

PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
for
FISCAL YEAR 2005

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
COMMITTEES ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
AND
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
SECTION 207(e) (1)-(7)
OF THE
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT

Department of State
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Health and Human Services



INTRODUCTION

This *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2005: Report to the Congress* is submitted in compliance with Section 207(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The Act requires that before the start of the fiscal year and, to the extent possible, at least two weeks prior to consultations on refugee admissions, members of the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives be provided with the following information:

- (1) A description of the nature of the refugee situation;
- (2) A description of the number and allocation of the refugees to be admitted and an analysis of conditions within the countries from which they came;
- (3) A description of the plans for their movement and resettlement and the estimated cost of their movement and resettlement;
- (4) An analysis of the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of their admission to the United States;¹
- (5) A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees;
- (6) An analysis of the impact of the participation of the United States in the resettlement of such

¹ Detailed discussion of the anticipated social and economic impact, including secondary migration, of the admission of refugees to the United States is being provided in the *Report to the Congress* of the Refugee Resettlement Program, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services.

refugees on the foreign policy interests of the United States; and

- (7) Such additional information as may be appropriate or requested by such members.

FOREWORD

Each year, the United States of America provides hope to thousands of refugees by welcoming them to our shores and providing permanent resettlement. We lead the international community by opening our doors so that refugees may find protection from persecution. We seek to provide a durable solution to their long-standing inability to return home or to be permanently accepted in their country of first asylum.

This report outlines the President's proposal for the United States refugee admissions program in FY 2005. It includes detailed narrative and statistical information about the current program, the plan for the coming year, and a strategy for its implementation by the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services.

The United States welcomes the news that the overall number of refugees in the world continues to decline. According to UNHCR, at the end of 2003 there were some 9.7 million refugees worldwide, down from 10.5 million the previous year. Large-scale repatriations are or soon will be underway for one-third of the refugees in Africa, including those from Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, and parts of Somalia. The dramatic changes in Iraq and Afghanistan have made it possible for some Iraqi and Afghan refugees to return to their home countries. Until recently, nationals of many of these countries were heavily represented in the U.S. resettlement program. In other parts of the world, however, refugees continue to live in precarious circumstances, and many are in need of third country resettlement. A primary focus of the program this year will be to evaluate several protracted refugee situations with an eye to offering resettlement as a means for achieving an appropriate durable solution.

In the current global refugee context, large, homogeneous refugee populations clearly in need of third country resettlement are more the exception than the rule. As a result, the time-consuming and often politically sensitive task of caseload identification is critical to maintaining a healthy admissions pipeline. We remain committed to addressing the challenge of expanding access to those in need of resettlement, by promoting greater identification and referral capacities within the United States Government and UNHCR as well as in the NGO community. These efforts have already yielded success. Over the past two years, our contribution of some \$14 million has supported 46 full time staff slots in resettlement-related positions in UNHCR and resulted in a dramatically increased number of individual referrals. This year, we expect UNHCR to refer at least 21,500 individual refugee cases to the United States through this resettlement initiative.

Our interest in mainstreaming resettlement within UNHCR's overall program of activities is based on the belief that resettlement should not be a durable solution of last resort. Where resettlement is needed, it should be available. It is not our view, however, that resettlement is the most desirable outcome in all cases. It is a resource-intensive activity and donor governments should ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to maintain its viability. The U.S. government also contributes significantly to the development of opportunities for repatriation and local integration in the country of asylum.

We recognize that NGO staff working to provide life-sustaining assistance to refugee populations in Africa may be aware of individuals for whom U.S. resettlement would be appropriate. Accordingly, we have held two training programs on resettlement case identification and referral in Africa over the past

eighteen months. In East Africa, the training resulted in the identification and referral of many strong individual cases in the months following the course. We expect a comparable, high quality result from the training and outreach effort we conducted in West Africa in April of this year. While the volume of referrals in this program remains small, the Administration is committed to offering this training to NGOs wherever warranted, including in Asia later in the year.

In addition to the development of individual case referral mechanisms, the United States Government initiated field visits during FY 2004 in collaboration with UNHCR, host governments, and NGOs to explore potential groups for resettlement consideration. In the past year, we fielded the first of these Targeted Response Teams (TRTs) to Mozambique, Uganda, Guinea, and Ghana. We found this to be an effective approach to group caseload identification, particularly for populations that have long been "warehoused" in protracted situations in which none of the three durable solutions (repatriation, local integration, or resettlement) appeared to be available. We are also firmly committed to the complementary work UNHCR has been developing in the area of group referrals. Through a systematic, analytical methodology under development, UNHCR can designate entire groups for resettlement consideration. This allows for the strategic use of resettlement to resolve refugee situations.

One measure of the refugee admissions program's success is the ability of the United States government to identify, process, and resettle the maximum number of refugees permitted under the President's ceiling. In both Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003, the United States admitted less than 30,000 refugees, far fewer than the 70,000 authorized by the President as a result of security concerns and resulting program changes

necessitated by the events of 9/11. In 2004, the program is on track to exceed the 50,000 regionally allocated ceiling established after last year's consultations process, but will not achieve the full 70,000 authorized by the President. Our projected FY 2004 admissions represent a 76% increase over last year's 28,421 admissions total. This achievement reflects significant expenditure of effort and resources on a scale not undertaken before. It also reflects close coordination among program partners - both inside and outside government. The Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services have worked closely to overcome obstacles in refugee admissions processing. Refugee advocates in the NGO community - especially members of Refugee Council USA and InterAction - also played key roles in the identification and sponsorship components of the process.

From a logistical standpoint, the security environment continues to pose major challenges by impeding ready access to refugee populations for processing. Based on assessments of transnational terrorism threats, the impact of the war in Iraq, and other factors directly related to the safety of American personnel involved in refugee processing activities, some traditional processing sites have been eliminated. As security challenges have arisen, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have collaborated to redirect resources to locations providing adequate safety for U.S. personnel. Wherever necessary, the Department of State has funded security upgrades to provide a safer working environment for processing personnel and adjudications officers.

Security is not the only issue affecting the predictability of projected admissions. For example, in Africa, relationship fraud has resulted in the

disqualification of many previously approved family reunification cases. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, the number of new religious minority group ("Lautenberg program") applicants and the percentage of those appearing for interview continue to decline.

Last year's Report to Congress identified initiatives essential to our ongoing efforts to improve the admissions program. Here is the list of completed and ongoing initiatives undertaken during the year:

- Creating a Refugee Corps: DHS has begun the work necessary for the FY 2005 hiring and deployment of a dedicated corps of refugee officers. This major undertaking will bring significant new resources to the processing of refugee claims overseas, increasing both program responsiveness and flexibility.
- Strengthening UNHCR: We have strongly supported UNHCR's expanded referral capacity with earmarked funding linked to referrals targets. This has improved UNHCR's capacity and focus and enhanced its willingness to accord resettlement a higher priority.
- Expanding NGO Involvement and Establishing Targeted Response Teams: Our NGO colleagues have demonstrated committed partnership in many different areas including: identifying colleagues to join the Targeted Response Teams (TRTs) to explore potential resettlement populations in the field; participating in regional working groups co-chaired by PRM and RCUSA and including representatives from the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, UNHCR, and IOM; and working with USG agencies to actively deter and combat fraud.

- Increasing U.S. Government Resources: We have dedicated additional State Department and Overseas Processing Entity personnel to refugee admissions efforts, including pipeline development.
- Expanding Family Reunification: Having instituted additional fraud prevention measures into the program, we increased from four to nine the number of nationalities eligible for P-3 processing in FY 2004 and propose a further expansion of the family reunification component of the program in FY 2005 as described below.
- Responding to "Longstayers": We have focused UNHCR and USG efforts to identify circumstances where resettlement is the preferred solution for refugees in intractable situations. We have been successful in expanding the concept of "rescue" to include those who have been "warehoused."
- Completing a Comprehensive Study of the Program: Professor David Martin, a renowned expert in the refugee field, has recently completed an independent, comprehensive study of the program. Drawing on the experience and ideas of United States government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and refugees, his report includes a number of important recommendations that we are now reviewing. The report will be made available to the public later this summer and will inform the process of determining the shape of further reforms.

