

12/9/97

Talking points on INS Accountability

- o The Attorney General and the INS Commissioner have been very concerned with the accountability of law enforcement officials operating in local communities. This is an on-going challenge at a time of tremendous change in immigration law. All of the new legislation is being implemented with accountability and community impact in mind.
- o I believe that the INS has made tremendous strides in working with communities, both along the border and around the country. INS has been deeply involved with community-based organizations for example, in connection with the unprecedented demand for naturalization over the past several years.
- o At a national level, INS established a Citizens' Advisory Panel to provide community input into INS operations. Many local INS offices and Border Patrol Sectors have established "CAPs" of their own to provide a regular mechanism for community dialogue.
- o INS has placed increased emphasis on training its personnel in recent years, to make sure that they understand the law and proper procedures.
- o When there are allegations of abuse, INS investigates vigorously. Officers have been disciplined -- even fired -- in instances where abuses have been substantiated.
- o INS has also expanded its Internal Audit capabilities so it can perform more regular, periodic audits of local offices and correct any deficiencies before they become problems.
- o In many areas, INS has introduced standardized policies and practices in areas that were previously left to local discretion. One area of great concern, for example, is INS detention practices. INS is working to increase access to its detention facilities by outside groups, including the American Bar Association, and is issuing standards to be observed by all INS detention facilities around the country.
- o INS has named 5 new senior managers in recent weeks who have as one of their fundamental charges increasing accountability at the local level.
- o There have been various proposals for reorganizing INS over the last several months. INS, along with the rest of the Administration, is looking hard at these proposals. A key element for evaluating any restructuring proposal is whether it will increase accountability.

STATEMENT

8/5/97

INS and Its Integrated Immigration Mission

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has, for many years, carried out its mission of enforcing the nation's immigration laws and providing services to qualified applicants. Throughout this time, the agency has found that immigration enforcement and service are complementary, not competitive, functions.

Only in recent years has INS finally begun to receive the attention and resources necessary from the Administration and the Congress to overcome a history of mismanagement and lack of support. This recent investment by the American people is now beginning to pay off and in the next few years will continue to provide positive returns as management improvements and program reforms take hold. The fruits of this investment are already evident in:

- Strengthened border control, particularly along the Southwest border;
- Record removals of criminal and other illegal aliens;
- Reform of the asylum system;
- Stepped up worksite enforcement operations to return jobs to legal workers;
- Ongoing improvement and reengineering of the naturalization process;
- Implementing sweeping changes in immigration laws; and
- Rebuilding of a neglected infrastructure and the infusion of new equipment and technology to modernize the agency.

Breaking up the agency, which has been proposed frequently over the years, would be needlessly expensive and duplicative, requiring other federal agencies to build separate, new capacities. Previous proposals to split INS have not identified any changes that would improve service to the public without compromising immigration law enforcement, and ultimately weakening the immigration system.

To overcome internal organizational shortcomings of past years, INS initiated a major reorganization in 1994. Drawing on three subsequent years of experience, the agency has recently proposed to the Department of Justice refinements to the INS organization that will further strengthen management, reinforce support of its field activities, and strengthen lines of communication and accountability.

Under the Clinton Administration, broad congressional and public support has resulted in increased INS resources to deal with illegal immigration. INS is effectively managing unprecedented growth in technology and personnel resources in law enforcement and service delivery. Experience with immigration enforcement and services require thorough coordination and integration of immigration resources within one organization.

- INS -

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Immigration Topics

1. Naturalization Backlog

Many Hispanic advocates have expressed serious concerns over the naturalization backlog and INS's naturalization fee increases. The dramatic increase in naturalization applications (from 540,000 in FY 1994 to almost 1.6 million in FY 1997), along with the dedication of substantial resources over the past nine months to implement quality procedures, has resulted in an increase in the number of pending applications to nearly 1.9 million as of the end of May 1998. Currently, most applicants are experiencing a wait time of 12 to 15 months.

- The Administration is committed to the highest standards of integrity in the naturalization process as we work to improve waiting times and provide more efficient service to citizenship applicants.
- Reducing the naturalization backlog is a top priority of the INS. The INS has devised a backlog reduction strategy based on the following: the creation of a separate Office of Naturalization Operations within the INS to handle naturalizations and redesign the naturalization process; the provision of \$200 million in new resources in FY 1998 to improve the naturalization process; and, the development of specific backlog reduction plans within individual field offices, starting with the biggest offices such as Los Angeles and Chicago. In addition, the INS is implementing technological improvements to more quickly process and track naturalization applications and the associated fingerprint cards.
- In the last year, the INS has (1) established more than 100 new offices specially designed to serve naturalization applicants; (2) implemented a nation-wide direct mail system for naturalization applications; (3) piloted a process to send fingerprints to the FBI electronically; and (4) engaged in an office-by-office analysis to identify choke points and inefficiencies and to promote standardization.
- The Domestic Policy Council and the Office of Management and Budget are working with the INS and DOJ to ~~evaluate the agency's current backlog reduction plan to determine what additional steps need to be taken to improve the process.~~

\$ ~~performance goals~~

~~make real progress over next 6 mo.~~

to develop a nation-wide workplan & performance goals
that will ~~assist~~ help the agency make real
progress over the next 6 mo

2. INS Reform

The Administration has developed a plan to make federal immigration activities more effective by separating enforcement and service operations *within* INS -- from headquarters to the field -- while preserving the necessary integrating functions for supporting and coordinating both operations. Congressman Reyes has been working with Chairman Rogers on an alternative reform bill. We, along with the House Democratic leadership (including Rep. Becerras), have been trying to persuade Rep. Reyes to instead work with the Administration on a proposal that meets all of our goals. We hope to present our reform legislation to the Congress very soon (likely next week).

- The focus of the Administration's reform effort is to untangle the INS's overlapping and frequently confusing organizational structure and replace it with two clear organizational chains of command -- one to provide immigration-related services and the other to accomplish its enforcement mission. This separation will result in an INS organization with better accountability and improved efficiency that allows each operation to focus on the unique management, knowledge, skills, and abilities of its function. The most dramatic feature of our reform plan is the elimination of the district system and the creation of local offices that are focused either on services or enforcement.
- We believe that the Commission on Immigration Reform (CIR) recommendation to disband the INS and reallocate its primary responsibilities to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Departments of State and Labor would only compound the current problems with the nation's immigration system. To be most effective, all immigration policy and management should remain within one agency at the Justice Department.
- The Administration did consider Congressman Reyes's proposal to pull enforcement operations out of INS into Main Justice. Consistent with Congressman Reyes's recommendation, our plan consolidates all enforcement operations to create a single point of responsibility and accountability. However, because of the variety of ways in which service officials depend on data collected by enforcement officers, and vice versa, to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of both functions -- as when, for example, a service officer discovers that a person has overstayed their visa and become an illegal alien -- we decided that both operations would work best when housed within a single entity.

3. Section 377

The Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) of 1986 legalized the immigration status of certain aliens who had been unlawfully present in the United States since January 1982. IRCA provided for a one-year application period for this benefit, ending in May 1988. The INS's implementation of the legalization program was challenged on the ground that the INS dissuaded some individuals from applying within the requisite time period. Despite a 1993 Supreme Court decision severely limiting the class of those potentially harmed by INS's action, much litigation continued.

Section 377 of the 1996 Immigration Act brought this litigation to an end by removing federal court jurisdiction from cases where the claimant didn't actually file a legalization application within the specified period, or couldn't show that they attempted to file during the time period (by presenting a completed application and application fee) and were turned away. This provision was supported by the Administration because DOJ believes that if an individual either did not file during the window period or cannot demonstrate that they attempted to file but were deterred, they are not entitled to relief under IRCA.

Many immigration advocates are concerned that hundreds of thousands of individuals who have resided legally in this country for years will become deportable in the near future as a result of this provision. Many of these individuals claim to have been in the United States since at least January 1, 1982, and few would be able to secure any other form of relief from deportation (the standard for "cancellation of removal" under the 1996 Immigration Act is much stricter than the equivalent "suspension of deportation" standard that existed prior).

- I am told that the Administration supported the enactment of Section 377 in an effort to bring an end to lengthy litigation covering individuals without bona fide claims to legalization. However, I have asked my staff to look into this issue further.

4. NACARA implementation -- "parity" for Salvadorans and Guatemalans

The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), enacted during the last session of Congress, authorized amnesty (automatic "green cards") for Nicaraguans and Cubans, but provided a less certain form of relief from deportation for many Guatemalans and Salvadorans. The Hispanic Caucus and many Central American advocates have urged the Administration to implement NACARA in a way that would achieve "parity" between all Central American groups affected by the legislation.

The Hispanic Caucus and the advocacy groups wanted the Attorney General to issue a regulation that would provide that those Guatemalans and Salvadorans covered under the legislation would automatically meet the "extreme hardship" standard -- the key requirement for suspension of deportation. This would almost ensure that Guatemalans and Salvadorans would receive permanent status. In addition, the advocates strongly suggested that those covered by NACARA should be processed through an administrative adjudication rather than through a more adversarial process before the Immigration Judges at the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR).

- We share your concern about the disparities in treatment in NACARA, as the President and I have made very clear in several public statements relating to the bill. As the President indicated in his signing statement, we are seeking to minimize these disparities in the implementation process.
- In this regard, the Attorney General has authorized a new administrative procedure for adjudicating the cases of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Eastern Europeans covered by NACARA. This procedure will empower INS asylum officers to decide the suspension claims of these individuals (in addition to the review currently available by immigration judges). This modified procedure will be much less burdensome for these individuals because it is a less adversarial setting than immigration court and thus lessens the need for representation by an attorney. (reg. @ end of August)
- In order to maximize consistency in the application of NACARA, the INS has temporarily suspended adjudication of asylum requests filed by potential NACARA beneficiaries (pending NACARA implementing regulations). Also, the INS will promulgate a regulation (due out soon) that codifies existing case law on adjudication of the "extreme hardship" standard to ensure that there is fair and consistent interpretation of the case law as it applies to this class of applicants.
- We expect that these changes will result in a generous approval rate. I know that you and others have pushed for a blanket finding of "extreme hardship" for these individuals. However, the Department of Justice has determined that this is not legally or administratively appropriate.

new
admin.
procedure

regulation
that codifies
existing
law

~~end of August~~

5. H-1B visas

H-1B visas are temporary work visas that allow “highly skilled” foreign workers (with a BA or equivalent) to work in this country for up to six years. Under current law, the number of H-1B visas is capped at 65,000 per year. Last year, this cap was reached for the first time. This year the cap was reached in early May. The information technology (IT) industry strongly supports raising the annual cap to address what it maintains is a shortage of U.S. workers with IT skills. Others, including the Department of Labor, challenge the industry’s conclusions about a shortage and are concerned that the current H-1B program does not target its use to employers who are experiencing skills shortages.

