

Mr. Skofield

Rolling doc / background on SFC

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LEGISLATION

**CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON OFFICE
ROOM 406G HUMPHREY BUILDING**

TO: Steve Warnath

FROM: Irene B. Bueno

DATE: 1/14/97

FAX NO: 456-7028

**TOTAL PAGES
INCLUDING COVER): 5**

Finally, attached is the latest DRAFT of the refugee self-sufficiency report. This draft will be distributed at the meeting today.

Please call me if you have any comments or questions 202-690-6786.

Thank you.

Interested Parties

Conquest

AR

Carnegie

Vol Ags

INGA

NEBL

Reauthorization - DPC - on their screen.

Options:

Process + timing

Consultation

Issue

Placement

Comments by COB, ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday.

Consultation

2 DC consultation - include State, INS,

Eastern - Request office - hook up 5 other sites

S/W -

Raised @ Dec. conference & asked for comments.

Some privatization

Groups.

Reacted to bootstrap copy.

INS: Cabinet/positions
require Vol Ags to deal w/
emergency situations.

Concepts - legislation needed?

- Increase role for Vol Ags - privatization

- 3-8 month pay - separate program not needed

- Refers to the still by 6 months.

- Medical services

- Transitional period into new program.

- Placement - alternative state pay

- Fish/Wilson - NY, Mass, ~~Switzerland~~ ^{Switzerland} review F/W - how can request to ~~run~~ ^{run} program.

(Cordon - they will hold large).



Your Copy

FEB 18 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR ANNE MCGUIRE

Attached is a memorandum for the President, from Secretary Shalala, transmitting a report that recommends steps to further promote social adjustment, economic self-sufficiency, and naturalization of refugees and asylees.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William V. Corr", is positioned above the printed name.

William V. Corr

Attachment



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

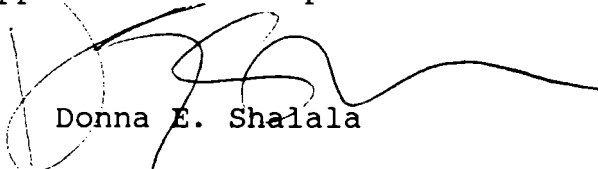
FEB 13 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased to provide you with the enclosed report that recommends steps to further promote social adjustment, economic self-sufficiency, and naturalization of refugees and asylees.

Your continued support of the domestic refugee resettlement program has been critical to building public confidence and support for the resettlement of those who are forced to flee persecution and make new lives in the United States. The priority for the domestic refugee resettlement program is, and must continue to be, to help refugees obtain self-sufficiency and social adjustment as quickly as possible after their arrival in the United States. Working with staff of the White House Domestic Policy Council, National Security Council; our partners at the Departments of State, Justice, and Education; with State and local governments; and with the private voluntary agencies that resettle refugees, we will continue to improve on our efforts to provide newly arrived refugees with the best possible start in their new homeland.

Thank you again for your support of this important mission.



Donna E. Shalala

Enclosure

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

ADDITIONAL STEPS TO INCREASE REFUGEE SELF-SUFFICIENCY, SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, AND NATURALIZATION

ISSUE

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton issued a memorandum on the subject of naturalization. Included in this memorandum was a directive that Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with other agencies as appropriate, present:

"...a report setting out a strategy of additional steps that we can take to promote social adjustment in the United States, economic self-sufficiency, and naturalization [of refugees and asylees]."

The priority for the domestic refugee resettlement program is, and must continue to be, to help refugees obtain self-sufficiency and social adjustment as quickly as possible after their arrival in the United States.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is cognizant of the role that the domestic refugee resettlement program plays in foreign and domestic policy. Concern over immigrant and refugee use of welfare and the rate of integration into American society has made it clear that in order to maintain public support for refugee resettlement in the future, the self-sufficiency rate and civic integration of refugees need to improve.

The domestic refugee resettlement program will expire this fiscal year. The reauthorization process provides an opportunity for a thorough review of the current domestic refugee resettlement program. The review will consider changes to the current program that promote the social adjustment, economic self-sufficiency, and naturalization of refugees and asylees, and provide a basis for new legislation.

This report provides background on the current domestic refugee resettlement program, recent initiatives and recommendations on initial steps that HHS will take pursuant to the President's directive to promote the social adjustment, economic self-sufficiency, and naturalization of refugees and asylees.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the domestic refugee resettlement program is to provide newly arrived refugees with the best possible start in their new homeland. As refugee admissions expanded in the 1970's, the existing federal welfare programs were increasingly utilized to provide cash and medical assistance to refugees and to help them move toward self-sufficiency. The current design of the

refugee program was created when the domestic resettlement program was codified in the Refugee Act of 1980 and the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) was established in the HHS.