We believe we have accomplished all of the initiatives set forth in last year's report to Congress with the lone exception of developing targeted strategies to improve the protection of unaccompanied minors. This will be a focus in FY 2005. During FY 2005, we also intend to examine possible statutory and

regulatory changes that could streamline the admissions process without compromising national security. We also will explore additional measures to counter fraud and corruption, and to enhance the physical security of refugees overseas.

The Administration's FY 2005 proposed ceiling of 70,000 reflects the President's continued commitment to resettling refugees in the United States. Given the level of effort and resources expended in FY 2004, and continuing security challenges, the program costs may fluctuate throughout the year. The proposal allocates regionally 50,000 of the 70,000 ceiling based on current identified resettlement needs. In order to meet the 70,000 ceiling, in the coming months, we will work to identify an additional 20,000 refugees in need of resettlement and the funding to achieve the program's goals while continuing to support critical humanitarian assistance requirements.

The FY 2005 proposal includes several program modifications. They include revised definitions of processing priorities, an expansion of Priority 3 family reunification eligibility, and limited universal in-country processing authority, as described below:

- Revised definitions of processing priorities:
Priorities 1 and 2 have been slightly redefined in this proposal to include NGO referred cases and to better define "groups".
 - Priority 1 (P-1) will include all individually referred cases identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy or a non-governmental organization (NGO).
 - Priority 2 (P-2) will include all groups of special humanitarian concern to the United States, identified by

the Department of State in consultation with USCIS, NGOs, UNHCR, and other experts. It will include some groups processed in their countries of origin.

- Expansion of the family reunification program: Eligibility for family reunification (P-3) consideration is expanded in FY 2005 to include nationals of five additional countries (Cuba, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Haiti, and Rwanda) who are the spouses, unmarried children under 21, or parents of persons admitted to the United States as refugees or granted asylum, or persons who are lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens who were initially admitted to the United States as refugees or granted asylum. Access to the admissions program for these individuals will be established on the basis of an Affidavit of Relationship filed by the relative in the United States and processed through USCIS. Applicants must be located outside their countries of nationality or habitual residence in order to qualify.
- Universal in-country processing authority: In order to meet the needs of extraordinary individual protection cases for whom resettlement is requested by a U.S. ambassador, we propose to extend in-country processing authority to any location in the world on a trial basis during FY 2005, with the understanding that significant public benefit parole will continue to be the solution to most such cases and that individuals will only be referred to the U.S. Refugee Program following concurrence by USCIS. Larger scale in-country programs will continue in the former Soviet Union, Cuba and Vietnam.

The United States refugee admissions program represents an important component of our rich tradition

as an immigration country: offering refuge to the oppressed. The Administration has demonstrated that, with sufficient resolve, resources, and commitment, we can continue to demonstrate robust leadership in refugee resettlement. Much has been accomplished in the past year. But more remains to be done. We are confident that, working together with our resettlement partners, we can meet the challenges ahead.

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I. OVERVIEW OF U.S. REFUGEE POLICY

Resettlement to third countries, including the United States, is considered for refugees in urgent need of protection as well as for those for whom other durable solutions are not feasible. In seeking durable solutions for refugees, the United States generally gives priority to the safe voluntary return of refugees to their homelands. This policy, recognized in the Refugee Act of 1980, is also the preference of the international community, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). If safe voluntary repatriation is not feasible, other durable solutions are sought, including local integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in third countries. For many refugees, resettlement is the best, or perhaps only, alternative. Recognizing the importance of ensuring UNHCR's capacity to identify and to refer refugees in need of resettlement, the U.S. government has provided some 20 million dollars during the past seven years to expand the organization's resettlement infrastructure.

According to UNHCR, as of January 1, 2004 there were 9.9 million refugees in the world. An important foreign policy goal of the United States is to assist refugees worldwide. The United States therefore makes financial contributions to international organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations. Under the authority in the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, the United States contributes to the programs of UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other international and non-governmental organizations that provide relief and assistance to refugees. Our assistance is targeted to address immediate

protection needs of refugees as well as to ensure that basic needs for water, sanitation, food, health care, shelter, and education are met. The United States continues to press for the most effective use of international resources directed to the urgent needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. During FY 2004, the United States has supported major relief and repatriation programs throughout the world. Repatriation to countries including Afghanistan, Somalia, Angola, and Sierra Leone has proceeded on a large scale.

For many years, the United States was one of ten countries that worked with UNHCR on a regular basis to provide resettlement opportunities for persons in need of this form of international protection or durable solution. In 2003, UNHCR referred refugees to 24 countries for resettlement. The majority (86%) was referred to the United States, Canada, and Australia. In addition to New Zealand and the traditional Western European resettlement countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Great Britain), small numbers of referrals were accepted by Germany, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Chile, Brazil, Korea, and Mozambique. The European Union has recently endorsed a plan in support of refugee resettlement that may generate additional interest in participation of European countries.

While the overall number of refugees referred by UNHCR and the percentage resettled by various countries fluctuate from year to year, the United States is committed to providing an opportunity for U.S. resettlement to at least 50% of all UNHCR referrals. In calendar year 2003 the United States resettled 54% of all UNHCR-referred refugees resettled in third countries (see Table VIII).

U.S. law allows for the admission of persons of special humanitarian concern who can establish persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The legal basis of the refugee admissions program is the Refugee Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-212, § 201(b), 94 Stat. 103. With some modification, the Act largely adopted the definition of "refugee" in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by its 1967 Protocol. The U.S. definition (Section 101(a)(42) of the INA, as amended) is as follows:

The term 'refugee' means: (A) any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or (B) in such circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation (as defined in section 207 (e) of this Act) may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The term 'refugee' does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

For purposes of determinations under this Act, a person who has been forced to abort a pregnancy or to undergo involuntary sterilization, or who has been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program, shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion, and a person who has a well-founded fear that he or she will be forced to undergo such a procedure or be subject to persecution for such failure, refusal or resistance shall be deemed to have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of political opinion.

The foreign policy interests of the U.S. have been advanced by our willingness to work with first asylum and resettlement countries to address refugee issues. In some locations, the prompt resettlement of politically sensitive cases has helped defuse regional tensions. During the past few years, U.S. resettlement efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia have helped energize efforts by UNHCR and other countries to ensure that resettlement is accorded those in need and that first asylum is maintained for the larger population.

Refugees resettled in the United States contribute positively to the diversity and enrichment of our country. The U.S. program emphasizes the goal that refugees become economically self-sufficient as quickly as

possible. Department of Health and Human Services-funded programs administered by individual states and the District of Columbia provide cash and medical assistance, training programs, employment, and other support services to arriving refugees. A variety of institutional providers perform these services, including the voluntary agencies that provide initial reception and placement services under cooperative agreements with the Department of State.

During the 24-year history of the program, we have witnessed various changes in the program. One of the most obvious changes has been in the nationalities of the refugees admitted through the program.

Even before the events of September 11, the end of the Cold War had changed dramatically the context in which the U.S. refugee admissions program operates worldwide. Having shifted its focus away from large groups concentrated in a few locations, primarily refugees from Vietnam, the Former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia, the program now offers resettlement to refugees of some 60 nationalities scattered around the world, interviewed this year in 42 often remote locations. While we believe this diversified approach is consistent with the Refugee Act's intent that persons most in need of resettlement should benefit from the program, overseas processing efforts face numerous challenges. Deteriorating security conditions for American personnel in refugee camps, the inadequacy of medical facilities required to conduct thorough medical screenings, and concern about program integrity--including fraud and corruption--are some of the issues facing the program.

