

Holly, R Michael

From: Cook, John G
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2003 2:29 PM
To: Byerly, John R(Main State); Parson, Susan(Main State); Koran, Donald W(Main State Rm 5333); Sardinas, Martha L; Hotchner, John M; Mercer, John W; McClevey, Richard P; Holly, R Michael
Cc: Barrett, Ann M
Subject: CLEARANCE: Telegram to ICAO on Biometrics

As was agreed at the meeting last Friday with Frank Moss, I have drafted the attached telegram to USMission ICAO. Could you please send me your clearance by noon Tuesday. Thanks. -- John



ICAO Telegram on
Biometrics.do...

John G. Cook
Information Management & Liaison
CAVO/I
261-8016 or ext. 48016

This email is UNCLASSIFIED based on definitions in E.O. 12958.

INITIALS		
APPR:	ABA	...
DRAFT:	JOH	...
CLR 1:	MSA	...
CLR 2:	JHO	...
CLR 3:	JME	...
CLR 4:	RMC	...
CLR 5:	MHO	...
CLR 6:	SPA	...
CLR 7:	JBY	...
CLR 8:	DKO	...

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CA/VO/I:JOHN G. COOK:JGC
11/20/03 X48016
CA:ABARRETT, ACTING

CA/VO/I:MSARDINAS CA/PPT:JHOTCHNER CA/PPT:JMERCER
CA/PPT:RMCCLEVEY CA/PPT:MHOLLY EB:SPARSONS
EB:JBYERLY IO/T:DKORAN

IMMEDIATE MONTREAL

ICAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: CPAS, CVIS, EAIR

SUBJECT: ATC ENDORSEMENT OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR BIOMETRICS
AND MRTDS

1. THIS IS AN ACTION TELEGRAM - SEE PARAS 6 AND 7.

2. SUMMARY: IT IS OF PARAMOUNT INTEREST TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ICAO AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AT ITS MAY 22 MEETING TO ENDORSE THE SPECIFICATIONS ON BIOMETRICS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AS APPROVED BY THE ICAO TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. MISSION SHOULD TAKE NECESSARY ACTION TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

3. THE ENHANCED BORDER SECURITY AND VISA ENTRY REFORM ACT (BORDER SECURITY ACT) IN SECTION 303 PLACED A REQUIREMENT ON COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP) THAT BY OCTOBER 26, 2004, THEY MUST ISSUE PASSPORTS WITH BIOMETRICS OR LEAVE THE VWP, WHICH WOULD MEAN THEIR CITIZENS WOULD NEED VISAS TO ENTER THE U.S. ACCORDING TO

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THIS LAW, THE BIOMETRICS TO BE USED IN PASSPORTS MUST COMPLY WITH ICAO STANDARDS.

4. TRAVELERS FOR TOURISM OR BUSINESS FROM THE 27 COUNTRIES IN THE VWP ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 30 MILLION ENTRIES TO THE U.S. EACH YEAR. IF THEY WERE REQUIRED TO HAVE VISAS, WHICH INCLUDE PAYMENT OF A \$100 FEE, MANY OF THESE VWP VISITORS MIGHT NOT COME TO THE U.S., WHICH WOULD HAVE A HARMFUL EFFECT ON THE U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY. IT IS VERY MUCH IN THE INTEREST OF THE U.S. AND THE VWP COUNTRIES THAT THE VWP CONTINUES IN EFFECT.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MAY 6-9

5. AT THE MAY 6-9 MEETING OF THE ICAO TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) ON MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES WORKING GROUP (NTWG) SETTING SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE USE OF BIOMETRICS IN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WERE APPROVED BY CONSENSUS. THESE SPECIFICATIONS NOW NEED TO BE ENDORSED BY THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (ATC) AT ITS MAY 22 MEETING IN ORDER FOR THE USG AND GOVERNMENTS IN THE VWP TO BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO MAKE MAJOR INVESTMENTS IN BIOMETRICS IN THEIR PASSPORT OPERATIONS.