The Administration believes that the first response for addressing the need for skilled workers must be ensuring that U.S. workers are recruited for these skilled jobs and protected against being laid-off and replaced by H-1B worker, and increasing the skills of U.S. workers. Thus, while it may be necessary in the short-term to increase the number of visas for temporary foreign workers, this must only be done in conjunction with reforms to the H-1B program that protect U.S. workers by targeting H-1B usage to employers with genuine skill shortages and with additional efforts to increase the skill level of U.S. workers.

We are working with members of the House and Senate to develop legislative language that is consistent with the Administration’s objectives.

- We have heard a lot recently about the shortage of trained workers in the information technology (IT) industry. The Administration believes that the first response to increasing the availability of IT workers must be increasing the skills of American workers and helping the labor market work better to match employers with U.S. workers. While it may be necessary -- at least in the short-term -- to increase the number of visas for temporary foreign workers, this must only be done in conjunction with meaningful reform to the H-1B program and greater efforts to raise the skill level of U.S. workers.
- Since 1993, this Administration has sought reforms of the H-1B visa program, including requiring employers to “recruit and retain” U.S. workers before hiring temporary foreign workers and prohibiting employers from laying-off U.S. workers in order to replace them with H-1B workers. These reforms, if enacted, would help target H-1B usage to employers with genuine labor shortages.

Executive Summary

The President's 1999 Immigration Budget Initiative

2/98(rev.)

Strengthening the Nation's Immigration System

The Fiscal Year 1999 budget request for the Immigration and Naturalization Service totals \$4.2 billion, a 10 percent increase over the Fiscal Year 1998 funding level. With this budget proposal, the Administration will have asked for a 179 percent increase in INS funding over FY 1993. The FY 1999 budget includes \$413.4 million in funding for new initiatives. The budget will add a total of 2,609 new staff positions, which, if approved by Congress, will allow INS to grow to almost 31,600 positions by the end of FY 1999—an 84 percent increase since 1993.

Enf

The INS budget for FY 1999 continues to support the immigration goals and strategies that the Administration and the agency have pursued over the past several years. Specifically, the thrust of INS' FY 1999 budget is to continue to improve our control over our international borders by deterring illegal crossers while facilitating legal commerce. INS intends to build on its successful multi-year strategy to: effectively regulate the border, both at and between the ports of entry; deter illegal employment in the interior of the United States; combat and punish smuggling as well as other immigration-related crimes; and remove expeditiously ever-greater numbers of criminal aliens and other deportable aliens. Included in this budget are requests for the staff and other resources necessary to achieve these objectives while efficiently and fairly enforcing the nation's immigration laws, as well as implementing the broad legislative mandates that Congress enacted in 1996.

Sen

In addition to the expansion of INS' more visible law enforcement functions, new funding will strengthen INS' ability to process benefits for legal immigrants and prospective new citizens, and ensure that INS customers are supported by the most comprehensive and modern technology available. These resources also will ensure that the physical workplace of INS employees keeps pace with the impressive growth of the agency's workforce.

Reform

While some have proposed separating the enforcement and benefit functions INS now performs, the Administration has begun developing a plan to enhance immigration law enforcement while improving the delivery of immigration services and benefits. The plan will make INS more efficient and effective in carrying out these responsibilities by separating enforcement and benefit/service operations—both at headquarters and in the field—and strengthening accountability and lines of authority. In addition, the plan recognizes that effective coordination between INS' two functions is necessary along with greater collaboration among federal agencies involved in immigration. Together, these reforms within INS and across the government will support and sustain the Administration's progress over the last five years in enforcing our immigration laws and fulfilling the nation's commitment to its immigration heritage.

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1999 Immigration Budget Initiative - Executive Summary

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The FY 1999 budget includes the following key proposals:

Refine Border Management Strategy

The FY 1999 budget includes \$225 million and 1,726 new positions for the Refine Border Management Strategy initiative, which will improve facilitation of entry and control at ports of entry, and continue the INS' National Border Control Strategy of "Prevention Through Deterrence." These funds will maintain the aggressive hiring and training efforts begun in FY 1995 and continued through FY 1998, once again increasing the agency's growing force of Border Patrol agents, immigration inspectors and immigration officers.

The request for 1,000 additional Border Patrol agents and 430 inspectors is complemented by a request for \$48.6 million in construction projects and \$14.6 million in force-multiplying technological capabilities, which will enable INS to further strengthen the border control it has achieved over the past several years. State-of-the-art technologies requested (\$14.6 million) include a sophisticated new surveillance system using electronic sensors linked with low-light video cameras (\$12 million); additional infrared night vision devices (\$2.3 million) and installation of an additional Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) system on Border Patrol aircraft (\$0.3 million), to increase night flight capabilities. Border Patrol construction projects (\$48.6 million) include \$36.1 million requested to build eight Border Patrol facilities in Texas, Arizona and California, \$5.1 million for planning, site development, and design work associated with those facilities, and \$7.0 million for eight military (JTF-6) and two other fencing and lighting projects.

Implement an Integrated Interior Enforcement Strategy

The FY 1999 Budget includes \$115 million to support 745 new positions to specifically address illegal migration in the interior of the United States. The Interior Enforcement Strategy for FY 1999 complements INS' Border Control Strategy by establishing a focused initiative to apprehend those who have used sophisticated alien smuggling organizations and other means to remain illegally in the United States. Part of the strategy requests \$44.4 million to help the agency respond to changing migration patterns of illegal aliens and remove more criminal aliens. In addition, included in this initiative are \$35.5 million in resources to enhance the Institutional Hearing Program and remove greater numbers of aliens with final orders of removal, and \$22.5 million to support and staff detention facilities. INS' detention construction projects further strengthen this strategy by expanding detention space needed to hold the increased number of criminal and non-criminal aliens who INS later removes from the United States. In addition, the budget requests \$12.6 million to replace old and add new detention facilities.

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1999 Immigration Budget Initiative – Executive Summary

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Improve Institutional Infrastructure

The FY 1999 INS budget includes \$46.6 million and 52 management positions to support the INS' infrastructure requirements. The INS' rapid growth in personnel over the past six years continues to have a direct impact upon the agency's ability to meet its infrastructure demands. In FY 1999, INS will increase the replacement cycle of the agency's vehicle fleet, implement a maintenance and repair system for its property inventory, and improve and modify INS' existing facilities through new construction and renovation projects.

The FY 1999 budget also includes \$2.1 million for the Optimize/Improve Systems Development and Data Management initiative. INS will use ADP and other emerging technologies to support efficient, effective and integrated operations and management. To achieve this goal, INS will focus its efforts on supporting its Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS IV).

Enhance Professionalism

The FY 1999 budget includes \$16.2 million and 81 positions to enable INS to continue its efforts to improve professional standards, build upon and enhance its current management systems, and support its enforcement and service roles. This initiative focuses on the overall professionalism of INS and its workforce, including resources for the Legal Proceedings program, the Office of Internal Audit, implementation of the Financial Management Information System, and reduction of INS' Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) backlog. These new resources will help the agency to improve accountability and achieve appropriate staffing levels, as well as to support the recent growth in casework primarily caused by the enactment of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

Improve and Centralize INS Records

The FY 1999 budget includes \$8.5 million and 5 new positions to support continued efforts to centralize and improve the integrity of INS records. The continued cleanup and centralization of records will allow INS to create a solid infrastructure for the INS Records Program, which will be used to support both the enforcement and service functions of INS. Records cleanup and centralization will lead to increased data integrity, which will in turn lead to more rapid and accurate verification, and renewed confidence in INS records. This will also complement INS' verification strategy by speeding the retrieval of critical information used to deter the employment of unauthorized workers in the United States, and to ensure that only those authorized receive entitlements.

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1999 Immigration Budget Initiative - Executive Summary

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Naturalization (Annualization of FY 98 Enhancement)

The FY 1999 budget also takes steps to continue making improvements to the way in which INS provides services to immigrants. This year INS added more than \$200 million to the budget to begin the overhaul of the naturalization system, which will increase the system's integrity and begin to decrease the backlog and waiting time for individuals seeking citizenship. INS plans to continue the same level of service in FY 1999.

Summary of \$413.4 Million Immigration Budget Enhancement
(\$ in millions)

REFINE BORDER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Border Patrol Agents	\$103.0
Inspections	37.3
Automation and Equipment	23.3
Expedited Removals - Asylum	12.2
Operation Disrupt	0.6
Construction	48.6
SUBTOTAL	\$225.0

IMPLEMENT INTEGRATED INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

Responding to Changing Migration	44.4
Criminal Alien Removals	35.5
Activation and Support of Detention Facilities	22.5
Construction	12.6
SUBTOTAL	115.0

IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Continue Fleet Replacement	10.0
Implement Repairs & Alternations Program	10.2
New Office "One-Time" Construction	26.4
Systems Development and Data Management and implement CLAIMS	2.1
SUBTOTAL	48.7

ENHANCE PROFESSIONALISM

Legal Proceedings Program	4.5
Enhanced Accountability	7.0
FOIA/PA Enhancement	4.7
SUBTOTAL	16.2

IMPROVE & CENTRALIZE INS RECORDS

Re-engineer RAFACTS and CIS	5.7
Records Contracts	2.8
SUBTOTAL	8.5

TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$413.4
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U.S. Department of Justice
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
Washington, DC 20536



NEWS RELEASE

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March 10, 1998

INS Deploys \$3.8 Billion in FY 1998 Resources

*1,000 New Border Patrol Agents and New Technology
Will Enhance Border Control and Facilitation*

WASHINGTON – The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is strengthening its efforts to deter illegal immigration while supporting legal immigration by focusing its FY 1998 budget of \$3.8 billion on enhancing the security of U.S. borders, removing illegal aliens and integrating new technologies to improve the delivery of immigration services, INS Commissioner Doris Meissner announced today.