We have continued to address the issue of inadequate medical screening in numerous processing sites and enhanced the physical security arrangements at many others. While taking the necessary steps to improve our capacity to offer resettlement to those for whom it is appropriate, we have aggressively pursued every opportunity to extend the program's accessibility to those in greatest need. There have been many partners in this effort. For example, we reached agreement with the Government of Thailand leading to resettlement processing for over 15,000 Hmong and other refugees living in Thailand. We have engaged the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and our voluntary agency and international organization partners in joint "Targeted Response Team" (TRT) efforts to conduct fact-finding missions in Africa to identify other possible groups. The TRT missions resulted in-group referrals by UNHCR in Uganda, Guinea, and Ghana, as well as increased individual referrals of refugees in Mozambique. We plan additional TRT missions this year in other geographic locations. In addition, we expanded our pilot non-governmental organization (NGO) referral initiative by providing training to NGO representatives working on refugee assistance projects in West Africa.

Domestically, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has worked with agencies participating in the Reception and Placement (R&P) program as refugee arrivals have increased to ensure that they were able to provide services according to established standards of care. Far fewer arriving refugees now have close family members living in the United States who are available to provide support and facilitate the integration process. When combined with the significant linguistic diversity, wide-ranging educational/employment histories of the refugee

population and the persistent shortage of available affordable housing particularly in urban areas, resettlement agencies have had to adjust their practices to meet the increasing needs of refugees in the program.

II. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM FOR FY 2005

A. Proposed Ceilings

**TABLE I
REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2003 AND FY 2004,
PROPOSED CEILINGS FOR FY 2005**

REGION	FY 2003 ACTUAL ARRIVALS	FY 2004 ORIGINAL CEILING	FY 2004 REVISED CEILING	FY 2004 PROJECTED ARRIVALS	PROPOSED FY 2005 CEILING
Africa	10,717	25,000	30,000*	28,500	20,000
East Asia	1,724	6,500	8,500*	8,200	13,000
Europe and Central Asia	11,269	13,000	13,000	10,000	9,500
Latin America/Caribbean	452	3,500	3,500	2,800	5,000
Near East/South Asia	4,260	2,000	3,000*	2,500	2,500
Unallocated Reserve	0	20,000	12,000*	0	20,000
Total	28,422	70,000	70,000	52,000	70,000

*A total of 8,000 numbers from the Unallocated Reserve were allocated as follows during the third quarter FY 2004 – 5,000 to Africa, 2,000 to East Asia, and 1,000 to Near East/South Asia – when it became apparent that arrivals from each of these regions would exceed the original ceilings.

In addition to the proposed ceilings, the President specifies that special circumstances exist so that, for the purpose of admission under the limits established above and pursuant to section 101(a)(42)(B) of the INA, certain persons, if they otherwise qualify for admission, may be

considered as refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States although they are within their countries of nationality or habitual residence. The FY 2005 proposal recommends continuing such in-country processing for specified groups in Cuba, Vietnam, and the countries of the Former Soviet Union. In order to meet the needs of extraordinary individual protection cases for whom resettlement is requested by a U.S. ambassador, we propose to extend in-country processing authority to any location in the world on a trial basis during FY 2005, with the understanding that significant public benefit parole will continue to be the solution to most such cases and that individuals will only be referred to the U.S. Refugee Program following concurrence by USCIS.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within DHS will also be authorized to adjust to the status of lawful permanent resident 10,000 persons who have been granted asylum and have been in the United States for at least one year, pursuant to Section 209(b) of the INA. We note that the 10,000-person statutory limitation on the number of asylees who can adjust their status has resulted in a backlog of adjustment of status applications some 17 years long. Nearly 22,500 individuals were granted asylum during FY 2003. It is estimated that these asylees from 2003 will not be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship until at least 2025 if the cap remains at 10,000 adjustments per year.

B. Admissions Procedures

1. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants for refugee admission to the United States must meet the following criteria:

- Meet the definition of "refugee" contained in the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act;
- Be among those refugees determined by the President to be of special humanitarian concern to the United States;
- Subject to certain statutory exceptions and waivers, be otherwise admissible under the INA; and
- Not be firmly resettled in any foreign country.

While applicants who meet the above criteria may be admitted to the United States as refugees in the discretion of DHS, there is no entitlement to admission for these applicants. The admissions program is the legal mechanism for admitting refugees who are among those classes of persons of particular interest to the United States. Applicants who fall within the priorities established for the relevant nationality or region are presented to USCIS for determination of eligibility for admission under Sections 101(a)(42) and 207 of the INA.

2. Worldwide Priority System for FY 2005

The worldwide processing priority system sets guidelines for the orderly management and processing of refugee applications for admission to the United States within the established annual regional ceilings. These processing priorities are distinct from the issues of whether an applicant is legally admissible to the United States or meets the statutory "refugee" definition. Just as an applicant who may qualify as an admissible

"refugee" has no affirmative entitlement to resettlement in the United States, assignment of a person to a particular processing priority only permits access to apply to the admissions program and does not entitle that person to admission to the United States.

- ***Priority 1: Individual Referrals***

Priority 1 is reserved for individual compelling protection cases or refugees for whom no other durable solution exists who are identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy, or a non-governmental organization (NGO). This processing priority is available to persons of any nationality. The U.S. historically resettles approximately 50% of all of UNHCR's resettlement referrals worldwide.

- ***Priority 2: Group Referrals***

Priority 2 is used for groups of special humanitarian concern to the United States designated for resettlement processing. It includes specific groups (within certain nationalities, clans, or ethnic groups) identified by the Department of State in consultation with USCIS, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UNHCR, and other experts. Some Priority 2 groups are processed in their country of origin.

In-country processing programs included in Priority 2:

Former Soviet Union

This Priority 2 designation applies to Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox

religious activists identified in the Lautenberg Amendment, Pub. L. No. 101-167, § 599D, 103 Stat. 1261 (1989), as amended, with close family in the United States.

Cuba

Included in this Priority 2 program are: members of persecuted religious minorities, human rights activists, former political prisoners, forced-labor conscripts (1965-68), persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatment resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs or activities, and persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship -- family or social -- to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

Vietnam

This Priority 2 designation includes persons eligible under the former Orderly Departure Program (ODP), and Resettlement Opportunity for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR) programs as well as the McCain amendment program currently awaiting reauthorization by the Congress. It also includes Amerasian immigrants, whose numbers are counted in the refugee ceiling.

Groups of Humanitarian Concern outside the country of origin included in Priority 2:

The admissions program will process several Priority 2 groups outside their country of origin and will continue to develop new Priority 2 groups during FY 2005, including:

- Meskhetian Turks in Russia
- Hmong Lao at Wat Tham Krabok in Thailand
- Iranian religious minorities, primarily in Austria
- Vietnamese in the Philippines
- Somali Benadir in Kenya
- Burundians in Tanzania
- Somali group in Uganda
- Liberian groups in Ghana and Guinea

Additional populations under active consideration for group designation in FY 2005 include Bhutanese in Nepal, Kunama in Ethiopia, Ethiopians in Yemen, and Burmese in camps along the Thai border.

- ***Priority 3: Family Reunification Cases***

In FY 2005, eligibility for a refugee interview is extended to nationals of fourteen countries (Burma, Burundi, Congo [Brazzaville], Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Colombia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan) who are the spouses, unmarried children under 21, or parents of persons admitted to the United States as refugees or granted asylum, or persons who are lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens and were initially admitted to

the United States as refugees or granted asylum.

Eligibility for interview will be established on the basis of an Affidavit of Relationship filed by the relative in the United States and processed through the USCIS. All applicants must be located outside their countries of nationality or habitual residence. This expansion provides greater access to the program while at the same time balancing resource constraints for the purposes of relationship verification and other processing requirements.

