yemen**, construction of a **new camp** for 3,000 new refugees from Somalia has slowed and might halt in October because of a \$ 2 million budget shortfall. UNHCR fears a backlash against the refugees by Yemeni authorities because of the construction delay.

► In **Jordan**, a budget shortfall of \$900,000 has forced suspension of **vocational education**, language training, **clothing stipends**, and distribution of **winter heaters** for 1,000 urban refugees from Iraq.

End



September 6, 2000
U.S. Committee for Refugees
Contact: Jeff Drumtra
202-347-3507, ext. 3024

September Update

1.5 Million Africans Flee in Search of Safety During First Eight Months of 2000

At least 1.5 million people in Africa fled their homes during the first eight months of this year because of war, violence, or political repression, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) announced today.

The USCR estimate of 1.5 million newly uprooted Africans is very conservative and might well undercount hundreds of thousands of newly uprooted people at locations in Africa where inadequate reporting makes estimates difficult.

Africa's newly uprooted population is equivalent to nearly 50,000 new refugees and internally displaced people per week. At least 10 African countries suffered significant population flight during January to August of 2000. The newly uprooted people join millions of other Africans who remain refugees or internally displaced from previous years; a cumulative total of some 14.2 million Africans are currently uprooted and unable to return home.

The estimate of newly uprooted Africans is based on extensive monitoring of public and private field reports by UN humanitarian agencies, private international relief organizations, and other sources in Africa. Although initial reports of new population upheavals are often inaccurate and frequently are exaggerated because of chaos on the ground, USCR has analyzed the field data to arrive at conservative minimum estimates.

The international community has responded poorly to Africa's new emergencies by curtailing food deliveries this year and leaving major relief programs drastically under-funded. The U.S. Congress is poised to pass an appropriations bill in the next few days that would cut assistance to African refugees to its lowest level in more than a decade. Congress is also prepared to reduce funding for humanitarian relief to internally displaced persons worldwide by as much as \$60 million—a cut of more than 25 percent. Moreover, an appropriations bill passed by the House, and pending in a House-Senate conference committee, would eliminate U.S. funding for all UN peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

Following is a summary of significant new population upheavals in Africa during the first two-thirds of this year:

(more)

Eritrea

- **Newly uprooted = 500,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 650,000]
- Cause = border war with Ethiopia.
- **Minimum estimate includes** populations uprooted during military offensive by Ethiopian troops in May-June.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include several thousand Eritreans who fled in August from areas occupied by Ethiopian troops; does not include larger displacement estimates by Eritrean authorities.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1 million.** [Higher estimates = 1.25 million]

Congo-Kinshasa (DRC)

- **Newly uprooted = 430,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 540,000]
- Cause = civil war; war with neighboring countries.
- **Minimum estimate includes** UN assessment that more than 400,000 Congolese became internally displaced in first half of year; 30,000 new Congolese refugees to Tanzania, Zambia, and Congo-Brazzaville.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher UN estimate of possible 100,000 additional newly displaced Congolese; does not include reports of an additional 20,000 new Congolese refugees in Congo-Brazzaville.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1.4 million.** [Higher estimates = 1.7 million]

Angola

- **Newly uprooted = 200,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 250,000]
- Cause = civil war; current violence in eight of country's 15 provinces.
- **Minimum estimate includes** approximately 200,000 new internally displaced persons; 10,000 to 15,000 new Angolan refugees in Zambia.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include sizable but uncounted August population movements into central cities of Kuito and Uige; does not include reports of uncounted numbers recently uprooted in contested border areas.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1.8 million to 2.5 million.**

Sierra Leone

- **Newly uprooted = 160,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 270,000]
- Cause = renewed civil war.
- **Minimum estimate includes** at least 100,000 newly uprooted persons registered by aid agencies nationwide; at least 50,000 newly displaced living on their own nationwide; 7,000 newly displaced in northern town of Bubuna in August; at least 6,000 new Sierra Leonean refugees to Guinea. (more)

