

TESTIMONY OF

MICHAEL J. HRINYAK

DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR INSPECTIONS

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

before

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND CLAIMS

regarding

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 110 OF THE ILLEGAL  
IMMIGRATION REFORM AND IMMIGRANT RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 1996 AT LAND  
BORDERS

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1998

9:30 AM, 2237 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I welcome this opportunity to testify on the progress the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has made towards developing the entry-exit control information system as required by Section 110 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). In particular I will be addressing the steps which the INS has made

towards identifying appropriate technologies to employ in land border inspection settings. I will first describe the current inspection process and the technology employed to support that process. I will then discuss alternative technologies being explored to both improve the current process, as well as those which INS believes may facilitate the automated collection of the information required by Section 110.

As you may be aware, the Administration has proposed that the current law be modified to eliminate the requirement for the establishment of an automated entry-exit control system for land borders and seaports and instead require a study of the feasibility of implementing such a system at the land and sea borders. This would not delay the implementation of Section 110 at airports, where INS intends to continue working towards an entry-exit control system in a careful and deliberate manner.

## THE CURRENT PROCESS

To fully appreciate the magnitude of the challenge before the INS, and the technological challenge presented, it is important to understand the current environment and processes, both in terms of gross numbers, and how the process is now structured. In fiscal year 1997 approximately 500,000,000 entries, yes, approximately one half billion, were made into the United States. The vast majority of these entries were made at our land border ports of entry, with 423,066,896 U.S. citizens, visitors, and business travelers entering, and departing, from the United States in fiscal year 1997. Roughly one third of these trips were made by citizens and the remainder by aliens (279,224,152). If we compare the entries made on the northern and southern land borders, approximately 72% of the entries were made at ports-of-entry on the southern land border or 304,381,632 entries and the remainder, 118,685,264, on the northern land border.

Each of these entries is important to the traveler and to INS. Each inspection must be carried out in a rapid professional manner regardless of the means of travel, location, physical conditions, or time of day. The borders of the United States are always open to visitors and the INS must always be ready to welcome them.

For travelers in private vehicles such as cars, vans and the like, the inspection begins with the inspector entering the vehicle's license plate number into the Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS) to determine if there are any agencies' lookout notices posted against the vehicle or the vehicle's owner of record. I should note that this differs from the process at airports where an individual's name is searched against IBIS. Once the computer check is completed the inspecting officer will ask a brief series of questions to determine the applicant's citizenship, and if necessary, purpose of the trip, anticipated length of stay in the United States and whether there are any dutiable items to declare. On the southern border the inspecting officer will ask the applicant, if he or she is an alien, for appropriate documentation. On the northern border the inspecting officer may ask for documentation if it is not clear that the alien is a Canadian citizen. If the inspecting officer determines the applicant is admissible the inspection then ends and the person is allowed to enter the United States. At most locations this entire process takes approximately a minute. The only record of the inspection normally maintained is the IBIS system record showing the date, time, lane number, inspector and license plate number. This record does not meet the requirements of Section 110 since it reflects only that a vehicle entered the United States and reveals nothing about the individuals who may have been in the vehicle.

At almost all land border locations, travelers who seek to enter on foot, or by bicycle, or bus, or by some other means where there is no vehicle license plate which can be used to query against the IBIS database, the inspection process is relatively simple, straight forward and low tech. The inspecting officer will ask a series of questions to determine the admissibility of the applicant, including citizenship, in the case of aliens, the purpose of the trip, and whether there are any dutiable items to declare. On the southern border the inspecting officer will also review documentation of aliens seeking admission. On the northern border, if the applicant indicates that he or she is not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, or if the inspector determines it is necessary to verify citizenship, documentation will be reviewed. If the inspecting officer determines the applicant is admissible the inspection then ends and the person is allowed to enter the United States. The entire process takes less than a minute. No record is made of the entry and no computer databases are checked.