3. DHS/USCIS Refugee Adjudications

Section 207 of the INA grants the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authority to admit, at his discretion, any refugee who is not firmly resettled in a third country, who is determined to be of special humanitarian concern, and who is admissible to the United States as an immigrant. The authority to determine eligibility for refugee status has been delegated to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

During FY 2005, DHS will begin restructuring its refugee program with the creation of a Refugee Corps, to be staffed with USCIS officers dedicated to overseas processing responsibilities. The Refugee Corps will provide DHS with additional resources, as well as increased flexibility, to respond to an increasingly diversified refugee admissions program.

a) USCIS Overseas Operations

Refugee adjudications are conducted by USCIS officers who have received specialized refugee training. Circuit rides to process refugees are coordinated by the USCIS overseas offices with geographic jurisdiction, in conjunction with USCIS Headquarters. USCIS relies upon Department of State Regional Security Officers overseas to assess the security environment at proposed circuit ride locations prior to committing to circuit ride travel.

b) Case Presentation to USCIS

Refugee processing procedures prior to USCIS eligibility interviews vary. Some applicants are referred to the U.S. program by officials of U.S. Embassies, UNHCR, or NGOs (Priority 1 referrals). Other applicants are eligible to apply for the program directly. These include some persons or groups identified under processing priorities as eligible for resettlement consideration (Priorities 2 and 3). Generally, the Department of State arranges for an Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) to conduct pre-screening interviews and prepare cases for submission to USCIS. This involves completing the required forms and compiling other necessary documents.

c) The Eligibility Determination

In order to be approved as a refugee, an applicant must establish that he or she has suffered past persecution or has a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A USCIS officer

conducts a face-to-face interview of each applicant. The interview is non-adversarial and is designed to elicit information about the applicant's claim for refugee status. The officer asks questions about the reasons for the applicant's departure from the country of nationality and problems or fears the applicant may have had or will have if returned to the country of nationality. In the in-country processing programs, the officer's questions focus on problems the applicant has had or fears having if he or she remains in his/her country of nationality. Background information concerning conditions in the country of nationality is considered, and the applicant's credibility and claim are assessed.

Under U.S. law, a person who has ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion is not a refugee. Likewise, an applicant who has been "firmly resettled" in a third country may not be admitted under INA § 207. Applicants may also be ineligible for admission to the United States on criminal, security, or public health grounds.

d)Actions on Admission

Arriving refugees, if not fingerprinted prior to travel, are printed at the port of entry. Refugees are authorized employment upon admission. After one year, a refugee is eligible to apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent

resident. Five years after admission, a refugee who has been granted lawful permanent resident status is eligible to apply for citizenship.

4. Processing Activities of the Department of State

a) Overseas Processing Services

In most processing locations, PRM in the Department of State engages an NGO, IOM, or U.S. Embassy contractors to manage an Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) to assist in the processing of refugees for admission to the United States. All of the OPE's pre-screen applicants to preliminarily determine if they qualify for one of the applicable processing priorities. The OPE's assist applicants with completing documentary requirements and schedule USCIS refugee interviews as appropriate. If an applicant is approved for resettlement, OPE staff guide the refugee through post-adjudication steps, including obtaining medical screening exams and attending cultural orientation programs. The OPE obtains sponsorship assurances, and, once appropriate security clearances are obtained, refers the case to IOM for transportation to the United States.

In FY 2004, NGOs worked under OPE contracts with PRM at locations in Austria, Kenya (covering East Africa), and Ghana (covering West Africa). International organizations (IOM and ICMC) support refugee processing activities in Egypt, the Former Yugoslavia, Russia, Pakistan, and Turkey. U.S. government

contractors provide processing services in Cuba, India, Jordan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Given rapidly changing world events affecting refugee resettlement operations, changes to this list are likely in FY 2005.

b) Cultural Orientation

The Department of State strives to ensure that refugees who are accepted for admission to the United States are prepared for the significant life changes they will experience through resettlement by providing cultural orientation programs prior to departure for the United States. It is critical that refugees arrive with a realistic view of what their new lives will be like, what services are available to them, and what their responsibilities will be. Every refugee family receives *Welcome to the United States*, a resettlement guidebook developed with input from refugee resettlement workers, resettled refugees, and state government officials. *Welcome to the United States* is produced in ten languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic, Somali, Vietnamese, Amharic and Farsi. Through this book, refugees have access to accurate information about initial resettlement before they arrive. The material in *Welcome to the United States* is also provided in some locations in video format. In addition, the Department of State enters into cooperative agreements for one- to three-day pre-departure orientation classes for eligible refugees at sites throughout the world.

c) Transportation

The Department of State makes available funds for the transportation of refugees resettled in the United States through a program administered by IOM. The cost of transportation is provided to refugees in the form of a loan. Beneficiaries are responsible for repaying these costs over time, beginning six months after their arrival.

d) Reception and Placement (R&P)

PRM maintains cooperative agreements with ten organizations, including nine private voluntary agencies and one state government agency, to provide initial resettlement services to arriving refugees. The R&P agencies agree to provide initial reception and core services (including housing, furnishings, clothing, food, and medical referrals) to arriving refugees. These services are now provided according to standards of care developed jointly by the NGO community and U.S. government agencies in FY 2001, and implemented in FY 2002. The ten organizations maintain a nationwide network of over 400 affiliated offices to provide services.

The R&P agreement obligates the participating agencies to provide the following services, using R&P funds supplemented by cash and in-kind contributions from private and other sources:

- Sponsorship;

- Pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement;
- Reception on arrival;
- Basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, clothing) for at least 30 days;
- Community orientation;
- Referrals to health, employment, and other services as needed; and
- Case management and tracking for 90-180 days, depending upon availability of anchor relatives.

III. REGIONAL PROGRAMS

TABLE II
PROPOSED FY 2005 REGIONAL CEILINGS BY PRIORITY

<u>AFRICA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2004	9,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	2,500
Priority 2 Groups	5,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	3,500
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>20,000</u>
<u>EAST ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2004	8,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	4,000
Priority 2 Groups	1,000
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>13,000</u>
<u>EUROPE / CENTRAL ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2004	4,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	100
Priority 2 Groups	5,400
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>9,500</u>
<u>LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2004	3,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	700
Priority 2 Groups	1,200
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>5,000</u>
<u>NEAR EAST / SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2004	1,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	400

Priority 2 Groups	1,00
	0
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>2,50</u>
	<u>0</u>
<u>UNALLOCATED RESERVE</u>	<u>20,0</u>
	<u>00</u>
<u>TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING:</u>	<u>70,0</u>
	<u>00</u>

In the following regional program overviews, a description of refugee conditions and religious freedom in each region is provided. In addition, prospects for voluntary repatriation, resettlement within the region, and third country resettlement are discussed.

A. AFRICA

In 2004, there was cause for optimism on several fronts across Africa. Thanks to progress made toward resolution of several long-term conflicts on the continent, UN-organized repatriations were underway in Angola, Eritrea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and parts of Somalia. Similar operations were under discussion for Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, and parts of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to which limited spontaneous returns were already underway. In all, close to 300,000 African refugees returned to their countries of origin in the last year and the pace is likely to increase in the months ahead. At the same time, fresh violence occurred in eastern DRC, the Darfur region of Sudan, western Ethiopia, and Ivory Coast, creating new refugee flows or threatening refugees in their countries of first asylum. There are approximately 3.2 million

refugees across the African continent, more than 30% of the worldwide population of refugees and asylum seekers.

The principle of first asylum is still honored by most African countries. Traditionally, refugees in Africa have been allowed to remain - and in many cases to integrate locally - until voluntary repatriation is possible. However, this tradition of tolerance has been challenged in recent years in countries such as Tanzania, where successive waves of refugees and large populations of longstayers have exceeded the country's ability to locally integrate a significant portion of the refugee population.

During the five years prior to FY 2002, admission of African refugees to the United States had increased dramatically, from 6,069 in FY 1997 to 19,201 in FY 2001. Difficulties including additional security requirements imposed after September 11, regional instability, and the closure of a significant number of fraudulent family reunification cases combined to limit the number of African refugees who arrived in FY 2002 and FY 2003. In FY 2004, the African program has significantly rebounded and we expect to exceed the ceiling of 25,000 refugees from Africa.