- Minimum estimate does *not* include additional 50,000 newly uprooted people reported but not confirmed by aid agencies; does not include reports of several thousand additional new uncounted refugees in Guinea; does not include highest estimates for newly displaced population congregated at Mile 91 in central Sierra Leone or Port Loko in the north.
- **Total uprooted, including from previous years = 750,000.** [Higher estimates = 1 million]

Sudan

- **Newly uprooted = 60,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 150,000]
- Cause = civil war; government policies.
- **Minimum estimate includes** nearly 50,000 new internally displaced persons in southern Bentiu oil-producing area in August; 10,000 new Sudanese refugees in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include unconfirmed reports of tens of thousands of newly displaced persons in inaccessible areas of Western Upper Nile Province; does not include possible new population displacement in central Sudan's Nuba Mountain area; does not include unconfirmed reports of recent population flight from government-controlled southern town of Wau; does not include uncounted numbers of newly uprooted people near northeastern town of Kassala; does not include reports of newly uprooted people in western Darfur Province.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 4.4 million.**

Burundi

- **Newly uprooted = 60,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 100,000+]
- Cause = civil war.
- **Minimum estimate includes** nearly 40,000 new Burundian refugees to Tanzania; 30,000 new internally displaced in southern Makamba Province.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include new internal displacement in eastern provinces where violence is ongoing; does not include newest displacement caused by violence and government policies near Bujumbura, the capital.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 1 million.**

Uganda

- **Newly uprooted = 50,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 200,000]
- Cause = armed insurgencies in north and southwest.
- **Minimum estimate includes** new displacement of 50,000 people in northern districts of Kitgum and Gulu.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher government estimates for displacement in Gulu and Kitgum; does not include possible new population displacement caused by insurgent attacks early in year near southern town of Bundibugyo; does

not include population displacement caused by recent insurgent attacks in central Uganda; does not include uncouneted displacement triggered by ethnic violence in northern Karamoja area.

- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 510,000.** [Higher estimates = 840,000]

Nigeria

- **Newly uprooted = 50,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 80,000]
- Cause = religious and political violence.
- **Minimum estimate includes** Nigerians uprooted in northern central city of Kaduna and nearby areas by violence that reportedly killed 600.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher unconfirmed estimates of population displacement in northern Nigeria; does not include possible new displacement caused by political tensions in southern oil regions.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 50,000 to 100,000.**

Liberia

- **Newly uprooted = 30,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 40,000]
- Cause = civil strife; alleged armed insurgency.
- **Minimum estimate includes** reports of 30,000 or more internally displaced persons since July in Lofa County.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include higher government estimates for population displacement in Lofa County.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 230,000.** [Higher estimates = 270,000]

Somalia

- **Newly uprooted = 5,000 minimum.** [Higher estimates = 25,000]
- Cause = civil strife.
- **Minimum estimate includes** new internally displaced persons in south central Somalia in March.
- Minimum estimate does *not* include likely displacement caused by violence in key town of Belet Wein in August, fighting south of Mogadishu in July, violence in Baidoa in June, and violence north of Mogadishu in Jowhar.
- **Total now uprooted, including from previous years = 780,000.** [Higher estimates = 850,000]

Africa Total

- **Total newly uprooted = 1.54 million minimum.** [Higher estimates = 2.3 million.]
- **Total now uprooted in Africa, including from previous years = 14.2 million** (includes uprooted populations from African countries not listed above).



Letter Sent to All House - Senate Conference

September 18, 2000

The Honorable Judd Gregg
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gregg:

As you complete the negotiations on the FY 2001 foreign operations appropriations bill and prepare for formal conference, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) urges that you provide the highest possible amount for the Migration and Refugee Affairs (MRA) account.

The House-passed figure of \$645 million for MRA is woefully inadequate, as is the Administration's request of \$658 million. The protection and assistance needs of the world's 14 million refugees and millions of internally displaced persons warrant an MRA budget of \$700 million or more. Please keep this in mind as you settle on a final MRA appropriations figure.

We also implore you to drop the new and unwise "MRA Congressional notification" provision from the Senate version of the bill. The provision would almost certainly cause dangerous delays in funding emergency refugee assistance programs in the field.