Currently, the Department of State funds voluntary agencies to provide refugees with initial resettlement assistance -- helping to orient them to the United States, find housing, enroll children in school, etc. After the initial resettlement phase, refugees are provided employment and social adjustment services through a variety of federal and state programs. About half of the newly arriving refugees have been provided these services through the Aid For Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program and other mainstream public assistance programs. Other refugees ineligible for AFDC for non-financial reasons may be eligible for the Refugee Cash and Refugee Medical Assistance programs for eight months after their arrival in the United States. This program is entirely funded by the federal government through the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement.

RECENT INITIATIVES

HHS has taken many steps over the past few years to improve the self-sufficiency and social adjustment rate of refugees. For example, in 1995, ORR issued regulations that directed States to target refugee-specific services to those refugees who have been in the United States for five years or less. The result is that resources are more focused on newly arrived refugees. Fiscal year 1996 was the first year that States were required to submit outcome goal plans, which has led to a greater focus on increasing self-sufficiency outcomes. In addition, ORR has encouraged states to provide refugee-specific services for those served by mainstream welfare programs and has required ORR-funded services to be culturally and linguistically appropriate for all refugee populations.

Demonstration projects funded under the "Wilson/Fish" statutory authority (Section 412(e)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), have been particularly successful in helping refugees gain self-sufficiency. Key to the success of projects in Kentucky, Massachusetts, and San Diego, California has been the integration of cash assistance with case management; the provision of intensive, up-front services; and the coordination of case management and employment services.

Outcomes have been especially good in these projects: in Kentucky, it usually takes less than 70 days for employable adult refugees to find a job at above minimum wage; in San Diego, during its first year of operation, nearly three-quarters of the refugees enrolled in the project became self-sufficient before the end of 12 months.

Another alternative to the State-administered program is the Matching Grant Program. It is also run by the voluntary agencies, integrating cash assistance with employment services for refugees during their first four months after their arrival. Currently the matching grant program serves approximately 25 percent of all refugee arrivals. In calendar year 1995, 41 percent of the Matching Grant participants were self-sufficient by the fourth month following arrival in the United States. In 1996, this program was enhanced through increased Federal funding to provide

more comprehensive services to refugees and was expanded to provide intensive up-front services to refugees in additional sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve refugee economic self-sufficiency, social adjustment, and naturalization -- and build upon recent initiatives -- we recommend the following:

1) *Economic Self-Sufficiency:* The Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) will conduct a series of consultations on the domestic refugee resettlement program that focus principally on how best to achieve early economic self-sufficiency with an increased emphasis on accountability for outcomes.

We recommend that the consultations take the following into account:

- As stated above, concern over immigrant and refugee use of welfare has made it clear that in order to keep the door open for refugees, the self-sufficiency rate and rate of integration of refugees need to improve.
- The successful models described above (and other models of effective self-sufficiency services for refugees) offer lessons and experiences to build on in moving towards more effective services to promote self-sufficiency and integration.
- Decreasing refugee admissions and increasing ethnic diversity of arriving populations mean that the resettlement program needs to be more flexible to maintain culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The bulk of refugee admissions were former Soviets and Southeast Asians. The refugee service system was established over the years primarily to meet the needs of these two groups. Now, the United States admits many different populations -- such as Somalis, Iraqis, Bosnians, and Sudanese. At the same time, the number of refugees from Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union is decreasing. There are many volatile regions in the world, making it difficult to predict who will be admitted as refugees and asylees.
- Refugees have unique experiences and come with a range of backgrounds -- from engineers with advanced technical degrees to illiterate farmers -- all of whom need refugee-specific services. Neither welfare nor welfare reform was designed specifically for newcomers who are fleeing persecution.

2) *Social Adjustment:* The Office of Refugee Resettlement, together with the voluntary agencies and the Department of State, State Refugee Coordinators, service providers, refugees and others, will develop and implement policies and strategies for the placement and resettlement of refugees in communities that afford refugees the best opportunities for social adjustment and self-sufficiency.

ORR will continue to ensure that funding for services and assistance is made available to those communities where refugees resettle.