1. Religious Freedom

In sub-Saharan Africa, people are generally free to practice their chosen religion. Religious tolerance is a generally accepted and widely practiced principle in many countries, though religious freedom is sometimes limited, particularly in the midst of ethnic and other conflicts. Ethiopia, with its rich Muslim and Christian traditions, is a good example of growing

religious tolerance competing with intra-religious tension. The Government of Eritrea, however, has in recent years engaged in serious religious repression, shutting down independent Protestant churches and arresting hundreds of Protestant worshippers. Eritrea has also targeted Jehovah's Witnesses, banning their places of worship and imprisoning a number of worshippers. In contrast, some locations have revealed persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, related primarily to a government's desire to force compliance with state policies that Jehovah's Witnesses deem contrary to their faith. There are also places where communal violence has been exacerbated by religious differences, such as in Nigeria. In both northern Nigeria and Sudan where Islamic Sharia law has been imposed, non-Muslims have been adversely affected. In Sudan, a country with a documented record of human rights abuses, there have been some instances of preferential distribution of limited humanitarian assistance in an apparent attempt to convert the aid recipients to Islam. The U.S. admissions program continues to be available to Sudanese and other refugees who are victims of religious intolerance.

2. Voluntary Repatriation

Despite the number of protracted refugee situations throughout Africa, voluntary repatriation to a secure environment remains the most common and desirable durable solution. Close to 300,000 Sierra Leonean refugees have returned home in recent years, most through an organized UN repatriation program that neared completion in 2004. Some Liberians spontaneously returned from Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Guinea, as well as other neighboring countries in 2004, and the UN is planning for organized voluntary repatriation to begin in October 2004 to assist in the return of some

320,000 Liberians. In Angola, some 220,000 refugees have returned home in recent years. Of the 230,000 remaining Angolan refugees (mostly in Zambia, DRC, and Namibia), most are expected to return home with UN assistance in 2004 and 2005.

The UN is also currently planning a large-scale organized repatriation to begin in late 2004 to assist some 600,000 Sudanese refugees return home from Uganda, Ethiopia, DRC, Kenya, and Egypt (although the ongoing violence in Darfur may complicate those efforts). Nearly 180,000 Burundian refugees have returned home since 2002, more than 50,000 of them from Tanzania this year alone. With security continuing to improve in Burundi, the UN plans to start organized repatriation for the remaining 800,000 Burundi refugees in late 2004. More than one million Rwandan refugees returned home in the mid-1990s and 2004 saw some organized repatriation of Rwandans from Uganda. The Refugee Convention cessation clause was expected to be invoked for Rwandans by UNHCR by the end of 2004. In the DRC, despite the signing of a peace accord in July 2003, instability and sporadic violence persisted, and very few Congolese refugees returned home in 2004. Finally, some 400,000 Somalis remained in exile in 2004, although 35,000 were expected to repatriate during the year, almost entirely to the Somaliland region.

3. Local Integration

In the 1960's and 1970's, many African countries accepted significant numbers of refugees and provided them land to cultivate. In the years since, however, large refugee outflows combined with increased pressure on land in most African countries have resulted in African refugees' increasing confinement to refugee camps or settlements. Where some refugees had achieved de facto integration, such as in the Ivory Coast, xenophobic attacks on foreigners have recently highlighted the fragility of such informal arrangements. Few African countries have offered formal, permanent integration of refugees, although there are some exceptions. Guinea is reportedly ready to offer local integration to some Liberians who are not willing or able to return. South Africa has allowed the permanent integration of a significant number of refugees, mostly from Mozambique. While the governments of Zambia, Uganda, and Kenya have expressed an interest in

providing refugees with citizenship and local integration opportunities, draft legislation on these initiatives has thus far foundered due to lack of public support.

4. Third Country Resettlement

Resettlement in third countries outside the region is an essential durable solution for some African refugees. The possibility of third country resettlement can play an important protection role, given the political and economic volatility in many parts of Africa. With limited opportunities for complete, permanent integration in neighboring countries and often-protracted periods in refugee camps before voluntary repatriation becomes an option, the need for third country resettlement of African refugees will continue. All resettlement countries, in particular the United States, Canada, and Australia, accept resettlement referrals from Africa, but the U.S. program receives the majority of them. In recent years, UNHCR has increasingly viewed resettlement as an important tool of protection and durable solution for refugees in Africa.

5. FY 2004 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate exceeding the 25,000 refugee admissions ceiling for Africa in FY 2004. Four countries (Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, and Ethiopia) account for the majority of refugee arrivals, with two countries (Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of Congo) accounting for fewer, yet significant numbers of refugee arrivals. Refugees also have been resettled from thirteen other African countries in smaller numbers.

We have taken steps to improve efficiency and to decrease vulnerability in the enhanced security procedures instituted in the aftermath of September 11, particularly the Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) component, which so impacted arrivals from Africa. Thanks to improved coordination with intelligence and law enforcement agencies and the addition of new staff at PRM dedicated to processing SAOs, delays caused by this enhanced security check were dramatically reduced in FY 2004. In addition, FY 2004 saw some improvement in the security conditions in some processing locations, such as Kakuma Camp in Kenya, where DHS officers were able to return in September 2003 and conduct interviews on a nearly continual basis throughout FY 2004. However, difficult security conditions persist in some locations, including many sites in Ethiopia. Sporadic violence in and around Kakuma threatened processing and required increased security for convoys of refugees and processing personnel into and out of the camp. Finally, USCIS has continued to verify claimed family relationships between U.S. anchor relatives and refugee applicants in the P-3 caseload in order to address the historically high levels of relationship fraud in the African P-3 program.

6. FY 2005 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed Africa ceiling of 20,000 is intended to respond to the resettlement needs of certain groups of African refugees, while realistically approaching the logistical and political realities of refugee processing in this complex working environment. PRM has actively engaged all appropriate offices within the Department of State, the voluntary

agency community, UNHCR, and USCIS to help identify groups appropriate for resettlement that would likely qualify under U.S. law. As a result of these discussions, PRM has identified a number of groups for priority processing during FY 2004.

The estimate of 9,000 individuals in the pipeline of approved refugees who will likely arrive during FY 2005 includes P-1, P-2, and P-3 cases approved during FY 2004, including several thousand Somali Bantu in Kakuma.

PRM continues to work closely with UNHCR to strengthen its resettlement referral capacity in Africa. We are currently funding twelve resettlement positions in eight African countries: Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. In return, PRM anticipates significant numbers of referrals from UNHCR in these countries during calendar year 2004 (many of whom will be processed in FY 2005).

In East Africa, we anticipate processing a group of approximately 1,750 Somali Benadir in Dadaab camp, Kenya, and approximately 1,000 minority clan Somalis in Nakivale Camp, Uganda. While we do not anticipate a large group referral from Mozambique, we do expect a continued increase in individual referrals of vulnerable cases from Marratane Camp. We also anticipate a referral of 2,000 or more Burundians in Tanzania - half of the total of 4,000 individuals that UNHCR intends to submit to all resettlement countries in the coming year.

In West Africa, we expect to process a group of 2,500 Liberian female-headed households who have experienced "double flight" to Ivory Coast and now Guinea, and a group of 1,500 Liberians in single-parent households in

Ghana. We also anticipate smaller numbers of refugee referrals in Nigeria, Senegal, Gabon, and Sierra Leone, and will be examining the residual numbers of Sierra Leonean refugees throughout the region, given that the repatriation is coming to an end. In addition, UNHCR has indicated it may refer up to 500 Mauritians in Senegal, pending negotiations between UNHCR and the governments of Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali.

In Egypt, we expect fewer referrals of Sudanese than in previous years, given UNHCR Cairo's decision to suspend new registrations for refugee status determinations (RSDs) for Sudanese, following the May 26 signing of the framework for peace. However, cases in the RSD pipeline will be referred for possible resettlement and we have encouraged UNHCR to continue to refer vulnerable cases such as women at risk, and individuals from the Darfur region. At the same time, we expect referrals of Somalis in Egypt to increase. Small numbers of Sudanese and Somalis will continue to be processed in Syria and Lebanon.