## TECHNOLOGY AND THE INSPECTION PROCESS

The INS has been exploring how technology can be applied to the inspection process both to better manage the movement of traffic at land borders and to better determine who is admissible to the United States. Many of these initiatives have been discussed before so I will try to keep my comments brief as I describe these initiatives, including the SENTRI project, and various alternative inspection systems including the INSPASS system and Automated Permit Port pilot.

### SENTRI

The Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) pilot program is an interagency initiative designed to facilitate the flow of traffic and trade while maintaining the integrity of the inspection process. Under this pilot, vehicles, and the individuals who will use the vehicles, are pre-screened and enrolled in the program by the INS and the United States Customs Service (USCS). When crossing the international border they then travel over a traffic lane dedicated to the exclusive use of the participants in the project. As these vehicles approach the border, an automated system reviews IBIS and other records relating to the vehicle and its occupants to ensure that they are enrolled in the program and have met the requirements for entry into the United States. Inspecting officers do not actively conduct an inspection of SENTRI participants on the primary lane; however, as part of the automated process the photographs of the participants associated with a particular vehicle are displayed on a screen and the officer may make a visual comparison of the vehicles occupants and the pre-registered participants. To facilitate this record review vehicles are equipped with a transponder which transmits a unique signal to a receiver, which in turn initiates the record search. A record of the entry is also made automatically by the system. This record could be modified to meet the requirements of Section 110.

### INSPASS

The INS Passenger Accelerated Service System (INSPASS) is a pilot program which was developed for deployment at airports to expedite the inspection of travelers. It is now being tested at Hildalgo, TX to determine whether it can accomplish the same objective in a land border environment. Like SENTRI, INSPASS provides an opportunity for those individuals who have been pre-screened and enrolled to take advantage of an alternative inspection process. INSPASS, however, differs in one significant way. A biometric, hand geometry, is recorded for each pre-screened enrollee and that biometric is verified upon each entry. This is accomplished when the applicant inserts his or her PORTPASS card, which has identifying data encoded, into a card reader and then places his or her hand on a hand geometry reader. An IBIS data base check is also initiated when the PORTPASS card is inserted into the reader. If both are positive, that is, if identity is confirmed through the biometric comparison and there is no adverse information regarding the applicant in IBIS, the inspection is completed automatically without the intervention of an inspecting officer. A typical INSPASS inspection takes less than 30 seconds. The system automatically records information regarding the entry and could be modified to meet the requirements of Section 110.

Preliminary results from the Hildalgo test indicate that the concept of an INSPASS type automated inspection on the land border is sound. The equipment has functioned as anticipated and response times are comparable to those at airport locations. Participation in this voluntary program, however, has been disappointing. While the pilot is still being reviewed to determine why it has not been more widely accepted it is believed that the additional time required to perform the individual IBIS record check and confirm the identity of the applicant through the biometric comparison off no advantage to the traveler vis-a-vis the current process.

### APP

To better address the needs of border crosses who live in remote locations where ports-of-entry may have limited hours of operation the INS developed the Automated Permit Port (APP) process. This process is being tested in Scobey, MT and, like the INSPASS system, it relies on a pre-screened enrolled population of users and a biometric verification to confirm the identity of the applicant for admission. In this instance the biometric used is voice recognition. An enrolled applicant who seeks admission at Scobey after normal port hours enters a pre-assigned Personal Identification Number (PIN) into a kiosk at the port. This prompts the system to call up the individual's record. The applicant then recites a pre-determined phrase into a telephone receiver at the kiosk and the system compares the stored record and the phrase being recited to confirm identity. If a match is made the applicant is admitted without the intervention of an officer and a record is made of the entry. This record could be modified to meet the requirements of Section 110.