In addition, ORR will award grants for English language training and social and cultural adjustment services for underserved refugee groups, such as older refugees, pre-literate refugees, or homebound women. These services will help these refugees attain the level of English proficiency needed to be able to participate in other services and to have an understanding and appreciation of the American culture so that they can become citizens and participate fully in mainstream American civic life.

3) *Naturalization:* ORR will set aside \$1 million to launch a new partnership program to provide matching funds for providers who leverage State, local, or private funds for citizenship education.

In addition, ORR will stress the importance of citizenship and naturalization in the refugee resettlement program and encourage its grantees to provide civics education and naturalization assistance through the refugee social services and targeted assistance programs.

To expand naturalization application processing, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will be invited to collaborate with ORR in building the capacity of community-based organizations, particularly mutual assistance associations, to assist refugees in obtaining citizenship.

To : Lavinia Limon@OFA.OD@ACF.WDC, Lavinia Limon@ORR.OD@ACF.WDC,
Olivia Golden@OAS@ACF.WDC
Cc :
Bcc :
From : Margaret Pugh@OAS@ACF.WDC
Subject : re: Mtg with State Groups
Date : Thursday, February 13, 1997 at 6:28:53 pm EST
Attach :
Certify : N
Encrypt : N
Forwarded By: Lavinia Limon@OFA.OD@ACF.WDC

Forwarded to: Irene Bueno@ASL@OS.DC
cc:
Comments by: Lavinia Limon@OFA.OD@ACF.WDC
Comments:

Hi! You weren't at the 10:30 meeting this AM - so I thought I would forward this to you. Also, I've talked to Dennis about the Interagency Workgroup on Tuesday at 1:00 in this building. It would be great if you could be here. Happy Valentine's Day!

=====

Comments by : Margaret Pugh@OAS@ACF.WDC
Date : Thursday, February 13, 1997 18:28:53
Forwarded to : Lavinia Limon@OFA.OD@ACF.WDC,
Lavinia Limon@ORR.OD@ACF.WDC,
Olivia Golden@OAS@ACF.WDC

Comments:
I just got a message from Exec Sec asking that someone from ORR be at the DS meeting tomorrow at 10:30 to brief everyone on what happened Monday and next steps. Lavinia -- will you be there already?

=====

Forwarded to: Olivia Golden@OAS@ACF.WDC, Margaret Pugh@OAS@ACF.WDC, Madeline Mocko@OLAB@ACF.WDC
cc:
Comments by: Lavinia Limon@OFA.OD@ACF.WDC
Comments:

Quick report on consultations re: refugee reauthorization - it went well, there were concerns and requests for greater detail which we need to address (see Lenny's note to Jim). The next steps I propose is to establish several working groups with representation from States, Volags, and other interested parties. We need working groups on 1) fleshing out Volag responsibilities, contract, funding stream, etc 2) fleshing out State's role after 8/12 months, social service and targeted assistance funding streams and 3) cost analysis State by State and refining projections. All parties would work on these groups as part of the consultation process with no decisions expected until the work product was produced, consolidated by ORR staff and run back up to the Dept for consideration. If you agree, I'll go ahead and set up workgroups.

Also, Jim is setting up mtg with NGA, NCSL, APWA, etc for later next week at their request.

Finally, we're having our first Interagency Task Force Meeting on tuesday, Feb 18th at 1:00. We'll have representatives from State, NSC, and INS. I've invited Steve Warnath of the DPC but he hasn't called back to confirm. Who

should I invite on our side? I thought Dennis Hayashi or Irene Bueno. Anyone from ACF other than myself and my staff?

We're busy!

----- [Original Message] -----

Next week is fine. The rest of the day went very well, even ending in applause; go figure.

I would characterize the mood among the crowd as mostly supportive but anxious to see paper. Some States had some very specific concerns but commented that they looked forward to working with us on them. FL, NC, TX, CO and MD ring a bell. We all agreed to meet again soon.

Last night, key States and voluntary agencies met separately. Early reports are things are on a good footing.



June 6, 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: Olivia Golden, ACF
Lavinia Limon, ACF
Mary Bourdette, ASL
Ann Rosewater, ASPE
Gary Claxton, ASPE
Dennis Hayashi, OCR
Irene Bueno, ASL
Kathleen Steele, IGA
Anna Durand, OGC
LaVarne Burton, ASMB

FROM: Kristin Siebenaler //
Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Commission on Immigration Reform Brief to HHS Staff
Monday, June 9, 1997 4:00-5:00PM
ROOM 640H HHH

You and your staff are invited to a briefing by the Commission on Immigration Reform on its upcoming report on U.S. Refugee Policy.