Proposed FY 2005 Africa program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2004</i>	<i>9,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>2,500</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees</i>	<i>3,500</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>20,000</i></u>

7. Possible Future Groups

Other smaller groups of Somalis, Sudanese and Ethiopians are expected from both Dadaab and Kakuma. We continue to monitor

the situation of the group of Eritrean Kunama in Ethiopia and have urged UNHCR to consider a group resettlement referral of those who do not choose to voluntarily repatriate to Eritrea by the end of 2004. In the Near East, we are working with UNHCR on possible referral of a group of Ethiopian former Navy personnel and their families in Yemen.

B. EAST ASIA

Thailand continues to host the largest population of refugees in East Asia. More than 140,000 Burmese, mostly ethnic minorities, are recognized by UNHCR and live in nine Thai-administered refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. UNHCR plans to conduct a comprehensive registration of this population in FY 2005 with an eye to developing durable solutions. The Thai government officially labels Burmese asylum seekers as "displaced persons" but has generally cooperated with the resettlement of UNHCR-referred urban Burmese. In FY 2004, at the request of the Thai government, some 15,500 Lao Hmong at Wat Tham Krabok and several thousand urban Burmese were expeditiously processed for resettlement in the United States.

As of June 2004, nearly 100 Vietnamese Montagnards had sought UNHCR protection, over 80 in Cambodia and others in Thailand. Most were referred to the United States for resettlement. Cambodia is the only signatory in Indochina to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Cambodian relations with UNHCR worsened sharply in early 2004 over the alleged refoulement of Montagnards to Vietnam, which led to the closure of UNHCR Cambodia's sub-office in Ratanakiri in April. By mid-year, however, relations showed signs of improvement. We are working with UNHCR and other concerned governments to develop

approaches to ameliorate tensions and improve protection for this population.

Over 19,000 Burmese Muslim Rohingyas remain in two UNHCR camps in southern Bangladesh. More than 200,000 of this group repatriated to Burma over the past ten years. UNHCR continues to facilitate repatriation of those who wish to return to their homes and provides protection and support after they have returned.

In April 2004, the U.S. and Philippine governments announced plans for the majority of a group of some 1,885 Vietnamese longstayers in the Philippines to be considered for possible resettlement in the U.S. The Philippine government has agreed to make efforts to regularize the status of those not approved for the U.S. program.

In 2003, Malaysia became the largest UNHCR refugee status determination operation in the world. From January 2003 to April 2004, UNHCR registered 18,092 persons of concern. They include asylum seekers from Burma, mainly Chin, Rohingyas, and other Burmese Muslims and Acehnese from Indonesia. Malaysia is not a party to the 1951 Convention. Arrest, detention, harassment and deportation of asylum seekers have increased sharply in recent years. UNHCR estimates that more than 2,000 persons will be in need of resettlement from Malaysia in 2005 and is preparing referrals of some 1,000 Burmese Chin to the U.S. program. Indonesia continues to host a number of asylum seekers from East Asia and elsewhere.

1. Religious Freedom

While many governments in East Asia permit freedom of worship, religious believers face

serious persecution in some countries. North Korea allows no religious freedom, and all organized religious activity except that which serves the interests of the state is suppressed.

The situation in other countries such as China, Vietnam, and Laos is also troubled. While the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Lao constitutions ostensibly provide for freedom of religion, these governments restrict or repress activities of religious organizations in practice. Many independent religious activities are either prohibited or severely restricted, and dissenters face possible physical mistreatment or imprisonment. Despite dramatic increases in religious observance in China, the government continues to harass and interfere with unregistered religious groups, most notably the unofficial Catholic churches loyal to the Vatican, Protestant "house churches," some Muslim groups, Buddhists loyal to the Dalai Lama, and the Falun Gong spiritual movement. There are many cases of arrest, imprisonment, and torture of religious believers in China. In Vietnam, the unrecognized Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam faces restrictions on its freedom of worship. Many Vietnamese Protestants, especially ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands and Northwest provinces, continue to suffer arrest, imprisonment, closing of their churches, and efforts to force renunciations of their faith. In Laos, we have seen modest improvements in religious freedom, however problems remain, particularly in Savannakhet and Attapeu Provinces, where Christians periodically have been detained or asked to renounce their faith. North Korea, China,

and Burma remain countries of particular concern with respect to religious freedom.

The U.S. refugee admissions program processes refugee cases referred by UNHCR and U.S. embassies whose claims are based on persecution due to religious beliefs. We have worked closely with UNHCR to strengthen this referral process.

2. Voluntary Repatriation

The pace of repatriation of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh remains slow. There is no known repatriation from other countries in the region.

3. Local Integration

Countries in the region are traditionally reluctant to integrate refugees or even to grant temporary asylum. Nevertheless, U.S. willingness to process Lao Hmong at Wat Tham Krabok at the request of Thai authorities and to interview some of the Vietnamese longstayers in the Philippines has elicited pledges from both governments to address the status of individuals found ineligible or who are otherwise unable to resettle abroad.

4. Third Country Resettlement

The United States and other resettlement countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Nordic countries, continue to process refugee cases from East Asia referred by UNHCR. In FY 2004, the United States processed UNHCR-referred refugee cases in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and China.

The United States continues to administer an in-country refugee admissions program in

Vietnam, managed by the Refugee Resettlement Section at the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. Only a small number of Orderly Departure Program (ODP) and Resettlement Opportunity for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR) refugee applicants remain to be processed.

5. FY 2004 U.S. Admissions

We expect to admit over 7,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2004. The majority, or about 4,500, will come from expedited processing of some 15,500 Lao Hmong from Wat Tham Krabok in Thailand. Another 1,400 urban Burmese referred by UNHCR are expected to arrive in FY 2004. We expect some 900 individuals to arrive from Vietnam and some of the Montagnards referred by UNHCR in Cambodia may be admitted in FY 2004. Due to serious fraud concerns, Amerasian processing was suspended in 2003 while the Department of State develops new guidelines for the processing of this small residual population. The McCain-Davis amendment, which provided refugee admission for certain children of Vietnamese admitted to the United States as refugees, expired on September 30, 2003. There are some 873 persons pending interview in this category. Legislation has been introduced to extend this provision for another two years but has not yet been passed by Congress.

6. FY 2005 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose an admissions ceiling of 13,000 for East Asia for FY 2005. The number includes the balance of the Lao Hmong who will not have traveled to the United States by the end of FY 2004. It also includes processing of some 4,000 Priority 1 referred individuals, including a second tranche of

urban Burmese in Thailand, Burmese Chin in Malaysia and small numbers of Montagnards. Finally, it includes some of the Vietnamese longstayers in the Philippines.

Proposed FY 2005 East Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2004</i>	<i>8,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>4,000</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>1,000:</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>13,000</i></u>

7. Possible Future Groups

Pending developments in Burma and Thailand, there could be a sizeable third country resettlement program for border Burmese as part of an effort to normalize the situation of Burmese refugees, many of whom fled their country of origin more a decade ago. We are also reviewing the potential for a group of up to 1,000 Burmese in India. Malaysia, with nearly 20,000 UNHCR-registered refugees, could also be a source of refugees for resettlement.

C. EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Since the demise of the Soviet Union important steps have been taken by many nations in Eastern Europe, as well as Central Asia, in the direction of democratization, rule of law, civil rights, and tolerance. For example, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are functioning democracies and each of these governments generally respects the human rights of its citizens, including freedom of speech, press,

and religion. In general, the nations that once comprised the Soviet Union have for over a decade demonstrated a wide divergence of both political progress and economic growth. Nations such as Belarus, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, continue to lag far behind others in undertaking any significant progressive reforms. In fact, in some areas of democratization, rule of law, and civil/human rights, these and other nations in the region are actually becoming more repressive. Failing economies continue to plague them. Of greater significance, however, are authoritarian regimes in several of these nations that attack and undermine civil society by persecuting journalists, crushing legitimate opposition, restricting freedom of religion, and violating human rights. Even Russia, while achieving certain basic elements of democracy, such as elections at all levels that are mostly free and fair and moving forward with many market economy reforms, does little to discourage attacks against dark-skinned foreigners, immigrants, and refugees within its borders.