In the past two weeks, four staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been murdered while attempting to assist refugees. Three staff were beaten to death by militia members in the Indonesian territory of West Timor on September 6, and this past weekend the head of UNHCR's office in Macenta, Guinea was shot and killed by armed raiders. While a higher budget for refugee protection and assistance would not necessarily have saved the lives of these dedicated staff, it is shameful that humanitarian workers are asked to put their lives on the line to help refugees while the international community fails even to give them the resources they need to do their job.

Attached please find a partial summary of the real-life impact that funding shortfalls are already having on refugees. While certainly not exhaustive, these facts demonstrate the urgency of the situation.

Sincerely,

Roger P. Winter
Executive Director

Congressional Dear Colleague Letter / Rep. Chris Smith (And Others)
September 25, 2000

Dear Conferee:

We are writing to urge your support in the Foreign Operations Conference Committee for an increase in funding for refugee protection.

In recent years, the Migration and Refugee Account (MRA) has been the only major State Department account to undergo a substantial real-dollar cut. The MRA appropriation in FY 1995 was \$671 million, plus an additional \$12 million in salaries and expenses. So both the \$645 million in this year's House-passed bill and the \$615 million in the Senate bill are significantly lower than what we were spending on refugees six years ago, even in unadjusted dollars.

The cut is far more dramatic, of course, when the effects of inflation are taken into account. The inflation-adjusted equivalent of our FY 1995 support for refugee protection is about \$815 million. The amounts currently under consideration by the Conference represent a reduction in the range of 18% to 25% below this amount. Over the same period, the number of refugees in the world and the scope of their needs have increased rather than decreased.

Last year Congress enacted the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, which addressed this dramatic shortfall by authorizing \$750 for the MRA account in FY 2001. Unfortunately, the Administration's budget request of \$658 million fell substantially short of the authorized level, and the House and the Senate figures are even lower.

The numbers, however, do not even begin to tell the whole story. As you know, the MRA account provides emergency food, shelter, and resettlement assistance for victims of religious, racial, and political persecution, as well as repatriation assistance for those who can safely return to their home countries. Some of the practical consequences of the cuts in refugee spending over the past five years include the following:

--- Somali women in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya are regularly raped by gangs of local thugs when they gather firewood outside the camp. In other camps around the world cooking fuel is provided for the refugees, but there is no room for it in the Dadaab budget. In 1997 U.S. refugee officials announced a \$1 million emergency grant --- enough to provide firewood for the refugee women and their families for a year --- but then quietly decided to spend the money over several years, so that only about one-third of the need is being met. Predictably, the number of rapes has decreased, but not by much. Refugee women are still forced to venture outside the camp, where they are still being raped in large numbers.

--- In the Kakuma camp, also in Kenya, food for the refugees has been cut by about 20%, to about 1700 calories per person per day. According to health workers in the camp, the number of malnutrition-related deaths of children under the age of five has increased tenfold, from two or three per month to over twenty.

(more)

--- In Congo-Brazzaville, up to 40,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa are beyond the reach of humanitarian aid workers in part because the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) needs \$1.6 million for barges or aircraft to reach them along a remote river.

--- In Pakistan and Iran, erosion of international financial support for refugee programs has resulted in the premature repatriation of several thousand Afghan refugees to regions in which there is inadequate food and water and where they are still in danger of persecution.

--- In Armenia, half of the refugees from Azerbaijan live in hazardous and substandard housing because there are no funds to repair or replace their shelters. Meanwhile, refugees who have fled from Armenia to Azerbaijan find themselves in the same situation for the same reason: lack of funds.

--- In the Russian Federation, a training program for local authorities to encourage them to respect the rights of 100,000 refugees residing in the country has been cancelled because the UNHCR country program is facing a 63 percent funding shortfall.

--- In Turkey, 2,400 asylum seekers who arrived last year are still waiting for refugee interviews or status decisions because of a \$2.5 million shortfall which has prevented UNHCR from filling vacant positions for protection officers.

