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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From the Secretary of State

22 November 1985

*David Grogan*

UNITA

We were very glad to see Chet Crocker in London, and found the discussions on 18/19 November most useful.

It was clear from those discussions that your negotiations to bring about a settlement leading to Namibian independence are at a particularly delicate stage. We continue to believe that such a settlement would be in the best interests of both our countries and of the countries of the region. I want you to know that, as in the past, we shall give the fullest possible support to your efforts.

We are both conscious of the importance to Western interests in Southern Africa of pushing back Soviet influence by securing a negotiated withdrawal of Cuban troops and the peaceful implementation of SCR 435. I am particularly concerned by recent moves in the US Congress to bring about military assistance to UNITA. Our own assessment is that any such aid is likely at least to be matched by the level of Soviet support reaching the MPLA government. Such a move by the US could strengthen the position of hardliners in the MPLA, increase the Angolan

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The Hon George Shultz

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Government's dependence on Russian and Cuban support and prolong a civil war which neither side can win outright. It would also almost certainly mark the end of the Namibia negotiations. The end result could only be a strengthening of Soviet influence in the region.

We do not envisage a similar change in our own policy towards Angola and Namibia. The German Government have told us that US aid to UNITA and an end to US-led negotiations on Cuban withdrawal might have the effect of bringing them under considerable pressure to abandon support for SCR 435. This is an additional important factor.

For all those reasons I very much hope that your Administration will resist pressure for military assistance to UNITA and enable our Governments to maintain our present common position.

GEOFFREY HOWE

A handwritten signature, likely of Geoffrey Howe, is written in dark ink. It consists of a large, stylized initial 'G' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke. Below the signature are several horizontal lines and a small dash, possibly indicating a signature line or a mark.

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