"With another record budget, we are further securing the nation's borders, deterring illegal immigration at ports of entry, and integrating new technologies so that U.S. citizens, immigrants and foreign visitors are served by a more efficient and modern INS," Commissioner Meissner said.

The INS budget for FY 1998 represents a 19.5 percent increase over the FY 1997 resource level and a 153 percent increase over the past five years. This year's budget expands the INS permanent workforce to nearly 29,000 by year's end. The vast majority of the new resources are being allocated to key immigration-impacted states including Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. The budget increase of \$644.4 million funds 2,235 new personnel, including \$125.3 million to hire 1,000 new Border Patrol agents. Two-thirds of those agents (670) are being assigned to the border in Texas and New Mexico as part of Operation Rio Grande, while 330 will be assigned to California's Operation Gatekeeper and Arizona's Operation Safeguard.

The FY 1998 budget also provides significant new resources to improve and expand port-of-entry inspections and to remove a record goal of 127,300 criminal and other illegal aliens from U.S. workplaces and prisons.

Commissioner Meissner said the FY 1998 increase enhances the agency's interrelated functions of deterring illegal immigration while supporting legal immigration and the delivery of services and benefits. "These increased resources enable INS to continue our implementation of the comprehensive, balanced program initiated under the leadership of President Clinton in 1993 and sustained by bipartisan congressional support," she said. By year's end, INS will surpass the President's goal of 7,000 Border Patrol agents in FY 1998—representing a 99 percent increase over FY 1993.

Commissioner Meissner said the 1998 budget will enable INS to better serve the American public and legal immigrants with the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and efficiency.

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1998 INS Budget Allocation Focuses on Border Control, Illegal Alien Removals

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"Our unprecedented resources are funding critical state-of-the-art technology to more fully integrate the vital sharing of information between the agency's key functions: the enforcement and the service sides," Meissner said. "This technology integration will enhance our ability to extend the seamless web of enforcement and speed the most efficient service available to our customers."

The infusion of \$644.4 million in INS program enhancements will substantially expand the following immigration initiatives in FY 1998:

Border Facilitation and Control – \$234 million in additional funds will enable INS to continue its National Border Enforcement strategy by enhancing facilitation of legal crossings and bolstering control of illegal immigration through added personnel and state-of-the-art technology at ports of entry and other border locations.

- **Border Patrol.** \$125.3 million in new funds will allow INS to add 1,000 new Border Patrol agents and 136 support staff. By year's end, INS will surpass the President's goal of 7,000 Border patrol agents in FY 1998—representing a 99 percent increase over FY 1993. FY 1998 resources also include \$16.2 million to increase border automation and technology including remote surveillance cameras, night vision scopes, radios and sensors and to extend INS' commitment to the deployment and support of the IDENT and ENFORCE systems, which help track and identify repeat illegal crossers and criminal aliens. Additional funding of \$42.7 million provides money for desperately needed maintenance, renovation and replacement of older Border Patrol facilities along the Southwest border, as well as resources for the planning and design of future projects.
- **Inspections.** Resource enhancements also provide \$19.4 million to hire 281 new immigration inspectors and 12 inspections support personnel for airports, which will ensure full staffing at Miami International and provide requisite staff for new airports located in Palm Springs, Calif. and Medford, Ore. INS also received \$12.9 million to hire four immigration inspectors and expand the departure management initiative at airports, as required by the 1996 immigration law. INS will apply \$17.5 million to automate the inspections process, including a new joint project with the U.S. Customs Service to deploy license-plate readers and other electronic and computerized port technologies nationwide.

Interior Enforcement and Removal of Criminal and Other Deportable Aliens –

\$191 million will support 295 new positions for the detention and removal of criminal and other deportable aliens. INS estimates that it will remove 127,300 criminal and other illegal aliens in FY 1998, a 14 percent increase over FY 1997's record 111,794 removals and a 121 percent increase since FY 1995. These resource enhancements include \$48.3 million to fund 181 positions to staff 1,864 additional detention bed spaces at INS facilities in Buffalo, N.Y. and Krome, Fla. and contract facilities in San Diego, Calif. The budget also assumes that \$104.5 million of additional funding from the Breached Bond/Detention account will support 1,136 additional bed spaces, bringing total funded bed spaces to 14,845, a 23 percent increase from last year.

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1998 INS Budget Allocation Focuses on Border Control, Illegal Alien Removals

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An additional \$12.2 million will provide 42 positions to locate and remove deportable aliens who have exhausted all available avenues of appeal. Funding of \$6.8 million and 29 positions are provided to help expand the local jail programs in various cities around the country. Another \$5 million is designated to fund 43 positions to expand the Vermont-based Law Enforcement Support Center, which provides information and assistance to state and local law enforcement organizations around the country, and to extend Law Enforcement Support Center services to Utah. Some \$14.2 million in funds will support construction and renovation of the Krome and Port Isabel, Texas service processing centers as well as planning and site design for other projects.

Improve Integrity, Customer Service and Professionalism

- \$219.5 million will help INS strengthen and improve customer service and promote professionalism and integrity in its workforce. These resources will fund critical improvements to the naturalization process to help guarantee the integrity of the citizenship program, improve customer service and reduce the backlog of pending cases. Among the improvements, \$57.7 million will permit INS to convert 400 temporary employees to term workers; \$33.2 million will help INS establish a direct mail system for applications; \$87.2 million will help implement an automated fingerprint process and fund revocation of citizenship of individuals improperly naturalized. An additional \$10.9 million will fund quality assurance measures and a continual quality review of naturalization procedures. Also, \$3.08 million and 37 positions will enable INS to process Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIA) requests in accordance with electronic FOIA/PA requirements.

**Continued Progress and Achievement in FY 1997:**

The FY 1998 funds will enable INS to build upon its FY 1997 achievements, which include the following:

- **Record Removals.** INS removed 111,794 criminal and other deportable aliens from the United States, a 62 percent increase over fiscal 1996's record of 69,040;
- **New Texas Border Control Effort Launched.** Operation Rio Grande, a major new integrated operation to gain control of the border in South Texas and New Mexico, was initiated in August 1997;
- **Border Patrol Expanded.** INS strengthened enforcement capabilities along the Southwest border by expanding the number of Border Patrol Agents to 6,863, an increase of 17 percent from fiscal 1996. To help identify and intercept repeat illegal border crossers, INS also deployed 316 IDENT terminals at Border Patrol stations, district offices and ports of entry;
- **San Diego Apprehensions Hit 17-Year Low.** Border Patrol apprehensions of illegal aliens crossing the border reached a 17-year low in the San Diego Sector, underscoring the success of Operation Gatekeeper, which completed its third year of operation. In October, that operation moved eastward to continue cracking down on international alien and narcotics smuggling operations through increased investigations, apprehensions and prosecutions;

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1998 INS Budget Allocation Focuses on Border Control, Illegal Alien Removals

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- **Operation Global Reach Launched.** To deter global migrant trafficking, INS opened 13 new overseas offices and assigned 45 additional officers overseas to prevent improper entry and interrupt alien smuggling networks;
- **New Law Implemented.** INS successfully implemented the major provisions of a sweeping new immigration law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). As part of this implementation, the agency trained more than 16,000 personnel in the new law's provisions, produced new regulations for 60 different IIRIRA sections, and implemented provisions related to expedited removal of aliens arriving in the United States either without valid entry documents or attempting entry by fraud;
- **New Pilot Programs.** INS began three new pilot programs, two of which are joint efforts with the Social Security Administration, to test systems designed to quickly and accurately verify whether new employees are legally eligible to work in the United States; and
- **Improved Naturalization Processing.** Completed more than 700,000 cases and received more than 1.6 million applications for naturalization—a 34 percent increase over fiscal 1996. INS formed a separate division, the Executive Office of Naturalization Operations, to handle naturalizations and redesign the naturalization process to guarantee integrity, incorporate state-of-the-art technology and provide improved customer service.

—INS—

Summary of \$644.4 Million Budget Enhancements to \$3.18 Billion Base

Border Facilitation and Control	
At the Ports of Entry	\$ 32.3
Between the Ports of Entry	125.3
Automation	33.7
Construction	42.7
Subtotal	\$234.0
Remove Criminal and Other Deportable Aliens	
Increased Enforcement through Use of Detention	\$ 60.4
Identification of Criminal Aliens	11.8
Additional Bedspace	104.5
Construction	14.2
Subtotal	\$190.9
Integrity, Professionalism and Customer Service	
Naturalization	\$194.2
Records Infrastructure	19.1
Card Production Machines	3.1
Freedom of Information Act	3.1
Subtotal	\$219.5
Total Budget Enhancements	\$644.4

—INS—

U.S. Department of Justice
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

BACKGROUND

12/23/97

The Year in Review *Highlights of 1997*

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has made great strides in 1997 in both enforcing the nation's immigration laws and administering immigration benefits to qualified applicants. During a time of unprecedented growth, and with the help of Congress, the agency has continued to move forward with its key priorities. Progress in these and other areas is outlined below.