--- UNHCR has instructed many of its offices around the world to cut their calendar year 2000 budgets because of an anticipated operating budget shortfall of about \$125 million. Unfortunately, these budgets had already been cut far below anticipated needs due to an instruction that budgets should be based on anticipated contributions from donors rather than on an assessment of the needs of refugees. The budget for Africa --- where per capita spending on refugee protection and assistance is already the lowest in the world, even after adjustment for variations in the cost of living --- will have to be cut by an additional 20% if more money is not found before the end of the year.

--- Meanwhile, the number of refugees resettled in the United States is scheduled to drop to only 76,000 next year --- 9000 fewer than last year, and only about half the number admitted each year during the early 1990s. The Clinton administration's budget also includes a \$14 million cut in support for refugees in Africa.

We therefore urge that the Foreign Operations conference report include \$750 million for the Migration and Refugee Account, the full amount already authorized by Congress for FY 2001.

Sincerely,
Rep. Chris Smith
[And Other Members . . .]

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
122 C Street NW #125
Washington DC 20001
202-783-7509
202-783-7502 FAX
LIRSWDC@aol.com

LIRS - Washington DC

Fax

Date: September 15, 2000 **456-1121 fax**

To: Irene Bueno, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff,
Special Assistant to the President

From: Stephanie Saenger for Merrill Smith

RE: Migration and Refugee Assistance Letter

Pages: 3

DORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH, CHAIRMAN

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MANUE COONEY, Chief Counsel and Staff Director
 BRUCE A. GOMAN, Minority Chief Counsel

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

September 15, 2000

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Chair
 Senate Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee
 Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 142
 Washington DC 20510

Re: Migration and Refugee Assistance

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am dismayed by the Administration's proposal for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) in the foreign operations budget for FY 2001 to further reduce funded refugee admissions to the United States to as little as 76,000. Based on the present refugee situation, such admissions should instead be increased at least to their 1993 level of 112,000.

There are over 14 million refugees in the world today, up over half a million in the last calendar year. In just the first eight months of this year, more than 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted. More than a third of African refugees are presently seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. If the Administration's inadequate budget for MRA is approved, this will mark a 46% overall decline in refugee admissions under this Administration from the 142,000 admissions approved in 1992.

Worse, the Administration has shown a disturbing inability to effectively process and admit the numbers Congress has authorized and appropriated funds for. This year, for example, 85,000 admissions were approved and yet it appears that as few as 72,000 or fewer will actually be admitted. That is a 15% shortfall, the worst in 14 years save 1996 when the Administration fell nearly 16% short of the admissions approved by Congress. We are not talking about abstract performance standards here. We are talking about squandered opportunities for new hope and new life for human beings who have suffered enough.

Languishing for years in squalid camps is not a "durable solution" for refugees. Refugees do not seek dependency on hand-outs. They seek, as all people do, to breathe free and to support their families with honest work. They are not a burden to our country. They are an asset - to our economy, to our culture, and to our political traditions of liberty and tolerance. Historically, the United States has been the proud world leader in refugee protection. The decline in this commitment in recent years can only send the wrong signal to other nations.

Please do what you can to reverse this disturbing trend. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Grassley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chuck" being more prominent than the last name "Grassley".

Senator Charles E. Grassley, Member
Senate Subcommittee on Immigration

Refugee Council USA

3211 4th Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017-1194
Tel: 202-541-5402/04 Fax: 202-722-8800

FAX Memorandum

Date: September 20, 2000

Total pages: 4 (including cover)

To: Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff

Fax #: 456-1121

From: Tristan Burnett, RCUSA



MESSAGE:

Please find the attached sign-on letter to President Clinton regarding the Administration's budget request for the MRA account for FY2001.

If you have any problems with this transmittal, please contact me at (202) 541-5404.

Thank you.

September 20, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Migration and Refugee Assistance Account

Dear President Clinton:

The undersigned respectfully request that you amend your Administration's FY 2001 budget request for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), part of the larger foreign operations budget, from \$658 million to at least \$700 million. The original request would reduce overseas assistance to African refugees by nearly \$14 million and cut funded U.S. refugee admissions by as many as 9,000. Neither is an acceptable response to present refugee needs which, in light of present fiscal resources, compel the conclusion that both refugee admissions and overseas refugee assistance, especially in Africa, can and should be increased.