Susan Martin, Executive Director, Commission on Immigration Reform
Andy Schoenholtz, Deputy Director
Alan Gall, Analyst (on detail to the Commission from ORR)

Please see attached executive summary

**U.S. COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM****U.S. REFUGEE POLICY: TAKING LEADERSHIP**
Key Recommendations***A Focal Point for U.S. Leadership***

The Commission recommends the designation of an office within the National Security Council [NSC] to serve as the White House focal point for overseeing and coordinating all aspects of U.S. policies regarding domestic and international refugee and related humanitarian issues.

International Refugee Policy and Programs

The Commission urges the federal government to continue demonstrating leadership in generating international responses to refugee and related humanitarian crises.

To accomplish this, the federal government should:

- Anticipate and take action, when possible, to prevent refugee and related humanitarian emergencies from occurring;
- Respond in a timely, humanitarian, and effective manner when their prevention is not possible;
- Facilitate protection of and assistance to refugees regardless of their location—that is, in countries of first asylum as well as at the border and in the interior of the United States;
- Endeavor to ensure, to the extent practicable, humanitarian aid and protection to those who are internally or externally displaced by other situations that threaten life or liberty; and
- Seek durable solutions (repatriation, local integration, or third-country resettlement) for those who require international protection and assistance so as not to perpetuate long-term refugee displacements.

The United States should serve these goals through:

- Preventive diplomacy and other actions that address the causes of refugee and related humanitarian emergencies and, thereby, reduce the likelihood of their occurrence;

- Policy leadership in the international refugee system through which the vast majority of refugees receive assistance, protection, and durable solutions;
- Timely and appropriate financial contributions designed to address the causes, consequences, and solutions to refugee and related humanitarian emergencies;
- Support for programs that target assistance and protection to the most vulnerable populations, with particular regard for the needs of women and children who comprise the vast majority of the world's refugee and displaced populations; and
- Clear, comprehensive, and consistent domestic refugee policies that adhere to recognized international norms for the protection of refugees and others facing life-threatening situations.

The Commission reinforces the need for creative approaches to address issues that are now impeding effective responses to international refugee and related humanitarian emergencies. The most pressing of these are:

- Early Warning of Humanitarian Crises;
- Preventive Actions;
- Emergency Responses;
- Protection of Internally Displaced Persons;
- Protection of Aid Workers;
- Durable Solutions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons; and
- International Responsibility—a broader sharing of responsibility and commitment towards refugees will increase the effectiveness of responses to refugee and related crises.

As a matter of some urgency, the Commission calls on the President to establish a senior-level taskforce, under the leadership of the NSC, to set criteria and guidelines for the involvement of U.S. military forces in humanitarian operations related to refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

Mass Migration Emergencies

The Commission reiterates its view that a credible immigration policy requires the ability to respond effectively and humanely to migration emergencies. This includes

- Establishment of a regional temporary protection system;
- Finalized federal contingency planning for migration, with appropriate provisions to review and revise as needed;
- Quick leadership by the NSC focal point for refugee issues to ensure smooth response to an unfolding mass migration emergency;
- Increased coordination among federal agencies involved in emergency responses as well as with state and local agencies and regional and international organizations;
- Realistic financing strategy and mechanisms to trigger allocation of funds; and
- Statutory authority for agencies mandated to take operational responsibility for responding to a mass migration emergency.

Asylum

The Commission commends the regulatory changes in the asylum system that have professionalized and streamlined decisionmaking while reducing abusive claims to refugee status.

The Commission recommends enhanced attention to the timely removal of rejected asylum seekers.

- The absence of an effective and coordinated strategy to ensure the timely removal of rejected asylum seekers may undermine a credible asylum system.

The Commission expresses reservations about the asylum-related legislation enacted in 1996 and urges the following corrections to certain provisions that can harm *bona fide* asylum seekers and undermine the efficiency of the asylum system.

- Standby authority for the Attorney General to institute Constitutionally-sound expedited procedures may be needed in an emergency, but the Commission does not believe "credible fear" is—except under exceptional circumstances—an appropriate standard for determining who will gain access to an asylum hearing. It is an appropriate standard for determining who will be released from detention, as those with a credible fear of persecution are unlikely to risk a reasonable chance at asylum by absconding.
- The severity of the persecution feared should be balanced against the nature of the crime committed and the danger posed to the community by an individual who may be denied asylum because of a criminal record. The Commission is concerned that categorical bars to asylum and withholding of removal may result in the return

of refugees who are not dangers to the community and have not committed crimes that most Americans would consider to be particularly serious ones.