ACTION REQUEST

6. IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY AND THE DEPARTMENT'S PASSPORT AND VISA OPERATIONS FOR THE ATC AT ITS MAY 22 MEETING TO ENDORSE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TAG ON THE USE OF BIOMETRICS IN MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (MRTDS). THE MISSION SHOULD TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTION TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE. IN PARTICULAR, THE AMBASSADOR SHOULD MEET WITH DR. KOTAITE, ICAO COUNCIL CHAIR, TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE AND EXPLAIN THE PARAMOUNT INTEREST OF THE USG AND THE VWP COUNTRIES IN ATC ENDORSEMENT OF THE TAG RECOMMENDATIONS. THE AMBASSADOR SHOULD ALSO MEET WITH THE CHAIR OF THE ATC, ANNE MCGINLEY OF IRELAND, TO EXPLAIN USG INTEREST IN THIS ISSUE. FOLLOWING ARE TALKING POINTS FOR USE WITH KOTAITE AND MCGINLEY, AND DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE IN THE ATC, IF NECESSARY. IN DISCUSSING THIS ISSUE, IT MAY BE BEST TO MAKE LITTLE OR NO REFERENCE TO THE BORDER SECURITY ACT, BUT RATHER TO BASE OUR ARGUMENTS ON THE NEED FOR ICAO TO PERFORM ITS TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE IN REGARD TO ENSURING THE GLOBAL INTEROPERABILITY OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

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AND PROMOTING TRAVEL DOCUMENT SECURITY, WHICH BIOMETRICS CAN INCREASE FOR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

7. TALKING POINTS

-- THE ICAO HAS BEEN STUDYING THE USE OF BIOMETRICS WITH TRAVEL DOCUMENTS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. THE ICAO NEW TECHNOLOGIES WORKING GROUP (NTWG) EXPLAINED THE RESULTS OF THESE STUDIES TO THE MAY 6-9 MEETING OF THE ICAO TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) ON MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

-- THE NTWG RECOGNIZED THAT MEMBER STATES WILL CONTINUE TO UTILISE THE FACIAL IMAGE AS THE PRIMARY IDENTIFIER FOR MRTDS AND RECOMMENDED THE USE OF STANDARDIZED DIGITALLY STORED FACIAL IMAGES AS THE GLOBALLY INTEROPERABLE BIOMETRIC FOR MRTDS.

-- THE NTWG ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE USE OF A DIGITALLY STORED FACIAL IMAGE, SOME MEMBER STATES MAY USE STANDARDISED DIGITALLY STORED FINGERPRINT AND/OR IRIS IMAGES.

-- THE TAG APPROVED BY CONSENSUS THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NTWG AND HAS FORWARDED THESE SPECIFICATIONS ON BIOMETRICS AND MRTDS TO THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE FOR ENDORSEMENT AT ITS MAY 22 MEETING.

-- MANY GOVERNMENTS ARE EAGERLY AWAITING THE ENDORSEMENT BY THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE SO THAT THEY MAY PROCEED WITH MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR INVESTMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOMETRICS IN THEIR PASSPORT OPERATIONS.

-- IT IS THEREFORE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE FOR THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AT ITS MAY 22 MEETING TO ENDORSE THE SPECIFICATIONS ON BIOMETRICS AND MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS THAT WERE APPROVED BY THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE-READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

-- (AS APPROPRIATE) ASIDE FROM THE BASIC REASON THAT USE OF BIOMETRICS IN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WILL INCREASE SECURITY, ANOTHER FACTOR DRIVING THE URGENCY OF ACTION ON BIOMETRICS IS THAT THE U.S. BORDER SECURITY ACT REQUIRES GOVERNMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE U.S. VISA WAIVER PROGRAM TO HAVE PROGRAMS IN EFFECT BY OCTOBER 2004 TO INCLUDE BIOMETRICS IN THEIR PASSPORTS.

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-- IT IS IN THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND OF GOVERNMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD COMPLIANCE WITH THIS OCTOBER 2004 DEADLINE, BUT GOVERNMENTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE SUCH PROGRESS UNLESS THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE ENDORSES THE SPECIFICATIONS ON BIOMETRICS AND MRTDS THAT WERE APPROVED BY THE TAG.

-- THE BORDER SECURITY ACT SPECIFIED THAT THE GOVERNMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM SHOULD USED BIOMETRICS APPROVED BY THE ICAO. HOWEVER, IF ICAO DOES NOT ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY ON THE SUBJECT OF BIOMETRICS IN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, OTHER ORGANIZATIONS MAY ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER THIS ROLE.

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