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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

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ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OFFICE

425 Eye Street, N.W.
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Washington, D.C. 20536



File:  Office: California Service Center
(WAC 03 028 51807 relates)

Date: **AUG 19 2003**

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER: SELF-REPRESENTED

PUBLIC COPY

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. *Id.*

Any motion must be filed with the office that originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. § 103.7.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now on appeal before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a naturalized citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Russia, as the fiancée of a United States citizen pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The director denied the petition after determining that the petitioner and the beneficiary had not personally met within two years before the date of filing the petition, as required by section 214(d) of the Act. In reaching this conclusion, the director found that the petitioner had failed to establish that he warranted a favorable exercise of discretion to waive this statutory requirement.

Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act defines "fiancé(e)" as:

An alien who is the fiancée or fiancé of a citizen of the United States and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with the petitioner within ninety days after entry.

Section 214(d) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d), states, in pertinent part, that a fiancé(e) petition:

. . . shall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within two years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival. . . .

The petitioner filed the Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F) with the Bureau on November 4, 2002. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met during the period that began on November 4, 2000 and ended on November 4, 2002.

In response to Question #19 on the Form I-129F, the petitioner indicated that he and the beneficiary had never personally met due to financial reasons. In response to the director's request for additional information, the petitioner stated that he could not travel to meet the beneficiary because he has two daughters and business obligations.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), a director may exercise discretion and waive the requirement of a personal meeting between the two parties if it is established that compliance would:

- (1) Result in extreme hardship to the petitioner; or
- (2) Violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice.

The regulation at § 214.2(k)(2) does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to a petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Examples of such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, serious medical conditions or hazards to U.S. citizens to travel to certain countries.

The petitioner's reasons for not traveling to meet the beneficiary due to family and business obligations are not grounds for a favorable exercise of discretion to waive the statutory requirement. The time and expense involved in traveling to a foreign country are normal difficulties encountered in complying with the requirement and are not considered extreme hardship.

On appeal, the petitioner submits evidence that he has now met the beneficiary in person and provides evidence of his travel to Russia from April 5, 2003 through April 16, 2003.

It is important to emphasize that the regulation at § 214.2(k)(2) requires the petitioner to prove that he last met the beneficiary no more than two years prior to the filing date of the petition. In the instant case, the relevant two-year period is November 4, 2000 to November 4, 2002. The evidence submitted on appeal reflects that the petitioner visited the beneficiary in April 2003, five months after having filed the petition. Although the petitioner and beneficiary have now met, the meeting did not occur within the relevant two-year period. Furthermore, the petitioner has failed to establish that he warrants a favorable exercise of discretion to waive the statutory requirement. Therefore, the appeal will be dismissed.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the denial of the petition is without prejudice. Now that the petitioner and the beneficiary have met, the petitioner may file a new I-129F petition in the beneficiary's behalf so that the two-year period in which the parties are required to have met will apply.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.