The number of refugees in the world increased by about 600,000 to more than 14 million last year. Of Africa's more than 3 million refugees, more than one third are presently seeking protection in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. Moreover, by conservative estimates, 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted just in the first eight months of this year alone.

Even without the envisioned cuts in assistance for African refugees, serious disparities in our response to the needs of refugees around the world beg for redress. Our response to the plight of European refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has been admirable. Protection assistance to similarly situated African refugees fleeing terrible atrocities in Sierra Leone, on the other hand, reportedly amounted to as little as 11 cents per refugee per day.

Also, the proposal of a ceiling as low as 76,000 for refugee admissions in FY 2001 represents not only a dramatic cut from the 85,000 funded this year, but a more than 46% overall decline from the 142,000 funded in 1992.

Although the Senate and the House have passed substantially lower MRA budgets, Budget Committee leaders in both chambers have announced their willingness to lift confining budgetary caps in order to reach agreement with the Administration. It is our hope that the FY 2001 budget will set a shining standard for refugee protection as part of the Clinton legacy

Clinton-Page 2

and not a further and unjustifiable decline.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of our views.

Respectfully yours,

endorsing agencies:

Africa Faith & Justice Network
Alliance for Justice, Medical Mission Sisters
American Friends Service Committee
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Batey Relief Alliance
Bethany Christian Services
B'nai B'rith International
Catholic Charities/Community & Immigrant Services, HI.
Centro Latino
Church World Service/Immigration & Refugee Program
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Colorado Refugee Network Council
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Eritrean Development Foundation
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Inc.
Grupo Quetzal
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Interfaith Service Bureau, Sacramento
International Aid
International Rescue Committee
International Women's Health Coalition
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Kurdish Human Rights Watch
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service
Lutheran Refugee Services of Colorado
Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
MAP International
Mobile Coalition for Refugees
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Coalition for Haitian Rights
National Immigration Forum

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National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA
New York Association for New Americans, Inc.
Obor, The International Book Institute, Inc.
Oxfam America
Peace Corps Association, Chicago Area
Refugees International
Sacramento Refugee Ministry
San Luis Valley Christian Community Services/Immigrant Assistance Program
Save the Children
Schmeltzer, Aptaker and Shepard
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Texas Immigrant & Refugee Coalition
The Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc.
The Center for Victims of Torture
United Jewish Communities
U.S. Association for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees
Voices for Immigrant Justice
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs/
Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Women's Commission for Refugee Women & Children
World Relief Corporation

cc: Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff
Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Gene Sperling, Director, National Economic Council

National Immigration Forum

September 7, 2000

TO: Maria Echaveste
Rochelle Thompson

FR: Frank Sharry
National Immigration Forum

RE: Request for Meeting on Refugee Funding

This is a follow up to an earlier request for a meeting to discuss refugee funding issues. A group of leaders representing religious and refugee organizations engaged in refugee protection and resettlement work have asked for my help in setting up a meeting with Maria. Rochelle asked to provide more specific information regarding who would attend, and what they are requesting.

The Issue

The Senate and House Appropriations Committees have proposed significant cuts in the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account and the Emergency and Refugee Assistance (ERMA) account. If not rectified, the funding shortfalls will likely result in 1) undercutting the President's ceiling by 9,000 refugee admissions into the U.S. in the next fiscal year; and 2) hampered ability by the U.S. and the international community to respond to refugee emergencies, such as Kosovo, worldwide.

The MRA and ERMA accounts are State Department programs funded through the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. For MRA in FY 2001, the Administration proposed \$858 million (the State Department initially asked for \$890 million), the House has approved \$645 million, and the Senate approved \$615 million. The funds are used for overseas refugee assistance, initial costs of U.S. resettlement, aid to refugees resettled in Israel, among other items. For ERMA in FY 2001, the Administration proposed \$20 million, the Senate approved \$15 million, and the House approved \$12.5 million. This is the fund that is tapped in emergency situations, such as recent crises in Kosovo, East Timor, and Congo.

Who Would Attend the Meeting

U.S. Catholic Conference (Mark Franken and Lacy Wright); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (Gideon Aronoff); Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (Merrill Smith); Immigration and Refugee Services of America/U.S. Committee for Refugees (John Fredriksson); World Relief Corporation (Ami Henson). Depending on the timing of the meeting, this list could change somewhat.