I. Border Enforcement and Facilitation

INS made significant strides and achieved important results during 1997 in its comprehensive border management strategy, which seeks to improve the quality of life in border communities by curbing illegal immigration and facilitating legal traffic across the border with Mexico. By putting Operation Rio Grande into place in South Texas, INS has strengthened enforcement in all four major corridors of illegal border crossings. As part of this effort:

- **Operation Rio Grande Launched.** In August 1997, INS launched Operation Rio Grande to gain control of the border in South Texas and New Mexico. The next step in INS' multi-year, comprehensive Southwest border enforcement strategy, Operation Rio Grande builds on the progress achieved by Operations Hold the Line, Safeguard and Gatekeeper. Phase I of the operation began in Brownsville and included an immediate deployment of additional Border Patrol agents and Immigration Inspectors and a major infusion of improved equipment and technology. Early results show that apprehensions in the McAllen sector have declined by roughly 29 percent from last year, accompanied by significant decreases in criminal activity.
- **San Diego Apprehensions hit 17-year low.** Border Patrol apprehensions of illegal aliens crossing the border reached a 17-year low in the San Diego sector, underscoring the success of Operation Gatekeeper, which completed its third year of operation. Fiscal 1997 apprehensions in the San Diego sector declined more than 40 percent from fiscal 1996 and nearly 50 percent from fiscal 1995. In October, Operation Gatekeeper began its third phase with an eastward expansion into California's Imperial Valley.
- **Border Patrol Expanded.** INS expanded the number of Border Patrol agents on duty, adding 985 officers for a year-end total of 6,863, an increase of 17 percent from fiscal 1996 and an increase of 84 percent over the past four years. To help identify and intercept repeat illegal border crossers, INS also deployed 316 IDENT terminals (105 percent of the agency's goal) at Border Patrol stations, district offices and ports of entry.

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II. Removal of Deportable and Inadmissible Aliens

- **Record Removals.** INS removed a record number of criminal and other illegal aliens in fiscal 1997. The agency removed 111,794 criminal and other illegal aliens, exceeding its goal of 93,000 removals, by 20 percent.
- **Increased Focus on Criminal Alien Removals.** The agency increased its removals of criminal aliens by 35 percent over fiscal 1996, for a total of 50,165.
- **Expanded IHP.** INS removed 14,851 criminal aliens through the Institutional Hearing Program (IHP) by identifying and processing deportable inmates prior to their release from federal, state, and local institutions. Through the IHP, the Service removed 44 percent more aliens overall than in fiscal 1996 and increased IHP removals from Federal institutions by 70 percent.

III. New Law Implementation

In fiscal 1997, INS successfully implemented the major provisions of a sweeping new immigration law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). These provisions include sections related to: revising refugee, parole and asylum procedures; reducing employment of unauthorized workers; and developing and testing status verification pilot projects. As part of this implementation, INS:

- Trained more than 16,000 employees in all provisions of the new law;
- Produced new regulations to 60 different IIRIRA sections;
- Worked with Congress and nongovernmental organizations to ensure that various components of the law were implemented as smoothly as possible, and continued to work with them in reviewing the need for possible modifications to the new law; and
- Implemented provisions related to expedited removal for aliens arriving in the United States either without valid entry documents or attempting entry by fraud.

IV. Naturalization

INS made critical improvements to the naturalization process in fiscal 1997 by adopting several quality assurance procedures and bringing state-of-the-art technological changes to the citizenship program. These improvements will help guarantee the integrity of the program, improve customer service, and reduce the backlog of pending cases.

- **Record Number of Applications.** Received more than 1.6 million applications for naturalization—a 34 percent increase over fiscal 1996. INS completed processing of 700,000 applications—the largest yearly total with the exception of 1996—and swore in 569,822 new American citizens.
- **Formed New Division.** Formed a separate division, the Executive Office of Naturalization Operations, to handle naturalizations. Since May 1997, the office has redesigned the naturalization process to guarantee integrity, incorporate state-of-the-art technology, and provide improved customer service.
- **New Fingerprint System.** Successfully piloted a computerized fingerprint tracking system and began implementing the Machine Readable Data (MRD) program in all

1997 in Review**Page 3**

four service centers. In addition, the agency reduced the average turn-around time from the FBI for MRD-processed fingerprints associated with naturalization applications to 14 days.

V. Protection of Individual Rights

- **New juvenile detention standards.** INS implemented a new, comprehensive juvenile alien program in April 1997, providing national standards to ensure the — safety and welfare of unaccompanied minors who are in the United States illegally.
- **New escort policy.** INS has developed a new escort policy to ensure that all criminal aliens who represent a risk to the public safety are escorted on repatriation flights. INS screens every alien deported on a case-by-case basis, and escorts any person who may be a threat to themselves or others.
- **Citizens' Advisory Panel and action plan.** INS has adopted many of the CAP recommendations over the course of the last two years. The agency has developed a formal action plan that outlines additional steps and incorporates activities currently being implemented and those in the planning stages. The action plan includes an improved complaint procedures and will bolster professionalism by working with INS managers and bargaining units to establish more uniform standards; expand interaction and communication between the agency and community groups and make information about INS policies and standards more readily available to the public thorough these groups; and improve and expand training for INS employees.

V. Anti-smuggling, Anti-terrorism and Overseas Deterrence

- **Anti-smuggling.** INS achieved impressive results in connection with major smuggling cases. Examples include a multi-regional/international investigation resulting in the dismantling of an alien smuggling and exploitation ring in New York City involving deaf Mexicans. In addition, INS sponsored a national demonstration project investigation linking anti-smuggling efforts to worksite enforcement and participated in the first joint INS/FBI task force investigating alien smuggling.
- **Operation Global Reach.** In an effort to deter global migrant trafficking, INS opened 13 new overseas offices and assigned 45 additional officers overseas as a part of Operation Global Reach, a new effort that is devoted to using overseas enforcement to prevent improper entry and interrupt alien smuggling networks. Operation Global Reach was announced in June 1997.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** INS increased its interagency and international cooperation on enforcement issues with officials from Mexico and Canada and enhanced training of foreign law enforcement and immigration officials.

VI. Worksite Enforcement

- **Largest Settlement.** INS reached the largest worksite settlement ever against a Texas restaurant chain, which agreed to pay a \$1.75 million fine in August 1997 for hiring and employing illegal aliens.

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- **Exceeded Case Completion Goals.** The agency exceeded its goal for both criminal and administrative case completions, by 14 percent and nine percent, respectively. INS completed 4,668 lead-driven administrative cases in fiscal 1997, exceeding its fiscal 1996 completions by 13 percent. Criminal cases presented to the U.S. Attorney's office increased by 46 percent from fiscal 1996, for a total of 129 in fiscal 1997.
- **Increased Fines.** INS increased fines levied against employers for "substantive violations" to 55 percent of total fines in fiscal 1997, up from 39 percent in fiscal 1996.
- **Unauthorized Workers.** INS identified 33,951 jobs previously held by unauthorized workers. The agency reached agreements with three states—Virginia, California and Florida—to share information about job openings created as a result of worksite enforcement operations to help place legal workers through state-run replacement worker programs.
- **New Pilot Programs.** INS began three new pilot programs, two of which are joint efforts with the Social Security Administration, to test systems designed to quickly and accurately verify whether new employees are legally eligible to work in the United States. INS began seeking employers to participate in the programs in September 1997.

VII. Improvements to INS Infrastructure, Workforce Professionalism and Customer Service

- **Hiring Goals Met.** INS increased its employee ranks by more than 2,500 in fiscal 1997, an increase of 114 percent over fiscal year 1996. The Border Patrol met 100 percent of all officer hiring goals. Over the past two fiscal years, INS has experienced tremendous growth in its officer corps, with an increase of 83 percent in detention enforcement officers, a 40 percent gain in Border Patrol agents, a 30 percent gain in inspectors, and a 25 percent gain in special agents.
- **Training.** INS enrolled more than 3,440 officers in basic law enforcement training and 2,050 graduated by the end of FY97. Another 1,784 officers received advanced training.
- **Competency-Based Promotional Assessments.** The agency completed administration of the new competency-based assessments for promotion to Border Patrol managerial positions, with 2,450 promotional candidates currently in the database. This is the first time a government agency has ever used a competency-based assessment mechanism for determining promotions (previously time-in-grade). Used as a model for other agencies.
- **Equipment.** Spent \$46.6 million to replace over-age and over-mileage Service vehicles. In addition, INS awarded a contract to McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems permitting an estimated acquisition of 45 helicopters over a five-year period. By the end of FY97, funding was provided to purchase a total of seven helicopters to be delivered in March 1998.
- **Customer Service.** INS opened a prototype National Customer Service Center, with telephone coverage provided at 22 pilot sites. Since the pilot began, INS has

1997 in Review**Page 5**

increased its call-answering capability by over 100,000 calls per month and reduced the average time on hold to just under five minutes.

VIII. Improved Community Outreach

- **Improved Community Relations.** INS made great strides in fiscal 1997 to expand its community relations activities. The community relations officer (CRO) position was created as a focal point for identifying and resolving immigration-related community issues and concerns, and for educating the public on new immigration laws and regulations. By the end of the fiscal year, seven officers were on board in key districts and sectors, with another three CRO positions allocated Servicewide.

- INS-

Immigration

America has always been a nation of immigrants, and this Administration is proud of the significant progress we have made toward improving this Nation's immigration system. Over the last five years, the INS has worked hard to curtail illegal immigration through tougher border control, reform of a badly abused asylum system, and the removal of record numbers of criminal and other illegal aliens. The agency has also worked to redesign and strengthen the naturalization process. While the INS has made important progress, the Administration recognizes that the recent changes in the breath and scope of the agency's mission require a rethinking of its structure.

- People sometimes compare the current level of immigration to the United States with the wave of immigration at the turn of the century. Though immigration seems large when compared to the post-World War II era, the number of new arrivals in recent years is lower than during the first decade of the 20th century.
- While the number of new immigrants in recent years is similar to arrivals early in the century, the percentage of the population that is foreign-born is much lower now -- approximately 10% today compared to 15% in the early 1900s.
- As recently as 1965, U.S. immigration policy favored Europe and Latin America through country quotas. Now, the opportunity to come to the United States is open to all nations. As a result, we now have a much more diverse flow of immigrants. For example, in the early 1900s, over 90% of immigrants to the U.S. came from Europe. Today, European immigrants represent approximately 16% of the total. The leading geographic source of immigrants to the U.S. is North America (Canada and Mexico) at 37%, followed by Asia (34%), South America (7%) and Africa (6%). People immigrate to the United States from over 200 countries.
- In addition, recent immigrants are much more likely to become citizens than their counterparts from the early 1900s. In each decade from 1911 to 1940, only about 1.5 million people became citizens. In contrast, during the 1990s, over 3 million people have become U.S. citizens.
- Also, the United States continues to honor its humanitarian tradition by accepting refugees fleeing persecution in their homelands. In 1996, nearly 75,000 refugees arrived in the U.S. from countries as diverse as the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Bosnia, Somalia and Cuba.

