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Judith C Penn 11/25/2002 11:19:42 AM From DBMnbox: Judith C Penn

Cable Text:

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ACTION VO-01

INFO LOG-00 MFA-00 AS-01 CA-01 DOTE-00 EAP-00 EB-00  
E-00 FAAE-00 UTED-00 TEDE-00 LAB-01 NSAE-00 CAEX-01  
PPT-D1 IRM-00 TEST-00 ECA-00 DRL-02 SAS-00 /008W  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0875  
INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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FOR CA/VO/F/S (JCOOK

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: CVIS, CPAS, PERL, NZ  
SUBJECT: BORDER SECURITY ACT -- HOST GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON USG  
FINGERPRINTING OF ITS CITIZENS

REF: A) STATE 187180 B) 30OCT02 E-MAIL SCHAKRAWARTI TO JCOOK

(SBU)1. Summary: In accordance with ref A, Amcongen Auckland  
contacted relevant officials in the NZG about subject topic.  
Ref B was sent to provide an interim response based on  
previous conversations with NZ Internal Affairs contacts. The  
official response arrived yesterday and is quoted in its  
entirety below. The NZG says that New Zealanders associate  
fingerprints with criminal activity and would be very  
concerned about them being required for US visas. The NZG is  
working with the US and others in the ICAO Technical Advisory  
Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents to set  
international biometrics standards. While they are working on  
facial recognition for New Zealand passports, they will  
install equipment for reading all ICAO-approved biometrics at  
border control points. Until the ICAO sets standards and a  
timeline for implementation, the NZG prefers not to speculate  
on timeframes. End summary.

(SBU)2. Q: Would it make a difference to your government  
whether our visa procedures required the collection of two  
fingerprints or ten fingerprints of visa applicants, and why?  
Are there legal and social issues in your country related to  
the collection of fingerprints?

A: There will be significant public concern if fingerprinting  
is made a prerequisite for the issue of a United States visa.  
Fingerprints are not generally used as a means of  
identification in New Zealand, and their collection is usually  
associated with actual or suspected criminal activity.

(SBU)3. Q: Do you expect that your government in the future  
will include one or more of these three biometric identifiers

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT R STRAND  
DATE/CASE ID: 15 JUN 2004 200303260

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being evaluated by the International Civil Aviation Organization in your passports? If so, which one(s)?

A: New Zealand is actively working with the United States and a small number of other governments in the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents to establish international standards for the inclusion of biometric information in passports. The New Zealand Passport Office, Department of Internal Affairs, is evaluating facial recognition technology, currently with a focus on determining its suitability for implementation in travel document application processing. This testing regime forms part of the ICAO New Technologies Working Group biometric evaluation and standards development. It is probable that, in the longer term, encoded facial biometrics will be incorporated in New Zealand travel documents. No other biometric technology is currently being seriously considered.

(SBU)4. Q: Do you expect that your government will have a program in effect by October 26, 2004, to issue passports with at least one of these biometric identifiers?

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A: New Zealand passports include state-of the art security features which are regularly reviewed. New Zealand wishes to continue to comply with ICAO travel document standards, particularly in relation to global interoperability, and also clearly understand the technical requirements of U.S. border control agencies in relation to travel document encoded data storage media (to allow reading and decoding of encoded biometrics). Until ICAO standards are finalised and U.S. technical requirements defined it would not be prudent for New Zealand to commit to an implementation timeline for the inclusion of a biometric identifier in its passports. New Zealand would be interested to know the likely timeframe for the issuing by the United States of passports containing a biometric identifier.

(SBU)5. If and when your government establishes a program to issue passports with biometric identifiers, do you expect you will impose a requirement that US passports have biometric identifiers? If so, would any of the three biometric identifiers approved by ICAO be acceptable?

A: New Zealand is currently trialling biometric identification technology at the border. While no decisions have been made we would expect to move to introduce systems to implement ICAO-approved biometric identifiers in passports.

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End Cable Text

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