## RVIS

Another system being tested to better serve residents in remote locations where port-of-entry may have limited hours of operation is the Remote Video Inspection System (RVIS). This approach relies upon a group of video cameras and an interactive voice system to monitor an unstaffed location from a staffed location. During the test period pre-screened enrolled travelers may activate the system through the use of a PORTPASS card which is provided to them by INS. This card is placed into a card reader which calls a record up on the system displaying the enrollees photographic image at the staffed monitoring location. The inspecting officer can then compare this to the live video image, ask questions if necessary, and view the car, its occupants and the contents of the car, and then admit the applicant. At some locations RVIS is being tested in conjunction with automated license plate readers which will perform an IBIS check while the inspector is viewing the video and alert the inspecting officer if there have been changes in the status of the applicant or concerns about the vehicle entered into the system since enrollment. RVIS creates a record of the entry which could be modified to meet the requirements of Section 110.

## TECHNOLOGY AND SECTION 110

As can be seen, the INS has been actively exploring new technology to improve the current process. None of the alternatives approached was considered to fully meet the demands of Section 110 on the land border, where the need to continue to facilitate the movement across the border is always a concern. The information requirements of Section 110 only added a new dimension to our efforts for ongoing process improvement, one which has called for a new innovative approach. Another concern was that many of the new processes being tested provide information regarding entry but none of them have been used to gather information on departures. Additionally, all of these test programs have focused on small populations of self-selected pre-enrolled travelers. It is difficult to extrapolate from these groups to make decisions about how particular changes will affect all land border crosses. To gather better data the Service determined that the best approach would be to test selected technologies in a port-of entry like setting under controlled circumstances and then to use this data to simulate what would happen if the new processes were to be implemented as standard operating procedures on the northern and southern land borders.

The test site chosen to examine additional technologies is the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA. Testing will occur during the summer and an analysis of the results, including computer simulations to project what would happen if the new processes were introduced, will be begin in September. The actual test will consist of a comparison of existing machine readable documents, including the INS issued border crossing card and permanent resident card, and a new generation of documents with radio-frequency tagents not unlike the technology used by SENTRI. The objective of the test will be to gather reliable data on the speed and accuracy of information collection using alternative technologies and to determine whether routine checks against IBIS can be incorporated into the process.

The INS documents being tested have machine readable zones, like many other documents, including U.S. and Canadian passports, which frequent border crossers may carry. These documents have generally not been "read" in land border settings during primary inspection; however, they are "read" in airport settings.

It is anticipated that very good information will be generated during the test to indicate how much additional time, if any, will be added to the inspection process if such documents were to be used in the future to meet the requirements of Section 110.

In addition to looking at current machine readable documents, two types of radio-frequency tagent enabled documents will be tested, with the difference in the two essentially being the range at which they can be passively read. The objective of this series of tests, like the first, will be to determine the speed and accuracy with which information can be collected.

The results of these tests will permit the INS to better understand how collecting the information required by Section 110 will affect land border inspection processes, and most particularly the affect of any changes on estimated waiting times. This will be done through a series of computer simulations in which the data obtained during the tests at Glynco will be used by the INS to project the anticipated impact of the changed processes on waiting times, staffing and other areas of concern using a proven computer modeling tool - the same tool now used to project staffing needs at our ports-of-entry.

The INS will also solicit public comments and suggestions regarding new technologies which might be used to meet the demands of Section 110 through notices in the Federal Register and the Commerce Business Daily. If significantly new or different technologies or approaches are suggested they too will be tested at the Glynco facility.

At this time, INS has not determined the budget implications for full implementation of Section 110 at land, air, and sea ports-of-entry. In FY 1998, INS has invested \$12.9 million for the entry-exit control system at 11 airports. In FY 1999, INS has requested an increase of \$19.5 million for the automation and positions necessary for further expansion of this project to additional airline carriers and airports.

## CONCLUSION

The Administration continues to move ahead to develop an entry-exit system as required by Section 110, however, we do so with particular concern for the logistics and costs associated with modifying or rebuilding land border ports-of-entry, and possible delays for the traveling public. These concerns have caused us to develop an approach which will enable us to test alternative technologies and to use computer simulation to project outcomes so that we can better determine how to meet the requirements of Section 110.

This concludes my testimony. I would be glad to respond to any questions which you may have.