- Artificial numerical limits on grants of asylum to recognized refugees are inadvisable.

The Commission recommends that asylees be admitted as Legal Permanent Residents [LPRs] upon the grant of asylum.

U.S. Refugee Admissions from Overseas

The Commission strongly recommends that the U.S. continue its commitment to resettle refugees as one of several elements of humanitarian protection for the persecuted. U.S. resettlement policy should rest on the following principles and frameworks.

- **Protection as a Core Priority.** The U.S. should give priority to those who are in imminent danger within their own countries or countries of first asylum.
- **Obligations to Persons Persecuted Because of Close Association with the U.S. Government.** The U.S. has a moral obligation to accept for resettlement persons who are persecuted or who have a well-founded fear of persecution specifically because of their former employment by or significant assistance to the U.S. government or by agencies acting on behalf of the U.S. government, unless these individuals pose a security threat to this country or were themselves guilty of persecuting others.
- **Promotion of Human Rights and Democratization.** Selective resettlement of political dissidents and other victims of serious human rights violations can be an important component of U.S. foreign policy, highlighting the human rights abuses practiced by other countries and, thereby, supporting efforts to encourage other countries to respect fundamental human rights and democratic principles.
- **U.S. Leadership in Promoting Durable Solutions.** Resettlement in the U.S. should be undertaken in the context of international efforts to find durable solutions for refugees. Many of the world's refugees cannot return to their country of origin and cannot remain permanently in their country of asylum. U.S. pledges of resettlement can help encourage other nations to do their fair share.
- **Consideration of the Effects of Resettlement Decisions on the Protection and Assistance of Refugees Worldwide.** Admission to the U.S. should be undertaken in close collaboration with UNHCR and other receiving countries.
- **Proportionality of Support for Resettlement.** The U.S. should review carefully the proportionality of resources expended on resettlement relative to those

required to assist, protect, and find solutions for refugees worldwide and to resolve refugee-producing situations.

- **Flexibility in Policy and in Program Implementation.** Refugee crises are difficult to predict with any degree of precision, making it imperative that the U.S. refugee program maximize its flexibility and minimize its response time.
- **Coordination and Consultation with Affected Agencies.** Refugee admission decisions have domestic and foreign policy ramifications, necessitating consultation and coordination with a wide range of private agencies, state and local governments, other nations, and international organizations.

In practice, admission numbers are not allocated by the five "priorities" identified by the Department of State. Instead, numerical limits are set by geographic region, with suballocations for specific nationalities.

The Commission recommends that refugee admissions be based firmly on human rights and humanitarian considerations.

The Commission recommends dividing categories for refugee admission into two broad priorities, each with subgroups, and with numbers allocated accordingly. The first priority encompasses refugees whose immediate entry is justified. It has two subgroups:

- Refugees who are in urgent need of rescue; and
- Refugees who are the immediate relatives of persons already living legally in the United States.

The Commission believes sufficient admission numbers should be allocated each year to guarantee entry to all such *bona fide* applicants within this grouping regardless of nationality.

The second priority includes refugees whose admission is of special humanitarian interest to the United States but who are not in imminent danger where they currently reside:

- Refugees who are members of designated subgroups who have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their past association with the U.S. government or whose admission will support U.S. foreign policy interests in promoting human rights;
- Refugees with close family ties to citizens and permanent residents of the U.S., but who are not immediate relatives; and

- Refugees in need of durable solutions who can neither repatriate nor remain indefinitely in their country of asylum, responsibility for whom is shared internationally.

This second group should be allocated numbers on a spill-down basis [that is, the annual target for refugee admissions minus the numbers needed for Group One], with the recognition that these refugees may remain in relative safety where they are until an admission number is available.

- Admissions under each category should include family members and close household occupants who are dependent on the principal applicant for financial or physical security.

The Commission reaffirms its recommendation that the United States set numerical targets—but not a statutory limit—for future refugee admissions. The Commission is opposed to establishing a statutory level of admissions that can be exceeded only by special legislation.

The Commission recommends that the consultation process be strengthened to ensure more effective Congressional participation in the setting of admission priorities and levels.

- Annual consultations to consider not only admission levels and priorities, but also projected needs for resettlement and appropriations for the following two years;
- Public hearings involving a wide range of experts as part of the consultation process.

The Commission cautions against excessive reliance on in-country processing of refugees for admission to the United States.