Talking Points on Legal Immigration, Now and At the Turn of the Century

April 23, 1998

- o People sometimes compare the current level of immigration to the United States with the wave of immigration at the turn of the century. In fact, the number of new arrivals in recent years is lower than during the first decade of the 20th century. Recent immigration looks large when compared to the post-World War II era, which is the frame of reference for most people. But besides the number of immigrants arriving now and at the turn of the century, there are other important differences.
- o While the number of new immigrants in recent years is similar to arrivals early in the century, the percentage of foreign-born residents compared to total population is lower now -- around 10 percent today compared to 15 percent then.
- o As recently as 1965, U.S. immigration policy favored Europe and Latin America through country quotas. Now, the opportunity to come to the U.S. is open to all nations and we have a much more diverse flow of immigrants as a result. In the first decade of this century, over 90 percent of immigrants came from Europe. In contrast, in 1996, European immigrants represented just 16 percent of the total, while North America was the leading geographic source -- at 37 percent -- followed by Asia at 34 percent, South America at 7 percent, and Africa at 6 percent. People came to the United States from over 200 countries.
- o In addition, we are doing a much better job now at fully incorporating immigrants into the mainstream through naturalization. From 1911 through 1940, only about 1.5 million people became citizens in each decade. In contrast, during the 1990s alone, over 3 million people have become United States citizens. Nearly one in three foreign-born residents in the U.S. today have become naturalized citizens. These new citizens strengthen our families and contribute enormously to our economic well-being in an increasingly global marketplace.
- o In addition to building families and strengthening our global economic posture through immigration, the United States continues to honor its humanitarian tradition by accepting refugees fleeing persecution their homelands. In 1996, nearly 75,000 refugees arrived in the U.S. Many of these came from the former Soviet Union, along with Vietnam, Bosnia, Somalia, and Cuba. At the close of the war in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. assisted the evacuation and resettlement of certain Iraqis who would have been subject to retribution by their government.
- o Immigrants have proved a particular boon to many cities by stabilizing their population and tax base, boosting real estate, and injecting entrepreneurialism, cultural diversity, and community investment.

TABLE 1. IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES: FISCAL YEARS 1820 - 1996

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1820 - 1996	63,140,227						
1820	8,385						
1821-30	143,439	1871-80	2,812,191	1921-30	4,107,209	1971-80	4,493,314
1821	9,127	1871	321,350	1921	805,228	1971	370,478
1822	6,911	1872	404,806	1922	309,556	1972	384,685
1823	6,354	1873	459,803	1923	522,919	1973	400,063
1824	7,912	1874	313,339	1924	706,896	1974	394,861
1825	10,199	1875	227,498	1925	294,314	1975	386,194
1826	10,837	1876	169,986	1926	304,488	1976	398,613
1827	18,875	1877	141,857	1927	335,175	1976, TQ	103,676
1828	27,382	1878	138,469	1928	307,255	1977	462,315
1829	22,520	1879	177,826	1929	279,678	1978	601,442
1830	23,322	1880	457,257	1930	241,700	1979	460,348
						1980	530,639
1831-40	599,125	1881-90	5,246,613	1931-40	528,431		
1831	22,633	1881	669,431	1931	97,139	1981-90	7,338,062
1832	60,482	1882	788,992	1932	35,576	1981	596,600
1833	58,640	1883	603,322	1933	23,068	1982	594,131
1834	65,365	1884	518,592	1934	29,470	1983	559,763
1835	45,374	1885	395,346	1935	34,956	1984	543,903
1836	76,242	1886	334,203	1936	36,329	1985	570,009
1837	79,340	1887	490,109	1937	50,244	1986	601,708
1838	38,914	1888	546,889	1938	67,895	1987	601,516
1839	68,069	1889	444,427	1939	82,998	1988	643,025
1840	84,066	1890	455,302	1940	70,756	1989	1,090,924
						1990	1,536,483
1841-50	1,713,251	1891-1900	3,687,564	1941-50	1,035,039		
1841	80,289	1891	560,319	1941	51,776	1991-96	6,146,213
1842	104,565	1892	579,663	1942	28,781	1991	1,827,167
1843	52,496	1893	439,730	1943	23,725	1992	973,977
1844	78,615	1894	285,631	1944	28,551	1993	904,292
1845	114,371	1895	258,536	1945	38,119	1994	804,416
1846	154,416	1896	343,267	1946	108,721	1995	720,461
1847	234,968	1897	230,832	1947	147,292	1996	915,900
1848	226,527	1898	229,299	1948	170,570		
1849	297,024	1899	311,715	1949	188,317		
1850	369,980	1900	448,572	1950	249,187		
1851-60	2,598,214	1901-10	8,795,386	1951-60	2,515,479		
1851	379,466	1901	487,918	1951	205,717		
1852	371,603	1902	648,743	1952	265,520		
1853	368,645	1903	857,046	1953	170,434		
1854	427,833	1904	812,870	1954	208,177		
1855	200,877	1905	1,026,499	1955	237,790		
1856	200,436	1906	1,100,735	1956	321,625		
1857	251,306	1907	1,285,349	1957	326,867		
1858	123,126	1908	782,870	1958	253,265		
1859	121,282	1909	751,786	1959	260,686		
1860	153,640	1910	1,041,570	1960	265,398		
1861-70	2,314,824	1911-20	5,735,811	1961-70	3,321,677		
1861	91,918	1911	878,587	1961	271,344		
1862	91,985	1912	838,172	1962	283,763		
1863	176,282	1913	1,197,892	1963	306,260		
1864	193,418	1914	1,218,480	1964	292,248		
1865	248,120	1915	326,700	1965	296,697		
1866	318,568	1916	298,826	1966	323,040		
1867	315,722	1917	295,403	1967	361,972		
1868	138,840	1918	110,618	1968	454,448		
1869	352,768	1919	141,132	1969	358,579		
1870	387,203	1920	430,001	1970	373,326		

NOTE: The numbers shown are as follows: from 1820-67, figures represent alien passengers arrived at seaports; from 1868-92 and 1895-97, immigrant aliens arrived; from 1892-94 and 1898-1996, immigrant aliens admitted for permanent residence. From 1892-1903, aliens entering by cabin class were not counted as immigrants. Land arrivals were not completely enumerated until 1908. See Glossary for fiscal year definitions.

Questions and Answers on Immigration
February 4, 1998

Q: The final report of the Commission on Immigration Reform recommended the dismantling of the INS. This week, the NY Times reported support on the Hill for just such a proposition. Does the Administration endorse this approach to reform?

A: We have studied the Commission's proposal, and others, and are developing a plan to enhance immigration law enforcement while improving the delivery of immigration services and benefits. The plan recognizes that enforcement and benefits are interrelated and, thus, neither should be addressed without the other in mind. The plan, however, will make Federal immigration activities more efficient and effective by separating enforcement and benefit and service operations -- both in headquarters and in the field -- thereby strengthening accountability and lines of authority. In addition, the plan will enhance coordination among Federal agencies involved in immigration and establish greater accountability within each agency.

Together, these reforms within individual agencies and across the Government will support and sustain the Administration's progress over the last five years in enforcing our immigration laws and fulfilling the nation's commitment to its immigration heritage.

Q: The Attorney General has acted to defer the deportation of tens of thousands of Haitian immigrants. Do you still intend to seek permanent legislative relief for Haitians?

A: Yes. Last December I directed the Attorney General and the INS to defer for one year the deportation of Haitians who were paroled into the United States or applied for asylum prior to December 31, 1995. I took this action to protect these Haitians against deportation while we worked with Congress to provide them long-term legislative relief. That remains our goal. These Haitians, like the Central Americans who were granted legislative relief in the last session, were forced to seek the protection of our country because of persecution and civil strife. Many of them have, over time, established strong ties to this country and have made significant contributions to our communities. Moreover, while we are encouraged by the progress made in Haiti since the restoration of democracy in 1994, the situation there remains fragile. Obtaining legislative relief for these Haitians will help support a democratic Haiti, which is the best safeguard against a renewed flow of Haitian migrants to the United States.

Q: On a recent trip to the Silicon Valley, Secretary Daley stated that the Administration is opposed to raising the cap on temporary visas for highly skilled immigrants. How, then, does the Administration suggest the nation address the shortage of workers in the high tech industry?

A: While we remain open to assessing any legislative proposals to reform the temporary visa programs administered by the INS, it is clear that long term shortages in our nation's workforce cannot be cured through the expansion of any of our non-immigrant (temporary) visa programs. This Administration is very sensitive to the needs of the high-tech industry and is concerned with ensuring that our nation's workforce is able to keep pace with the rapid growth in this field. That is why we have consistently emphasized training and re-training U.S. workers to enable them to move into these high-growth, high-salary positions.

Q: Your budget includes \$2.5 billion to restore food stamps to legal immigrants. What justifies such an enormous spending package?

A: I believe that legal immigrants should have the same opportunity, and bear the same responsibility, as other members of society. When I signed the 1996 welfare law, I pledged to work toward reversing the harsh, unnecessary cuts in benefits to legal immigrants that had nothing to do with moving people from welfare to work. This proposal is part of fulfilling that pledge. Our proposal restores Food Stamp benefits to approximately 730,000 legal immigrants, including families with children, elderly and disabled immigrants, refugees and asylees, and certain special immigrants (e.g., the Hmong). Though this program would first require immigrants in need to seek assistance from those who sponsored them into the country, it provides a necessary safety net for vulnerable groups of immigrants who are legal, permanent residents of our country.