For your information, the refugee protection groups have met with State Department officials with the Population Refugee Migration Bureau (Julia Taft and others) as well as Christine Lindsey of OMB's International Affairs Division. They would like to meet with you to request your intervention so that the Administration can avert a significant and unnecessary reduction in critical funding for the some of the world's most vulnerable populations.

Request for White House Help

Specifically, the groups would like Maria's help in pressing OMB to fight for at least its own budget request, and with respect to the MRA account, and in light of Frank Wolf's commitment to fight for \$700 million in conference, that the Administration go for a similar amount.

Please call me at (202) 544-0004 ext. 16.

Sincerely,

Frank Sharry
Executive Director

END

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA

3211 4th Street NE, Washington, DC 20017-1194
Tel: 202-541-5402 Fax: 202-722-8800

September 6, 2000

Via Facsimile (202) 456-1121

Ms. Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Re: Migration and Refugee Assistance for FY 2001

Dear Ms. Echaveste,

As you are aware, we in the Refugee Council USA seek a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss some serious shortfalls in the Administration's FY 2001 budget proposal for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), part of the larger foreign operations budget. I appreciate that your time for such a meeting is scarce and may well become scarcer as we approach the end of the Congressional session. Accordingly, I take this opportunity to set forth our concerns in writing.

Introduction

The chief problems with the Administration's request of \$658 million for MRA is that it would reduce funded U.S. refugee admissions by as many as 9,000 and reduce overseas assistance to African refugees by nearly \$14 million. Neither cut is an acceptable response to either present refugee needs or fiscal resources. In fact, the abundance of both such needs and resources compels the conclusion that both refugee admissions and overseas refugee assistance, especially in Africa, can and should be increased. The Refugee Council, proposes an amended request of \$700 million in order to help accomplish this.

Changes in the World Refugee Situation

At least two major changes in the world refugee situation have occurred or become known since the issuance of the Administration's request that would imminently justify such an amendment. First, according the U.S. Committee for Refugees *World Refugee Survey 2000*, which was published only

Maria is referring to you
Irene

in June of this year, the number of refugees in the world increased by about 600,000 to more than 14 million in 1999. This reflects a disturbing trend reversal after nearly seven years of decline. The *Survey* also reveals that, of Africa's more than 3 million refugees, more than one third are presently seeking refuge in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict.

Second, with the collapse of the peace accords in Sierra Leone (the source of some 460,000 refugees in 1999 or about 15% of the continent's total), prospects are far less optimistic for their voluntary repatriation and assistance needs than they were at the time of the Administration's MRA budget proposal. By conservative estimates, 1.5 million Africans were newly uprooted just in the first eight months of this year. This includes 40,000 new Burundian refugees in Tanzania, 30,000 new Congolese refugees in Tanzania, Zambia and Congo-Brazzaville, 10,000 – 15,000 new Angolan refugees in Zambia, 10,000 new Sudanese refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, and 6,000 new Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. Surely catastrophes of this magnitude merit a serious upward revision of the Administration's request for both overseas assistance and U.S. refugee admissions.

Changes in the Political Context

Although the Senate and the House have passed substantially lower MRA budgets (\$615 million and \$645 million, respectively), at least two aspects of political reality suggest that these lower figures will not be difficult to overcome. One, grassroots lobbying activities of members of the Refugee Council, their affiliates and thousands of concerned Americans, have shown considerable effect in softening opposition among Republican leaders to greater appropriations to this account. We have made live and video presentations to community groups in Mobile, AL, Louisville, Bowling Green and Lexington, KY, Aurora and Glen Ellyn, IL, and Anchorage, AK. Such presentations are also planned for Oxford, Jackson and Biloxi, MS and St. Petersburg, FL. Speaking just for the Lutherans here, 17 Bishops in the states and congressional districts of foreign operations appropriators have written in support of the Refugee Council request. And, of course, Frank Wolf (R-VA) will be championing it in the foreign operations appropriations conference.