The Commission affirms the need for flexible and streamlined determinations of eligibility for the U.S. admissions program, including:

- Streamlining of administrative processes;
- Training and career development paths for U.S. officials involved in the refugee admissions program;
- Narrowly defined group profiles.

The Commission recommends that refugees be admitted as Legal Permanent Residents [LPRS] unless the Attorney General determines that there has been inadequate opportunity prior to admission for the INS officer to thoroughly review the case.

Transitional Refugee Assistance and Services

The Commission endorses a domestic refugee resettlement program of assistance and services whose aim is the social and civic integration into local communities of all refugees, as well as economic self-sufficiency of those refugees who are employable. A domestic assistance program should help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency after entry, as well as provide full federal financial support for refugees who, because of age or disability, are unable to support themselves.

The Commission supports the current array of assistance and services for newly arriving refugees and recommends increased attention to services that prepare refugees for naturalization:

- Reception and placement into local communities with a focus on initial basic maintenance assistance;
- Health screening;
- Transitional cash assistance and medical benefits;
- Refugee-specific social services and educational services; and
- Naturalization preparation.

The Commission supports the continuation of a public/private partnership to help refugees quickly and effectively achieve economic self-sufficiency, but recommends a more explicit division of responsibility than currently exist:

- State Department Reception and Placement grants to the private voluntary agencies would cover all arriving refugees, limited to prearrival and reception during the first thirty days;
- Health screening grants administered by public health agencies would continue to cover all arriving refugees;
- Private voluntary agencies would be funded by HHS through the Office of Refugee Resettlement for refugees not eligible for maintenance assistance programs—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Supplementary Security Income (SSI);
- The public sector would have principal responsibility for refugees who are eligible for TANF, SSI, and Medicaid.

The Commission believes that the recommended public/private partnership should continue for a three-year trial period during which its effectiveness would be evaluated to assess whether the partnership should be continued or modified.

The Commission recommends strengthening the mechanisms by which the refugee program is funded:

- Specify a minimum time period of special refugee cash and medical assistance provided to refugees not eligible for TANF or SSI (under current law, refugees are eligible for thirty-six months; in practice, this is determined by the budget and is now eight months);
- Ensure greater consistency between admissions decisions and appropriation of funds through inclusive consultations (as outlined above regarding refugee consultations with Congress);
- Establish a domestic emergency fund.

The Commission recommends that under the leadership of the National Security Council, existing federal agencies develop an operating plan for improved national coordination, ensuring:

- Consistency between admissions and transitional assistance requirements;
- Adequate statutory and regulatory authority to resettle refugees;
- Improved local notification and preparation;
- Management of responses when emergency consultations are needed.

The Commission recommends that Congress make urgently needed corrections in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. We continue to believe that categorical denial of eligibility for public benefits to lawfully-resident immigrants and refugees is inconsistent with U.S. national interests and that the safety net provided by needs-tested programs should continue to be available to those whom we have affirmatively accepted as legal permanent residents. With regard to refugees, two of the Act's provisions pose particular problems:

- Inappropriate Time Limits on Eligibility of Elderly and Disabled Refugees for SSI and Other Federal Needs-based Programs. Congress permitted refugees to retain eligibility for public benefit programs during their first five years in the country. Thereafter, refugees cannot obtain public assistance unless they naturalize. Many elderly and some disabled persons will have great difficulty passing the naturalization test and they do not have family sponsors to provide support. Providing continuing coverage under SSI, food stamps, and other means-tested federal benefit programs to elderly and disabled refugees would strengthen the U.S. capacity to offer resettlement to some of the world's most vulnerable refugees—the aged and disabled.
- Inappropriate Eligibility Provisions for TANF-eligible Refugees. At present, refugees are eligible for TANF only during their first five years in the United

States and lose subsequent eligibility unless they naturalize. We believe that a small modification that would treat refugees as the law treats citizens—giving them a lifetime eligibility of five years—would make more sense.

#

Proposed Refugee Admissions Categories

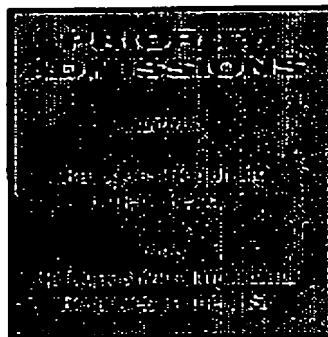
ANNUAL NUMERICAL TARGET

large enough to include:

all
PRIORITY ADMISSIONS

and selected
REGULAR ADMISSIONS

=



+