Immigration -- INS Reorganization. We have completed our review of proposals to restructure the nation's immigration system, including the final recommendations of the Commission on Immigration Reform (CIR). In its final report, the CIR called for the separation of the enforcement and service functions that INS now performs, through reallocation of major functions to other agencies. After consultation with representatives from the Department of Justice, the INS, the Department of State, the Department of Labor, members of the CIR, and immigrant advocacy groups, we have concluded that though the functional separation of service from enforcement is an effective way to improve the administration of our immigration laws and policies, this separation is best achieved through reform within the INS rather than through a dismantling of the agency. This functional separation within INS will strengthen accountability and lines of authority, while making the agency more efficient and effective in carrying out its interrelated responsibilities. DOJ has entered into a contract with a private consulting firm to assist them in designing a reform plan that meets our goals. Over the next few weeks, we will be meeting with INS, DOJ and the contractor to assist in guiding this development.

Q: Recently released reports show that the INS erroneously granted citizenship to more than 38,000 immigrants over a 13-month period, including over 11,000 criminals. What is the INS doing to correct this?

A: In response to widespread criticism of the INS's Citizenship USA program, the agency contracted with KPMG Peat Marwick to determine how many people with disqualifying criminal convictions were actually naturalized.

The KPMG studies demonstrated two key findings. First, that approximately 1.1% of the 1.1 million people granted citizenship between August 1995 and September 1996 (approximately 11,500 individuals) failed to establish Good Moral Character, and thus may have been improperly naturalized. This means that the applicant may have had a disqualifying conviction for a felony or crime involving moral turpitude, a conviction on a misdemeanor charge, or may have failed to reveal an arrest for any type of crime. The majority of those "improperly naturalized" are categorized as such for failure to disclose an arrest -- even though the arrest may not have made them ineligible.

Second, in a separate analysis that matched each of the 1.1 million citizenship files against the FBI criminal history database, KPMG determined that during this period, 369 people were naturalized despite having been convicted of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude (CMT), and an additional 5,634 individuals were naturalized despite failing to reveal a felony or CMT arrest. All of these cases are being reviewed to determine whether to proceed with citizenship revocation procedures. The Administration is committed to revoking the citizenship of all improperly naturalized felons.

In light of this and other concerns, the Administration has taken steps to completely re-engineer the INS's naturalization program. INS has worked with Coopers & Lybrand to develop a blueprint for a new process designed to meet the highest level of integrity and security while delivering efficient service. This is being done in conjunction with the Administration's plan for broader reforms at the INS.

Q: What is the status of your INS reform proposal? Does the Administration support the recommendation of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform to dismantle the INS?

A: We have studied the Commission's proposal, and others, and are developing a plan to further enhance immigration law enforcement and improve the delivery of immigration services and benefits. That plan will fundamentally reform the way the federal government conducts immigration activities.

While we are still working out the details, it is clear that enforcement and benefits are interrelated and that neither should be addressed without the other in mind. But we can improve immigration activities

**INS Naturalization/Reform
Questions and Answers
FebruaryX, 1998**

Q. Recently released reports show that INS erroneously granted citizenship to more than 38,000 immigrants over a 13-month period, including over 11,000 criminals. Didn't INS report earlier that this number was only 6,000? And what is INS doing to correct this?

A. Recently, two reviews were released by KPMG Peat Marwick accounting firm on Citizenship USA, the INS naturalization program. These reports helped us to understand how many people with criminal convictions were actually naturalized, and what other systemic problems existed within the naturalization program.

In the first of these reviews-- the Criminal History Case Review -- every individual naturalized during the 13-month review period (August 1995 to September 1996) was matched against the FBI's criminal history database. This exhaustive review found that of the more than one million people naturalized during this period, 6,300 people were naturalized despite convictions for felonies or crimes of moral turpitude (369), or had failed to reveal that they had been arrested for a felony crime of moral turpitude (5,900). **The Administration is committed to revoking the citizenship of all improperly naturalized (criminals?)/has already revoked the citizenship of X# criminals...**

In a second review, KPMG took a random sample of naturalization cases and estimated that 11,500 individuals would have failed to establish good moral character due to their criminal histories. This 11,000 figure is substantially larger than the 6,000 figure from the Criminal History Review because it took into account misdemeanor convictions and arrests -- cases that do not meet the current threshold for revoking citizenship. [The remaining 27,300 would have been ineligible primarily by filing applications before completing the residency requirement-- although 96% of these individuals had met that requirement before taking the oath of citizenship].

The Administration is taking steps to completely reengineer the naturalization program. INS has worked with Coopers and Lybrand on a blueprint for a new process designed to meet the highest level of integrity and security while delivering efficient service. In addition, the Administration is developing a plan for broader reforms to the INS.

Q. What is the status of your INS reform proposal? It has been reported that there is some support on the Hill to dismantle the INS along the lines of the proposal set forth by the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform. Will the Administration support this? If not, what types of reform will be proposed?

A. We have studied the Commission's proposal, and others, and are developing a plan to

further enhance immigration law enforcement and improve the delivery of immigration services and benefits. That plan will fundamentally reform the way the federal government conducts immigration activities.

While we are still working out the details, it is clear that enforcement and benefits are interrelated and that neither should be addressed without the other in mind. But we can improve immigration activities by more strictly separating enforcement and service operations at every level, in order to strengthen accountability and lines of authority.

Our reforms will support and sustain the Administration's progress over the last five years in enforcing our immigration laws and fulfilling the nation's commitment to its immigration heritage.

Questions and Answers on Immigration
February 4, 1998

Q: The final report of the Commission on Immigration Reform recommended the dismantling of the INS. This week, the NY Times reported support on the Hill for just such a proposition. Does the Administration endorse this approach to reform?

A: This Administration has made a lot of progress over the last 5 years in enforcing our immigration laws and fulfilling our nation's commitment to its immigrant heritage. We have curtailed illegal immigration through tougher border control, strengthened worksite enforcement, and removed a record number of criminal and other illegal aliens. We have also worked to improve and tighten the naturalization process, and have made needed reforms to our asylum system for refugees fleeing persecution. Anything that we do to further improve our immigration system should build upon what we have already worked hard to accomplish.

We have studied the Commission's proposal, and others, and are developing a plan to enhance immigration law enforcement while improving the delivery of immigration services and benefits. In thinking about these reform efforts, we have recognized that enforcement and benefits are interrelated, and thus that neither can or should be addressed without the other in mind. Our plan will make all immigration activities more efficient and effective by separating enforcement and benefits *within* the INS, and thereby strengthening accountability and lines of authority.

Q: The Attorney General has acted to defer the deportation of tens of thousands of Haitian immigrants. Do you still intend to seek permanent legislative relief for Haitians?

A: Yes. Last December I directed the Attorney General and the INS to defer for one year the deportation of Haitians who were paroled into the United States or applied for asylum prior to December 31, 1995. I took this action to protect these Haitians against deportation while we worked with Congress to provide them long-term legislative relief. That remains our goal. These Haitians, like the Central Americans who were granted legislative relief in the last session, were forced to seek the protection of our country because of persecution and civil strife. Many of them have, over time, established strong ties to this country and have made significant contributions to our communities. Moreover, while we are encouraged by the progress made in Haiti since the restoration of democracy in 1994, the situation there remains fragile. Obtaining legislative relief for these Haitians will help support a democratic Haiti, which is the best safeguard against a renewed flow of Haitian migrants to the United States.

Q: On a recent trip to the Silicon Valley, Secretary Daley stated that the Administration is opposed to raising the cap on temporary visas for highly skilled immigrants. How, then, does the Administration suggest the nation address the shortage of workers in the high tech industry?

A: While we remain open to assessing any legislative proposals to reform the temporary visa programs administered by the INS, it is clear that long term shortages in our nation's workforce cannot be cured through the expansion of any of our non-immigrant (temporary) visa programs. This Administration is very sensitive to the needs of the high-tech industry and is concerned with ensuring that our nation's workforce is able to keep pace with the rapid growth in this field. That is why we have consistently emphasized training and re-training U.S. workers to enable them to move into these high-growth, high-salary positions.

Q: Your budget includes \$2.5 billion to restore food stamps to legal immigrants. What justifies such an enormous spending package?

A: I believe that legal immigrants should have the same opportunity, and bear the same responsibility, as other members of society. When I signed the 1996 welfare law, I pledged to work toward reversing the harsh, unnecessary cuts in benefits to legal immigrants that had nothing to do with moving people from welfare to work. This proposal is part of fulfilling that pledge. Our proposal restores Food Stamp benefits to approximately 730,000 legal immigrants, including families with children, elderly and disabled immigrants, refugees and asylees, and certain special immigrants (e.g., the Hmong). Though this program would first require immigrants in need to seek assistance from those who sponsored them into the country, it provides a necessary safety net for vulnerable groups of immigrants who are legal, permanent residents of our country.

Questions and Answers on INS Restructuring
January 21, 1998

Q: The New York Times reported today that the Administration has decided to reject the Commission on Immigration Reform's recommendation to disband the INS. Is that report accurate?

A: No, it is not. The White House-led, interagency group reviewing the Commission's recommendations has made no formal recommendations, and no one has made final decisions. Nor will the President's FY 1999 budget contain his own plan for immigration reform, as the New York Times reported. The Administration has determined that fundamental reform is necessary to improve federal immigration activities -- and, in particular, that there must be greater separation of enforcement and service functions. But the Administration has not yet made any final decisions on the most appropriate way to effect this reform.

Q: According to the New York Times, the INS has hired a consultant to provide expert advice on internal management reforms. Is that true, and doesn't that suggest that the INS expects to remain intact?

A: The INS did hire a consultant, but the group reviewing the Commission's recommendations understands the role of the consultant to be limited: the consultant will provide advice only on details of implementing a structural reform proposal. The consultant will not provide advice on -- nor will it limit the Administration's consideration of -- the broad issue of what structure will best effect needed immigration reforms.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Elena Kagan

FROM: Julie Fernandes

DATE: December 9, 1997

RE: Asian Pacific American Leaders Meeting

The following are responses to immigration policy questions raised by Asian Pacific American leaders at an October 16, 1997, meeting with Erskine Bowles.