Two, even sympathetic foreign operations appropriators in Congress (as well as the Administration) have been operating under the influence of stringent budgetary caps requiring painful off-sets from other popular and/or worthwhile programs in order to increase funding for MRA. Recently, however, the Senate and House Budget Committee Chairs have announced their willingness to lift those caps in order to reach agreement with the Administration before the end of the congressional session. While this is good news in many respects, it also places heavy responsibility upon the Administration for whatever the outcome may be. It is our hope that the outcome will be a shining standard for refugee protection as part of the Clinton legacy and not a further and unjustifiable decline.

Chronic Shortfalls in Admissions - Funded and Actual

The Administration's proposal of a ceiling as low as 76,000 refugee admissions for FY 2001 represents not only a dramatic and unjustified cut from the 85,000 funded this year, but a more than 46% overall decline under the Clinton Administration from the 142,000 funded (132,173 admitted) in 1992.

If all 76,000 are admitted in FY 2001, that would make the overall decline in actual admissions (as opposed to merely *funded* admissions) under this Administration about 42%. But, despite the fact that these numbers have never been available to even one percent of the refugees in the world, the Administration has shown a disturbing inability to come even close to the refugee admissions ceilings approved by Congress. This year, for example, the State Department estimates that only 72,000 of the 85,000 funded refugees will actually be admitted. This is failure, by more than 15%, will the worst of any year on record since 1987, save 1996, when it was nearly 16%.

We are not just talking about quotas or abstract performance standards here, but squandered opportunities for new hope and new life for people who have already suffered enough. While this is an internal problem in the State Department's Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration that cannot be immediately resolved in the budget process, it is one of concern to us and to the Clinton Administration's legacy.

In any event, while it will be the succeeding Administration's duty to make full use of the seats available on the U.S. refugee program "lifeboat," it remains this Administration's duty to guarantee that those seats are available.

Chronic Disparities in Assistance

Even without the envisioned cuts for overseas assistance for African refugees, serious disparities in our response to the needs of refugees around the world beg for redress. As Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration recently remarked in *Refugees* magazine,

[t]he dichotomy of how refugees were treated in, say, Guinea, versus how those from Kosovo were treated was totally unacceptable to all of us; unacceptable to spend less than \$20 million on 500,000 refugees from Sierra Leone and then ask for \$240 million for an equivalent number of refugees in Kosovo. It is not fair and it's not right.

As you are aware, some \$167 million of the Kosovo Emergency Supplemental remained available for MRA in FY 2000, bringing the total funds available in this year to \$790 million. Our response to the plight of European refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has been admirable. Protection

assistance to similarly situated African refugees fleeing terrible atrocities in Sierra Leone, on the other hand, reportedly amounted to as little as 11 cents per refugee per day. This raises a nagging question: does our commitment extend equally to refugees around the world? The answer suggested by the Administration's budget request is not comforting. While increasing such assistance to European refugees by more than \$31 million, it recommends cuts in overseas assistance to African refugees of nearly \$14 million.

Conclusion

We remain ready and eager to meet with you to discuss this matter in further detail at your convenience. I will make every effort to make myself personally available for such a discussion. Should that not be possible, however, you may rest assured that a number of executive officers of the constituent members of the Refugee Council and/or their Washington representatives will be available and highly capable of pursuing the matter with you.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr.
Chair, Refugee Council USA
(President, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service)

cc: Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Gene Sperling, Director, National Economic Council

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA

3211 4th Street NE, Washington, DC 20017-1194
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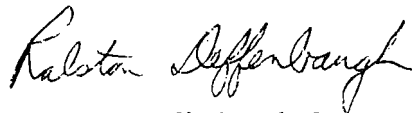
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Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Jr.
Chair, Refugee Council USA
(President, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service)

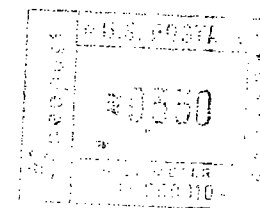
cc: Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State
Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Gene Sperling, Director, National Economic Council



LIRS

**LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION
AND REFUGEE SERVICE**

700 Light Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-3850



Ms. Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington DC 20500