UNHCR reported that by early 2004, some 5 million individuals were either asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), or "of concern" throughout the region. Most have fled conflicts outside the region, such as Afghanistan, but persons allegedly experiencing persecution within the countries of the former Soviet Union are also included. Furthermore, even those nations pursuing more liberal, democratic governance have been slow or reluctant to recognize, protect, and integrate refugees and at-risk individuals. Although UNHCR has been working with many governments in the region on asylum processes and refugee protection laws, this work has produced limited

results. Although diminishing in number, nationals of the countries of the former Yugoslavia continue to be represented among the population of asylum-seekers in Europe. While both the human rights situation and repatriation opportunities continue to improve, neither is ideal—particularly for returning minorities.

Since 1989, the U.S. refugee admissions program has accepted applications from certain religious minorities in the nations that made up the former Soviet Union who also have close family ties to the U.S. Under the Lautenberg Amendment, Jews, Evangelical Christians, and certain members of the Ukrainian Catholic or Ukrainian Orthodox Churches may benefit from reduced evidentiary burden when seeking eligibility for refugee status. Nearly 470,000 individuals have entered the United States as Lautenberg refugees, representing over 35% of all refugees admitted since 1989.

In addition to those eligible under the Lautenberg Amendment, individuals of all nationalities throughout the region may be referred for Priority 1 processing. The OPE in Moscow provides processing support for refugees in the countries formerly associated with the Soviet Union. Most cases are processed in Moscow and Kiev. The OPE also assists USCIS during circuit rides to other capitals in the region, including the Caucasus and Central Asia, to process UNHCR (P-1) referrals and individuals with Lautenberg Amendment eligibility. These circuit rides are intended for individuals for whom travel to Moscow or Kiev is difficult.

1. Religious Freedom

Freedom of religion has varied widely in the former republics following the breakup of the

Soviet Union. Most states regulate religious groups and activities to some degree, following the Western European model of establishing so-called "traditional" religions that enjoy privileges sometimes denied to other, newer religious groups; these same states sometimes view certain newer groups as "dangerous sects and cults." Following the example of Russia in 1997, many states enacted restrictive legislation to govern the activities of foreign missionaries, especially those from Protestant or "nontraditional" denominations. In many cases, registration with state bodies was required, not only to establish a group as a legal entity that could rent or own space, but in some cases to hold religious services, a practice which is inconsistent with the right to freedom of religion.

Anti-Semitic statements by some elected officials, demonstrations by extremist groups, and attacks on synagogues and other places where religious groups gather have been reported, most often in the western successor states, such as Russia and Belarus. In the Muslim Caucasus and Central Asia states, the remaining small Jewish communities enjoy reasonably amicable relations with their Muslim compatriots. Despite the presence of Muslim extremists, including the Hizb'ut-Tahrir, Jewish communities from Azerbaijan in the Caucasus to Bukhara and Tashkent in Uzbekistan report societal and government support. In contrast, anti-Semitic acts increased in Russia in 2002 and 2003. Notwithstanding the energetic condemnation of such acts by President Putin, police investigation of these incidents, usually described as mere

"hooliganism," has been lax. On the other hand, observant Muslims across Europe and the former Soviet Union have complained of being treated as potential Islamic extremists. This treatment may consist of legal prohibitions against wearing clothing or beards marking one as an observant Muslim in certain public contexts, frequent requests for identification documents in Russia and Ukraine or detentions and arrests in Central Asia, including the likelihood of torture in Uzbekistan.

Religion and ethnicity are closely intertwined in the Balkans, so it is often difficult to identify acts as primarily religious or primarily ethnic in origin. Persecution on ethnic/religious grounds was a significant factor in both the Bosnia and Kosovo resettlement efforts. The refugee admissions program has provided protection for persecuted Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians, as well as individuals of other religious minorities and mixed marriages. We will continue to work with UNHCR, non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, and U.S. missions to identify victims of religious persecution for whom resettlement is appropriate.

2. Voluntary Repatriation

In the former Soviet republics, the U.S. resettlement program considers applications for refugee status from individuals while still in their countries of origin. Voluntary repatriation is, therefore, not applicable for these cases.

The rate of ethnic minority returns in the Balkans declined during 2003 and is expected

to taper off further in coming years as the number of remaining displaced persons decreases. While the international community continues to support efforts to create favorable conditions for the return of minorities in the region, inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo in March 2004 showed that more needs to be done to ensure the security and safety of minorities there and encourage additional returns this year.

International efforts are being made to repatriate Afghans and citizens from certain African nations, such as Angola, because of changing country conditions and increased stability in their home nations. However, UNHCR has and will continue to refer for third country resettlement consideration a number of at-risk Afghans, Africans, and others in the region who are unable to repatriate.

3. Local Integration

Since the Presidential Determination establishing the refugee admissions program levels each year allows for the in-country processing of nationals of the countries that were formerly republics of the Soviet Union, integration in the country of first asylum is not applicable for those cases. Local integration is always considered for third country nationals identified as refugees by UNHCR. Given the xenophobic policies of most governments in the region, however, local integration is generally not a viable option.

4. Third Country Resettlement

The United States, in addition to Canada, Australia, Sweden, Norway, and other resettlement countries, continue to accept

immigrants and refugees from the region. Jewish emigration to Israel continues, with some 6,700 individuals availing themselves of this opportunity in the first half of 2004. UNHCR has been and will continue to refer to the United States, Canada, and other resettlement countries a number of at-risk individuals fleeing various forms of persecution within the region, as well as Afghan and African refugees who are unable to repatriate.

5. FY 2004 U.S. Admissions

In FY 2004, we estimate 10,000 admissions from Europe and Central Asia, a slight decrease from the 11,270 arrivals from the region last year. The majority of FY 2004 admissions from the region will be Lautenberg P-2 refugees processed by the Moscow OPE, although the number of those applying for this program continues to decline each year. During FY 2004, circuit rides took place to process refugees in Almaty, Ashgabat, Baku, Bishkek, Chisinau, Kiev, and Tashkent.

Approximately 350 refugees from the former Yugoslavia will be admitted during FY 2004. Family reunification programs for Bosnian refugees were phased out during FY 2001, but some cases registered before the cut off dates were processed and arrived in the United States during FY 2004. The OPE in Belgrade currently handling processing for this caseload will close in FY 2005 due to declining numbers.

In February 2004, we began P-2 program registration of interested and eligible Meskhetian Turks who have resided without legal status in the Krasnodar Kray region of Russia since the early 1990s. We anticipate admitting some 500 individuals in FY 2004 with arrivals to continue throughout FY 2005.

6. FY 2005 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed FY 2005 ceiling for refugees from the region is 9,500. It includes a significant number of individuals approved by the end of FY 2004 who will not have traveled by the end of the year, as well as newly approved numbers in all three Priorities. Priority 2 includes both Meskhetian Turks and individuals processed under Lautenberg guidelines in the Former Soviet Union.

Proposed FY 2005 Europe & Central Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2004</i>	<i>4,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>5,400</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>9,500</i></u>

7. Possible Future Groups

Processing of the Meskhetian Turk group will continue into the early part of FY 2005. Success with this group may lead to consideration of other minority groups long resident in Russia or other countries in the region that are unable to obtain citizenship or normal legal status.

D. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

According to UNHCR, as of January 1, 2004, the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and other people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean totaled nearly 1.5 million. The on-going conflict in Colombia generated the most significant numbers of refugees and IDP's in the region. UNHCR reports that there are approximately 48,000 Colombian refugees in the region and up to 2.1 million internally displaced in Colombia. The political crisis in

Haiti earlier this year has contributed to population displacement throughout the Caribbean. Nearly 26,000 Haitians and 30,000 Cubans fled their home countries in 2003. Several countries in the region with significant refugee populations, such as Venezuela, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Peru, are developing asylum processes with various levels of assistance from UNHCR.

