For Immediate Release

June 14, 1972

Houser to Test United Nations Visa for Namibia

On May 23, 1972 Mr. George Houser, Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa, received the first Namibian visa issued by the United Nations Council for Namibia, the authority established by the United Nations to replace the illegal South African administration. He will attempt to use that visa on Wednesday and Thursday, June 14 and 15.

Mr. Houser has booked on PanAm flight 164 leaving Kinshasa, Zaire on June 14 at 5:50 p.m. local time (approximately noon in New York). The flight is due in Johannesburg, South Africa at 10:25 p.m. local time, where passengers for Windhoek, Namibia (formerly South West Africa) must transfer to South African Airways, the only air communication with Windhoek. Mr. Houser has an open ticket for Windhoek, and will only be in transit in Johannesburg.

Because South Africa continues to treat Namibia as a part of its own territory, to date all foreigners traveling to Namibia have been required to obtain a South African visa. Mr. Houser does not have a South African visa. He relies on United Nations Resolution 2145 terminating South Africa's mandate over Namibia and Resolution 2248 establishing the United Nations Council for Namibia, both reinforced by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on June 21, 1971 which the United States has accepted.

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Since PanAm is a U.S. airline, Mr. Houser expects to board the flight without difficulty and not to meet a challenge to the visa until he attempts to board a connecting flight to Windhoek at Johannesburg. However, the flight may confront three nations - the United States, Zaire, and South Africa - with the necessity of acting on the question of United Nations authority over Namibia.

A statement which will be presented by Mr. Houser in Kinshasa and/or Johannesburg and Windhoek is attached.
Statement by George M. Houser, Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa
On the occasion of his travel to Namibia, June 14, 1972

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

On May 19, 1967 the United Nations General Assembly, by an overwhelming vote, adopted Resolution 2248 establishing the United Nations Council for Namibia (South West Africa). By a previous resolution (Res.2145) the General Assembly had terminated South Africa's mandate over the territory. This was subsequently reinforced by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on June 21, 1971. Furthermore, the Court opinion declared that South Africa was illegally occupying Namibia and that member states of the U.N. had an obligation to recognize as invalid all acts of South Africa with respect to Namibia. The U.N. Council for Namibia had powers entrusted to it to "administer Namibia until independence...and to promulgate such laws, decrees and administrative regulations as are necessary for the administration of the territory...."

On May 4, 1972, in preparation for a trip to Africa, I applied by letter to the U.N. Council for Namibia for a visa allowing me to enter the Territory. They granted me this visa and it is presently in my passport. To my knowledge, mine was the first request to the Council for a visa, and therefore the first visa granted.

I plan to proceed to Namibia by regular air travel which is my legal right. I hope that every consideration will be given to me to proceed to Namibia without difficulty and thus uphold the decision of the United Nations in its determination to help achieve an independent Namibia as soon as possible.