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MI

FILE: [REDACTED]
[SRC 01 229 63835]

Office: MIAMI

Date: **JUL 25 2005**

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

APPLICATION: Application for Temporary Protected Status under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1254

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert P. Wiemann".

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application was denied by the District Director, Miami, Florida, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Honduras who is seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS) under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. §1254.

The district director determined that the applicant failed to establish he had: 1) continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998; and 2) been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. The director, therefore, denied the application.

On appeal, counsel asserts that the applicant is the child of an El Salvadoran citizen, and, even though he was born in Honduras to a Honduran mother, he is a national of El Salvador. The applicant provides additional information to support this assertion.

Section 244(c) of the Act, and the related regulations in 8 C.F.R. §244.2, provide that an applicant who is a national of a foreign state as designated by the Attorney General is eligible for temporary protected status only if such alien establishes that he or she:

- (a) Is a national, as defined in section 101(a)(21) of the Act, of a foreign state designated under section 244(b) of the Act;
- (b) Has been continuously physically present in the United States since the effective date of the most recent designation of that foreign state;
- (c) Has continuously resided in the United States since such date as the Attorney General may designate;
- (d) Is admissible as an immigrant except as provided under section 244.3;
- (e) Is not ineligible under 8 C.F.R. § 244.4; and
- (f)
 - (1) Registers for TPS during the initial registration period announced by public notice in the *Federal Register*, or
 - (2) During any subsequent extension of such designation if at the time of the initial registration period:
 - (i) The applicant is a nonimmigrant or has been granted voluntary departure status or any relief from removal;
 - (ii) The applicant has an application for change of status, adjustment of status, asylum, voluntary departure, or any relief from removal which is pending or subject to further review or appeal;
 - (iii) The applicant is a parolee or has a pending request for parole; or

(iv) The applicant is a spouse or child of an alien currently eligible to be a TPS registrant.

The term *continuously physically present*, as used in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means actual physical presence in the United States since January 5, 1999. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous physical presence in the United States by virtue of brief, casual, and innocent absences as defined within this section.

The term *continuously resided* as used in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1 means residing in the United States for the entire period specified in the regulations and since December 30, 1998. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous residence in the United States by reason of a brief, casual, and innocent absence as defined within this section or due merely to a brief temporary trip abroad required by emergency or extenuating circumstances outside the control of the alien.

Persons applying for TPS offered to Hondurans must demonstrate that they have continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, and that they have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. On May 11, 2000, the Attorney General announced an extension of the TPS designation until September 9, 2003. Subsequent extensions of the TPS designation have been granted by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, with the latest extension granted until July 5, 2006, upon the applicant's re-registration during the requisite time period.

The burden of proof is upon the applicant to establish that he or she meets the above requirements. Applicants shall submit all documentation as required in the instructions or requested by CIS. 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(a). The sufficiency of all evidence will be judged according to its relevancy, consistency, credibility, and probative value. To meet his or her burden of proof, the applicant must provide supporting documentary evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own statements. 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(b).

The record shows that the applicant filed his TPS application on May 21, 2001. The applicant last entered the United States on February 21, 2000. The applicant indicated on his application that he was a citizen of Honduras. Counsel provided a letter stating that the applicant's father was El Salvadoran. In support of his application, the applicant submitted a copy of his Honduran birth certificate. The district director concluded that the applicant had failed to establish that he was eligible for TPS as a Honduran because he arrived in the United States subsequent to the eligibility period. The district director therefore denied the application.

On appeal, counsel states that the applicant is the child of a Honduran mother and an El Salvadoran father, and, is therefore a citizen and national of El Salvador, even though he was born in Honduras. In support of this assertion, the applicant submits a photocopy of his and his father's birth certificates, as well as a copy of the El Salvadoran law defining citizenship.

