The American Committee On Africa today called upon the United States sports establishment to answer South Africa's denial of a visa to Arthur Ashe by banning South African athletes from participation in sports in this country and by the refusal of other U.S. athletes to participate in competition in South Africa. South Africa should be barred from participation in Davis Cup tennis competition and the ban on South Africa's participation in the Olympics should be continued, the Committee said.

The statement was released by George Houser, Executive Director, who stated: "It comes as no surprise that the South African government has denied Arthur Ashe a visa. It is patently clear that black athletes are not welcome in South Africa.

The importance of this decision is not confined to the sports field. It is a dramatic demonstration of the commitment of South Africa to a racist position and its denial of human rights to the non-white South African majority."

The full statement follows:
It comes as no surprise that the South African government has denied a visa to Arthur Ashe. The fact that the government announcement by its Minister of Sports came almost simultaneously with Ashe's victory in the Australian tennis championship, reflects with what disdain South Africa views the possible reaction of the rest of the world.

The decision will have great effect on South Africa's position in international sports. It is patently clear that black athletes or interracial teams are not welcome in South Africa. Thus it is imperative that South Africa be barred from participation in Davis Cup tennis competition and that the International Olympic Committee at its May meeting in Amsterdam continue to reject South African participation in the next Olympic Games in 1972.

Further, the various international sports federations which have not already taken positions to keep South Africa out of international events will have to do so or give up all pretense of non-racialism, and white American athletes who have continued to play in South Africa should refuse to compete where black Americans are barred.

The importance of this decision on Arthur Ashe's application for a visa to participate in competition for the South African tennis championship is not confined to the sports field. It follows by only a few months denial of a visa to the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa of the House of
Representatives, Charles Diggs, because he is black. It is a dramatic demonstration of the commitment of South Africa to a racist position. Arthur Ashe is not just a tennis player. He is black, as are the majority of South Africans. Therefore, the denial of this visa is symbolic of the denial of full human status to all blacks in South Africa. The South African government looks upon an indication of equality between races as a threat - and Ashe is a more-than-equal tennis player. This denial, then, is a statement of intention to maintain the exploitive, police state regime indefinitely in order to maintain white supremacy.

This action by South Africa has implications for the United States too. Secretary of State Rogers used his influence, according to reports, to urge South Africa to allow Ashe to enter South Africa. Since Arthur Ashe is an American there should be a particular response here. Only selected Americans can travel to South Africa. White Americans and the United States government should reject special privileges. The United States should now positively discourage continued American economic investments in the racist regime.

Finally, inasmuch as American black athletes cannot go to South Africa, it should be the policy both of the United States government and of sports associations here not to accept white South African participants unless they publicly and specifically repudiate their government's racist policy. Only then can we make clear that our intention here to reject all forms of racism is more than empty words.