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OFFICIAL OF AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA TELLS COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA  
OF UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ENTER TERRITORY

The Council for Namibia\* this afternoon heard George Hauser, Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa, report on his unsuccessful attempt to enter Namibia on a visa issued by the Council.

Mr. Hauser later answered questions posed by the representatives of India and Yugoslavia. Comments were also made by the President of the Council and the representatives of Guyana, Yugoslavia and Colombia, who congratulated Mr. Hauser on his courage.

The meeting was declared open for the hearing of Mr. Hauser's statement but was closed afterwards for the Council to consider the report of its representatives to the meetings this week of the Security Council, a letter to the United States representative to the United Nations, and a request for hearing by Carlos Hamathi of the South West Africa National United Front (SWANUF).

Statement by Mr. Hauser

In his statement to the Council, Mr. HAUSER said that a visit to Namibia would have given him the opportunity of seeing many people whom he had never been able to see previously and might have opened new possibilities for projects which the American Committee on Africa and other organizations might support as Namibia moved towards independence.

The purpose of his attempt to enter to Namibia was also test in a practical way South Africa's adherence to United Nations resolutions and to the 1971 opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Regarding his travel plan, Mr. Hauser stated that he could have taken a direct flight on South African Airways from Europe to Windhoek, Namibia, or else transfer to South African Airways at Johannesburg for the flight to Windhoek. He decided on the latter course, he said, because he intended to be in Rabat for the annual meeting of the Organization of African Unity and it was therefore convenient for him to travel by Pan American Airways on the southern journey from Casablanca.

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\* Members of the Council are Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

Upon inquiring whether he should have a South African visa in order to change planes at the Jan Smuts airport in Johannesburg, he was told it was not necessary if he was going on to, for example, Botswana. As he believed that Namibia was as separate a country from South Africa as was Botswana, he thought that the same transit facilities should prevail, he stated. Consequently it had not been his intention to seek a South African visa at any point.

On his way to Johannesburg, Mr. Hauser went on, he stopped off at Kinshasa for three days. While there, he was surprised to see reports of his proposed visit to Namibia appearing in the South African press. It was clear to him then that the South African authorities would contact Pan American Airways officials to try to prevent him from entering Namibia.

On 14 June, he said, he presented his ticket and passport to Pan American officials at Kinshasa, preparatory to departing for Namibia via South Africa, but was told that he did not have a South African visa. When he replied that he was not going to South Africa but to Namibia and that he had a United Nations passport, the official then told him that he did not have a confirmed reservation from Johannesburg to Windhoek.

Subsequently, the Pan American services manager at the airport told him that the South African Government had informed the company that he should not be allowed to embark without a South African visa, Mr. Hauser said. The manager had said that the South African Government was exercising the right of "no transit without visa", which was unusual. However, Pan American had to conform or be fined by the South African Government.

Mr. Hauser said he had told the Pan American manager that by enforcing South Africa's demand, he was simply extending that country's "police state apparatus". He then handed him a statement explaining his position.

Mr. Hauser stated that he met the manager again on 15 June and gave him a fuller explanation of his position. He also handed him an official letter of protest against the action of Pan American in not honouring his reservation to Johannesburg.

Mr. Hauser declared that in Kinshasa he was prevented from getting on the plane for Johannesburg and never even went through the formalities of immigration on leaving Zaire. He observed that his "confrontation" with the South African authorities over the right to use the United Nations visa took place at Kinshasa airport with the Pan American authorities as the enforcing agency.

Noting that the incident had received considerable publicity, especially in Africa, Mr. Hauser said that his effort would be of some use if it helped to bring to the attention of the world community the aims of the United Nations regarding Namibia as well as South Africa's continued frustration of the right of the people of that country to freedom.

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Mr. Hauser also said that he was in touch with his legal advisers as to the steps to be taken following Pan American's refusal to honour a confirmed reservation on its flight to Johannesburg and thence to Namibia.

Other Statements and Questions

The President of the Council, O. ADENIJI (Nigeria), paid tribute to Mr. Hauser for his courage in challenging South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. He expressed the hope that more persons would seek visas from the Council when they wished to visit Namibia.

SYMED BARAKAT AHMAD (India) associated his delegation with the President's remarks and sought further information on the extent and nature of the press coverage given to the incident. He also inquired whether the American Committee on Africa had lodged a protest at the headquarters of the Pan American company.

Replying, Mr. HAUSER stated that there was little coverage of the incident in the United States press. As for the lodging of a protest at Pan American headquarters, the Committee had not taken such action because it felt that it had already done so by protesting at Kinshasa.

Mr. BARAKAT AHMAD (India) was of the view that there were advantages in informing the headquarters of the wide complications of the affair. While South Africa could arrest or deport Mr. Hauser if it so desired, he observed, it should not shift the onus of blame to an airline.

KABUKA STANLEY BENNY NYIRENDA (Nigeria), congratulating Mr. Hauser on his forthright spirit, asked him whether he could not have taken the direct flight to Namibia.

Mr. HAUSER replied that there were direct flights from Frankfurt and Paris to Windhoek but he had assumed that a South African visa would be required. However, he did not try to take any of those routes because his trip had various objectives.

LIONEL SAMUELS (Guyana) urged that the American Committee on Africa make extensive use of its contacts to promote far greater interest in the question of testing the acceptability of the Council's visa for Namibia.

His delegation would like to see a joint effort by a number of respectable and prominent institutions and a more direct test than the one undertaken thus far.

ALEKSANDAR PSONCAK (Yugoslavia) stated that new initiatives such as Mr. Hauser's would have to be undertaken if an impression was to be made on South Africa.

CARLOS MARTINEZ (Colombia) urged Mr. Hauser and the American Committee on Africa to continue its policy of helping the people of Namibia.