The birth certificates establish the applicant's father was an El Salvadoran. However, in *Chee Kin Jang v. Reno*, 113 F. 3d 1074 (9th Cir. 1997), the United States Court of Appeals found that the Service reasonably interpreted the term "PRC national" in the Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA) to exclude Chinese dual nationals who did not declare citizenship of the People's Republic of China (PRC) when they entered the United States, and that the Service's treatment of PRC dual nationals, depending on whether they entered under a PRC passport or a passport of a different country, was reasonable. The Court states that an alien is bound by the nationality claimed or established at the time of entry for the duration of his or her stay in the

United States. Thus, a dual national CSPA principal applicant must have claimed PRC nationality at the time of his or her last entry into the United States.

In *Chevron USA, Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Counsel*, 467 U.S. 837, 842-843 & n.9 (1984), the district court held that the practice of binding an alien to his claimed nationality “promotes the congressional policy of insuring that an alien will be able to return, voluntarily or otherwise, to his or her country of origin if requested to do so and provides for consistency in the enforcement of law, especially given the large numbers of nonimmigrant foreign nationals who visit the United States each year.”

Additionally, the Board of Immigration Appeals, in *Matter of Ognibene*, 18 I&N Dec. 425 (BIA 1983), concluded that although an alien may hold the phenomenon of dual nationality, an alien may only claim one citizenship at a time for purposes of immigration matters within the United States. As explained in *Ognibene*, clearly, it is not the prerogative or position of the United States to require a dual national alien nonimmigrant to elect to retain one or another of his nationalities. Equally as clear, the national sovereignty of the United States is acceptably and reasonably exercised through section 214 of the Act in holding that a dual national alien nonimmigrant is, for the duration of his temporary stay in the United States, of the nationality which he claimed or established at the time that he entered the United States.

The Board, in *Ognibene*, further held that under appropriate circumstances in a given proceeding of law, the operative nationality of a dual national may be determined by his conduct without affording him the opportunity to elect which of his nationalities he will exercise. The General Counsel, in GENCO Op. 84-22 (July 13, 1984), reinforced this concept and states, “In interpreting a law which turns on nationality, the individual’s conduct with regard to a particular nation may be examined. An individual’s conduct determines his ‘operative nationality.’ The ‘operative nationality’ is determined by allowing the individual to elect which nationality to exercise. The nationality claimed or established by the nonimmigrant alien when he enters the United States must be regarded as his sole nationality for the duration of his stay in the United States.” [Emphasis in original].

Additionally, the General Counsel, in GENCO Op. 92-34 (August 7, 1992), concluded that the Service may, in the exercise of discretion, deny TPS in the case of an alien who, although a national of a foreign state designated for TPS, is also a national of another foreign state that has not been designated for TPS. The General Counsel explains that “TPS is not a provision designated to create a general right to remain in the United States. Rather, the statute provides a regularized means of granting haven to aliens who, because of extraordinary and temporary circumstances, cannot return to their home country in safety. See *id.* 244A(b)(1)(A), (B), and (C), 8 U.S.C. § 1254(b)(1)(a), (b), and (c).”

While the applicant, in this case, is the son of an El Salvadoran citizen, the director is correct in his findings that the applicant claimed to be a national and citizen of Honduras throughout these immigration proceedings prior to the appeal. The nationality the applicant claimed and/or established at the time he first came into contact with the Service (now CIS) was that of a Honduran. On subsequent filings before the Service, including his TPS application, the applicant continues to present himself as a Honduran. Therefore, his citizenship must be regarded as his operative nationality during these proceedings.

The record indicates that the applicant was born and lived the entirety of his life in Honduras prior to his arrival in the United States. Consequently, the applicant's claim of El Salvadoran citizenship cannot overcome the district director's findings.

Therefore, the district director's decision to deny the application for temporary protected status will be affirmed.

An alien applying for temporary protected status has the burden of proving that he or she meets the requirements enumerated above and is otherwise eligible under the provisions of section 244 of the Act. The applicant has failed to meet this burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.