Q. The final report of the Commission of Immigration Reform ("CIR") does not support family reunification of adult siblings ("fourth preference"). The groups stated this is an important eligibility category and request that it be maintained.

One of CIR's recommendations was the reduction in the level of "core" admissions of legal immigrants, plus a special program to allocate visas to the spouses and children of legal permanent residents ("second preference") to alleviate a backlog. In order to make these extra visas available without increasing the total number of family-sponsored immigrants, CIR recommended eliminating three other categories of more extended family members -- adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens ("first" and "third preferences") and siblings of U.S. citizens ("fourth preference").

The Administration supported efforts in Congress for study and assessment of the fourth preference backlog in order to determine an appropriate response in light of future immigration and economic trends. The Administration also supported a suspension of new applications under fourth preference while this assessment was underway, and development of an agreement on an equitable process to "grandfather" those already on the waiting list whose petitions had been approved. However, while the Administration supported the CIR recommendations generally, it never endorsed the elimination of other family preferences in favor of second preferences.

The DPC is coordinating a review of the CIR's proposal and other reform recommendations designed to improve the executive branch's administration of the immigration laws. As part of that process, we are examining recent reforms made to our immigration laws that could have a significant impact on legal immigration, and the CIR's recommendation in this area. The Administration continues to support legal immigration reform that is pro-family, pro-work, and pro-naturalization

Q. The group expressed concern that within the INS, there is no accountability at the local level.

Though the INS has made tremendous strides in working with communities, both along

the border and around the country, the INS and the Administration remain concerned with the accountability of INS officers operating in local communities. The issue of accountability is an ongoing challenge at a time of tremendous changes in the nation's immigration laws. As part of the DPC review of the various proposals for reforming the nation's immigration system, we are evaluating various ways to improve the accountability between field officers, district directors and Headquarters.

Q. Though we encourage naturalization, the groups were concerned that the process is often difficult and overloaded -- the standard wait to become a citizen is currently two years.

The Administration is committed to the highest standards of integrity in the naturalization process as we work to improve waiting times and provide more efficient service to citizenship applicants. Prior to recent reforms, the naturalization process used an antiquated system, which was overwhelmed by the recent enormous increase in naturalization applications. Since 1996, INS has faced an unprecedented increase in citizenship applications -- receipts historically at the 300,000 level annually had risen to more than 1.3 million by the end of FY 1996. This past May, INS undertook a series of improvements that will help guarantee the integrity of the citizenship program, improve customer service, and ultimately reduce the backlog of pending cases. These efforts aim to reduce the time it takes to complete the naturalization process, from the submission of the application to the oath of citizenship, to six months.

With the signing of the FY 1998 Department of Justice Appropriations bill, the INS will receive a \$211 million funding increase necessary to see these reforms through. The funding will be used to reduce the current application backlog, to enhance automation, and to add staff and other resources to continue naturalization reform efforts.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 2, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN PODESTA
BRUCE REED
RAHM EMANUEL
SYLVIA MATHEWS

SARA LATHAM
CATHY MAYS
MICHELLE CRISCI
JUNE GAYLE TURNER

CC: MARIA ECHAVESTE
DORIS MATSUI
BEVERLY BARNES
CAROLE PARMELEE

FROM: JASON GOLDBERG

SUBJECT: Follow-up on Asian Pacific Leaders Meeting

On October 16, Erskine Bowles met with a group of Asian Pacific American leaders. Erskine promised to do a follow-up meeting this month.

Before we schedule a follow-up meeting, Erskine would like responses to his questions marked on the attached memo from Doris Matsui.

I will check in with each office on Friday, December 5, 1997.

Hopefully we can resolve or show progress on all of Erskine's questions and then schedule a meeting before the holidays.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 24, 1997

*Asian -
please ask the
people responsible
to follow up - when
they have done so
Schneiderman 2nd
me 7/11*

MEMORANDUM TO ERSKINE BOWLES

FROM: DORIS MATSUI *DM*

CC: SYLVIA MATHEWS
MARIA ECHAVESTE

RE: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEADERS MEETING

This is to follow-up on the meeting you held with leaders of Asian Pacific American community organizations. They were very pleased with the meeting as it demonstrated the President's commitment to working with the community. We have received requests to schedule a follow-up meeting in December. The following outlines the issues that were discussed at the meeting.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE ISSUES

- Concern was expressed over the stereotypes and scapegoating of the community through the media and congressional hearings. The community does not want Asian Pacific Americans being held to a different standard than other Americans who participate in the political process.
- You stated categorically that the White House and Administration are outraged by the scapegoating and racism which has damaged the community.
- They requested that the White House review the policy which does not allow campaign contributions from legal permanent residents to the Democratic party. The DNC has informed the community that this is a White House policy. Currently, the policy is to accept campaign donations from U.S. citizens only.

Pocket

Follow-up: The community wants the White House to review this policy.
How should we proceed?

IMMIGRATION

*Read
Enclosure*

- The final report of the National Commission on Immigration Reform does not support family reunification of adult siblings (Fourth Preference). The groups stated this is an important eligibility category and request that it is maintained.

One of the problems with the INS is that there is no accountability at the local level.

John

Reed.
Em

We encourage people to become citizens, but the process is often difficult and overloaded. The standard wait to become a citizen is currently two years.

CENSUS

- They thanked the Administration for fighting for the sampling issue. The community also support the OMB directive to accurately reflect all peoples by allowing individuals to check more than one racial category.

APPOINTMENTS

- The groups were very excited about some of the recent high level appointments of Asian Pacific Americans, particularly Bill Lann Lee. You expressed the commitment of the Administration to continue to support Asian Pacific Americans to high level appointments. As an example, you shared with them the imminent nomination of Donna Tanoue to be the chair of the FDIC.
- Along the same lines, the groups urge that the President, when recognizing or highlighting Americans in speeches, etc., that he occasionally highlight prominent Americans of Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry.

Follow-up: Beverly and I will work with speechwritng.

- The community believes that there are not enough Asian Pacific American judicial appointments and when they occur, the process is very long. You expressed to them that the process in many of these nominations are handled in consultation with U.S. Senators and other elected officials, who may not always make timely decisions.

NOTE: Members from the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association have periodically met with Jonathan Yarowsky from the Counsel's office to discuss judicial appointments.

- The community would also like to see more appointments of Asian Pacific Americans in the White House, particularly in policy development, personnel, and at the Assistant to the President level.
- The group expressed concern regarding the status of Paul Igasaki, Vice Chair of the EEOC. His confirmation was not completed, they requested that he be recessed.

Follow-up: Refer to Bob Nash.

WELFARE

- The community was grateful that the Administration took a strong stance to win back the immigrant provisions of the welfare bill.

- However, they remain concerned about the cuts in food stamps and SSI funds that affected many children and senior citizens. One of the major issues in the community is that elderly seniors, many who have been longtime U.S. permanent residents, are denied food stamps.

Lead

Diana

Follow-up: Refer this issue to Domestic Policy for review.

- Many in the community recommended that we work closely with minority business owners. They suggested that many Asian Pacific American small business owners are developing good models.

Follow-up: We will refer these models to SBA.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- Prop 209 is a grave concern to them. They would like the President to continue to support affirmative action in a visible manner.

FILIPINO VETS

- The Filipino American community continues to advocate for the extension of veteran's benefits to Filipino Veterans who fought alongside the United States in WWII. They continue their efforts both on the Hill and at the White House to move forward legislation currently pending.
- Note: The White House has set up a policy review of the issue that encompasses the Office of Public Liaison, Domestic Policy Council, OMB, NSC, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs and State. The group is taking a fresh look at the issue and what policy options may be available. Their report is completed, Maria is reviewing it before it goes to Sylvia.

Servic

HMONG COMMUNITY ISSUE

- The Hmong community has an issue similar to the Filipino Veterans where Hmong nationals were recruited and trained by the United States during the Vietnam War.
- Hmong families received public assistance as part of a refugee assistance program to assist with their adjustment to life in the United States. According to community reports, this community, due to language barriers and lack of previous formal education, have difficulties in securing employment.
- HR 1048, technical amendments to welfare reform, adopts a "sense of the congress" which affects the Hmong veterans who have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. This language states that these persons are treated as veterans under the welfare-reform law as non-citizen veterans eligible for food stamps.

- USDA issued an Administrative Notice stating that Hmong veterans are not veterans for purposes of the welfare law, are therefore ineligible for food stamps.

Need Green
NOTE: Lao tribesmen were hired, trained and paid by the CIA, DOD & State for military operations during the Vietnam war

- The Asian Pacific American community believes that since the Hmong nationals served in active duty for the American armed forces and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable and are considered veterans, they should continue to receive food stamps benefits consistent with the exception provided other noncitizen veterans.

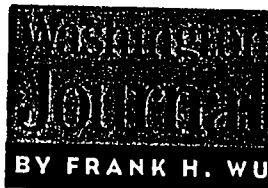
Follow-up: Review and discuss food stamp issue with USDA and Domestic Policy.

JAPANESE PERUVIAN ISSUE

- Information regarding this issue was distributed to the White House during the meeting. The Justice Department is reviewing the regulations.

Asian Week

10/23/97
/29/



'IT IS SIGNIFICANT WHEN THE CHIEF OF STAFF MEETS WITH THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY.'

the Clinton administration's chief of staff.

Nine individuals had a half-hour discussion with Bowles, public liaison Doris Matsui, Presidential Personnel official Vanessa Weaver, and members of the domestic-policy staff. They discussed a wide range of issues ranging from the campaign-finance scandal and political appointments of Asian Americans to immigration and Filipino military veterans. They thanked Clinton for his nomination of Bill Lann Lee as the assistant attorney general for civil rights and for his support of census sampling.

Among their concerns were the status of Paul Iwasaki, the vice chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, whose current term expires soon and who is awaiting likely re-appointment. On potential legislative developments, the groups noted that the final report of the federal commission on immigration reform does not support family reunification of adult siblings—a visa category widely used by Asian Americans.

The groups also asked that the White House support the right of lawful immigrants to donate money to political campaigns; President Clinton has taken a stand against such a policy. Although Bowles did not make any commitments, the APA groups were satisfied with their meeting, the first they have had with him.

Daphne Kwok, executive director of the Organization of Chinese Americans, said, "We were pleased that we were finally able to get the meeting, and that we were able to raise issues of concern to the Asian American community. Mr. Bowles seemed to be receptive and quite knowledgeable about the issues already."

Matthew Finucane, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, said, "It is significant when the chief of staff meets with the Asian American community. It is important for the community to know that we raised these issues."

The event, which was more than nine months in the planning, will be followed up by another meeting this December.

Given that the campaign-finance controversy has had as much to do with image and perception as with the integrity of the democratic process, it seems appropriate that videotapes are proving to be the most significant evidence. Despite the scandal, Asian American community groups continue with their efforts to participate in mainstream politics.

As the campaign-finance hearings continue, Asian Pacific Americans are trying to establish a better relationship with the second Clinton administration. At the White House on Oct. 16, representatives from the leading national APA organizations met with Erskine Bowles,

Follow-up to October 15 Oversight Hearing:**Commission on Immigration Reform - Recommendation on Fourth Preference**

10/16/97

In June 1995, the Commission on Immigration Reform (CIR) issued its recommendations on legal immigration reform. (The full report was issued in September 1995.) The President stated that CIR's work reflected a balanced immigration policy and congratulated CIR for developing recommendations that were pro-family, pro-work, and pro-naturalization. He stated that the Administration looked forward to working with Congress on this issue.

CIR recommended a reduction in the level of "core" admissions of legal immigrants, plus a special program to allocate visas to the spouses and children of legal permanent residents ("second preference") to alleviate a backlog. In order to make these extra visas available without increasing the total number of family-sponsored immigrants, CIR recommended eliminating three other categories of more extended family members -- adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens ("first" and "third preferences") and siblings of U.S. citizens ("fourth preference").

While the Administration supported the CIR recommendations generally, it never endorsed the elimination of other family preferences in favor of second preference. It is the mistaken belief that there was an identity of views on this specific point that gives rise to the misperception that the Administration later reversed its position on legal immigration reform.

- o In September 1995, Commissioner Meissner testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration on legal immigration reform. She offered naturalization as an alternative method to reduce the second-preference backlog, rather than a special visa allocation. This preserved the option for U.S. citizens to reunite with adult children without increasing the total number of family-sponsored visas.
- o The Commissioner testified that the Administration's goal was to honor, to the extent possible, commitments already made to U.S. citizens who had filed petitions to bring their relatives to the United States under the first and third preferences and whose petitions had been approved.
- o The Administration supported efforts in Congress for study and assessment of the fourth preference backlog in order to determine an appropriate response in light of future immigration and economic trends. The Administration also supported a suspension in new applications under fourth preference while this assessment was underway, and development of an agreement on an equitable process to "grandfather" those already on the waiting list whose petitions had been approved. (See, e.g., 11/28/95 views letter to Sen. Simpson on S. 1394.)

*

In March 1996, both the House and the Senate voted to "split" consideration of legal and illegal immigration reform. The Administration supported the split to ensure that needed illegal immigration reform would not be delayed by disagreements on legal immigration reform.

Fourth Preference December 10, 1997

Background: The final report of the National Commission on Immigration Reform recommended eliminating the "fourth preference," which enables siblings of U.S. citizens to enter the country. This eligibility category is predominantly used by Asian Americans. The Administration has never advocated elimination of the category, but has supported a moratorium on new applications under this category.

Talking Points:

- As you know, the Administration has never called for elimination of the fourth preference or otherwise endorsed this Commission recommendation.
- We have supported evaluating the various family preference categories -- and the allocation of visas among them -- to determine whether our current policies are the best possible in light of future immigration and economic trends.
- In making that evaluation, we will maintain our strong support for pro-family immigration policies and we will be mindful of the importance of the fourth preference for Asian Americans.



Elizabeth R. Newman
09/30/97 12:19:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Statement by the President: INS Reform

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

**For Immediate Release
1997**

September 30,

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the Honorable Shirley Hufstedler, and the late Barbara Jordan, issued its final report today. This report, which reiterates many of the excellent recommendations contained in the Commission's interim reports, further contributes to our country's understanding of the role of immigration in the United States. I commend the Commission's work and its contribution to the national dialogue on immigration policy.

America has always been a nation of immigrants, and I am proud of the significant progress my Administration has made toward improving America's immigration system. My Administration has curtailed illegal immigration through tougher border control, strengthened worksite enforcement, and the removal of record numbers of criminal and other illegal aliens. We have also worked to improve and tighten the naturalization process, and have made needed reforms to our asylum system for refugees fleeing persecution.

One of the Commission's recommendations is to restructure the immigration system by reallocating the main functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to other agencies. This proposal raises difficult and complex issues, which need further consideration. I have asked the Domestic Policy Council to coordinate with the affected federal agencies to evaluate carefully the Commission's proposal and other reform options designed to improve the executive branch's administration of the nation's immigration laws.

With this report, the Commission completes its work. I want to thank all of its members and staff for their service and contribution on these important issues.

-30-30-30-

Message Sent To: _____

Commission on Immigration Reform Final Report
Questions and Answers
September 30, 1997

Q. What does the Commission's final report say? Are there any new recommendations?

A. The Commission on Immigration Reform was created in the Immigration Act of 1990 and charged with examining and making recommendations regarding U.S. immigration policy. Under the leadership of its two chairs, the Honorable Shirley Hufstedler and the late Barbara Jordan, the Commission releases its final report today.

The final report reiterates many of the the Commission's earlier recommendations made in interim reports regarding illegal immigration, legal immigration, and refugee policy. The Commission restates its support for a comprehensive strategy to deter illegal immigration, including an increased Border Patrol; better worksite enforcement; and improvements to the deportation process. The Commission also renews its call to re-prioritize the current system of legal immigration and reduce the overall number of legal immigrants admitted into our country.

The final report also contains some new recommendations: first, a proposal to restructure the immigration system by reallocating the main functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to other federal agencies; and second, a plan to better integrate immigrants into American society.

Q. What is the Administration's position on the Commission's proposal to eliminate the INS and reallocate its functions to other agencies?

A. The Commission's proposal to reallocate the main functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to other agencies raises difficult and complex issues, which need further consideration. The President has tasked the Domestic Policy Council to coordinate with the affected federal agencies to evaluate carefully the Commission's proposal and other reform options designed to improve the executive branch's administration of the nation's immigration laws.

We are proud of the progress this Administration has made toward improving America's immigration system. The Administration has curtailed illegal immigration through tougher border control and the removal of record numbers of criminal and other illegal aliens. We have worked to improve and tighten the naturalization process and made needed reforms to our asylum system for refugees fleeing persecution. And we have strengthened the disincentives to hire illegal workers through improved employer verification, targeting abusive employers, and reducing document fraud.

The Commission notes that the Administration has taken significant steps to address weaknesses in INS operations that this Administration inherited. This progress results from the committed work of many dedicated individuals at INS -- the Border Patrol, the people who process applications, the inspectors and many others -- during a period of tremendous growth and challenge for the agency.

Q. Congressman Reyes intends to introduce legislation on restructuring management of immigration functions within the Department of Justice. Does the Administration prefer this approach to the Commission's?

A. While we have not yet seen the Congressman's legislation, we will certainly review it as part of the Domestic Policy Council-led process to look at reform options to improve the executive branch's administration of our immigration laws.

Q. What is the Administration's position on the Commission's renewed call to substantially reduce legal immigration levels?

A. We are currently monitoring recent reforms made to our immigration laws that could have a significant impact on legal immigration, and the Commission's recommendation in this area. The Administration continues to support legal immigration reform that is pro-family, pro-work, and pro-naturalization.

Q. Does the Administration support extending the life of the Commission?

A. The final report signifies the end of the Commission's work. The Commission has made many excellent recommendations during its tenure, and has contributed significantly to our country's understanding of the role of immigration in the United States. We will carefully review the Commission's newest recommendations. However, we do not see a need to further extend the Commission.

Q. What is the Administration's position on the Commission's call for a new "Americanization movement" to help legal immigrants become Americans?

A. While we certainly need more time to review the Commission's proposal in this area, we think that some of the ideas hold promise. The President has said many times that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. To benefit from our diversity, we should do more to help immigrant families to become full participants in our national community. This may be something for the President's Initiative on Race to include as part of the national dialogue during its work this year.

Q. Does the Administration support the Commission's proposed changes to last year's welfare reform law which restricts benefits for legal immigrants?

A. The President worked with Congress to fulfill his pledge to restore certain benefits to legal immigrants. The President fought to ensure that any balanced budget agreement would protect legal immigrants unfairly harmed by the welfare law. The balanced budget agreement includes \$12 billion to restore both disability and health benefits to legal immigrants who are currently receiving assistance and also protects current residents who may become disabled in the future. The Administration's efforts help ensure that our laws do not have an unduly harsh effect on individuals who have made vital contributions to their communities and who have put down roots in our nation.

Q. Does the Administration support the Commission's proposed improvements to the naturalization process? Does the INS intend to raise the fee for naturalization?

A. We will review carefully the Commission's recommendations in this area. The Administration is committed to the highest standards of integrity in the naturalization process as we work to improve waiting times and provide more efficient service to citizenship applicants. By July 31, INS had received over 1.4 million naturalization applications for the current fiscal year-- a 51% increase over the same period in FY 1996. The new INS Office of Naturalization Operations was created four and a half months ago to strengthen the integrity of the naturalization system and improve customer service. The new office has made considerable progress on its plan to fully automate and standardize naturalization procedures across the country by the summer of 1998.

With regard to a naturalization fee increase, INS has conducted a thorough review of their application process and may propose a fee increase that reflects the true costs of adjudicating these benefits. A fee increase will not be implemented until improvements have been made to the naturalization process.