The number of Colombian asylum requests in Ecuador has steadily increased over the past few years. In 2002, there were a total of 475 requests. That number jumped to 11,463 in 2003. UNHCR in Ecuador reports between 800-900 asylum requests per month in 2004. As of April 2004, there were 6,988 Colombians recognized as refugees by the Government of Ecuador. There are approximately 1,500 Colombians recognized with official temporary status residing in Panama and another 8,266 asylees in Costa Rica. In Venezuela, the number of Colombians "of concern" to UNHCR is believed to be between 20,000 and 50,000. Venezuela has only approved 75 Colombian asylum seekers since the establishment of their Refugee Eligibility Commission in August 2003.

In response to the dangers faced by certain professions, including police, lawyers, judges, and others in Colombia, the United States began a modest P-1 resettlement program in 2002 to resettle Colombians referred by the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá. As instability has continued, we have expanded the program. We are now interviewing Colombians referred for resettlement consideration by UNHCR in Ecuador and Costa Rica. To date, 655 refugees have been approved for resettlement in the United States.

Under the U.S.-Cuba Joint Communique of September 9, 1994, the United States is committed to approving at least 20,000 Cubans for lawful migration to the United States each year. The refugee admissions component of that overall number is managed under the in-country program. In recent years, Cuban refugee admissions have averaged approximately 2,500 per year. In FY 2004, the program has made every effort to ensure that all those eligible for consideration have access to the program. In the two fiscal years following 9/11, the number of actual admissions was well below expectations, due in large part to delays caused by increased security measures. We expect to exceed last year's admissions in FY 2004 and to continue the upward trend in FY 2005.

Cubans currently eligible to apply for admission to the U.S. through the in-country program include the following:

- (1) Former political prisoners;
- (2) Members of persecuted religious minorities;
- (3) Human rights activists;
- (4) Forced labor conscripts (1965-68);
- (5) Persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatments resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs; and
- (6) Persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship - family or social - to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

The situation in Haiti remains fragile, but some Haitian migrants have begun repatriating

voluntarily. The United States continues to support the expansion of UNHCR's presence in the Dominican Republic to help the government address the needs of Haitian and other asylum seekers and would accept referrals to our program.

1. Religious Freedom

In Latin America, religious freedom is widely recognized and enjoyed. The key exception is Cuba, where the government engages in active efforts to monitor and control religious institutions, including surveillance, infiltration, harassment of clergy and members, evictions from and confiscation of places of worship, and preventive detention of religious activists. The Cuban government also uses registration as a mechanism of control; by refusing to register new denominations, it makes religious minorities vulnerable to charges of illegal association. The U.S program offers resettlement to Cubans persecuted for religious activities.

2. Voluntary Repatriation

Although UNHCR considers repatriation for Colombian refugees, given the political turmoil in Colombia, as well as the violence from non-state actors, very few refugees can consider repatriation as a durable solution at present. Additionally, UNHCR is also assisting Haitians who are currently in Jamaica and Cuba in voluntary repatriation.

3. Local Integration

In the recent past, local integration has been the most suitable solution to regional refugee problems in Latin America. In recent years, however, resettlement has become an important durable solution for those who

faced physical risks and had urgent protection needs.

The Governments of Ecuador and Costa Rica have tried to maintain a liberal asylum policy and allow Colombians in need of protection to obtain asylum and integrate locally. As more refugees have fled to these countries, however, living conditions in Ecuador and Costa Rica for Colombians have deteriorated as refugees wait longer for status determinations and find themselves unable to gain the right to work. Additionally, some Colombian refugees in Ecuador and Costa Rica have begun to claim continued persecution by Colombian insurgent groups operating in these countries of first asylum. For refugees in Venezuela and Panama, the situation is worse as those governments are reluctant to receive Colombian refugees and lack the necessary procedures to grant them refugee status. Many Colombians in need of protection who cross irregularly into these countries must hide in remote border areas or in the shantytowns of larger cities.

PRM is currently supporting UNHCR's efforts to assist the Dominican Republic to develop its system of refugee status determination for the benefit of Haitian and other asylum seekers. Furthermore, PRM is working with UNHCR and IOM to prepare contingency plans for possible mass migration scenarios in the region.

4. Third Country Resettlement

Canada and the United States offer resettlement to at-risk Colombian refugees in the region for whom resettlement is the only

appropriate durable solution. Canada also operates an in-country humanitarian program in Colombia through which hundreds of Colombians are resettled each year. PRM hopes to expand the U.S. program in FY 2004 by processing increased numbers of UNHCR-referred refugees in Ecuador and Costa Rica.

The United States also facilitates the resettlement to other countries of Cuban and Haitian migrants who are interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard or who enter Guantanamo Naval Base illegally and are found by USCIS to have a well-founded fear of persecution if repatriated. From 1995 through June 2004, 165 such Cuban migrants have been resettled to twelve different countries, mostly within the region, with a small number going to Europe, Australia, and Canada. Since 2002, six Haitian migrants from Guantanamo have been resettled in third countries.

5. FY 2004 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate resettlement of 2,600 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean during FY 2004. Cubans comprise the overwhelming majority of refugees resettled from the region. Historically, most Cuban admissions have been former political prisoners and forced labor conscripts who served sentences in the 1960's and 1970's. The program was expanded in 1991 to include human rights activists, displaced professionals, and others with claims of persecution. The expanded criteria remain in effect today.

During FY 2004, Cuban refugee arrivals increased substantially over the prior two years. This is largely due to more efficient security clearance procedures implemented in

Havana. In addition to refugee admissions, thousands of Cubans will come to the United States through other legal migration channels, such as the Special Cuban Migration Program.

In FY 2002, the U.S. and UNHCR implemented a small pilot program to identify for resettlement particularly vulnerable Colombian refugees in Ecuador and Costa Rica. In FY 2004, we expect just over 500 Colombian refugees to be admitted to the United States, up from 150 in FY 2003.

6. FY 2005 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed ceiling for Latin America and the Caribbean for FY 2005 of 5,000 will include Cuban refugees eligible for the in-country Priority 2 program, UNHCR-referred Priority 1 Colombians in the region, and a small number of Priority 3 family reunion cases.

Proposed FY 2005 program for Latin America and the Caribbean:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2004</i>	<i>3,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>700</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>1,200</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification refugees</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>5,000</i></u>

E. NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Despite the changed conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have expanded the possibilities for refugee repatriation, the Near East/South Asia region remains host to the majority of the world's refugee population --

some 6.5 million people, primarily Afghans, Palestinians and Iraqis. Few countries in the region are signatories to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol. Nonetheless, host governments generally continue to tolerate the presence of refugees.

UNHCR, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and other humanitarian organizations work with refugees in the region. Some countries have provided long-term protection, mainly to Palestinians, Afghans and some African nationals. Despite the voluntary return of some three million Afghan refugees from countries of asylum since November 2001, the Government of Pakistan is aware that it may need to indefinitely host some of the remaining Afghan population, who have been resident there for many years. Other countries in the region have provided long-term asylum for Tibetan, Bhutanese, Sri Lankan, and Iraqi refugees. With the cessation of hostilities in Iraq, it is hoped that the majority of Iraqi refugees will find they are able to return to Iraq. Refugees identified for third country resettlement by UNHCR in the region include Afghans in Pakistan, Iran and India; Afghans and Iranians in Turkey; and some particularly vulnerable Iraqis throughout the region.

1. Religious Freedom

Persecution of religious minorities is common in certain countries in the Middle East and South Asia. In Pakistan, blasphemy laws and other Islamist legislation have been abused to target religious minorities, including Shi'as, Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis and Zikris. Sectarian violence between majority

Sunnis and minority Shi'as have claimed over 100 lives in the past two years. In India, responses by state and local authorities to extremist violence against religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are often inadequate. In Saudi Arabia, public non-Muslim worship is a criminal offense, and the minority Shi'a Muslim and Ismaili communities are subject to longstanding official discrimination. In several countries in the region, the conversion of a Muslim to another religion is viewed as a criminal act. In Iran, particularly severe persecution of minority religions continues to be reported. In addition to the P-2 program for Iranian religious minorities, the U.S. refugee admissions program accepts UNHCR and Embassy P-1 referrals of religious minorities of various nationalities in the region. The Specter Amendment enacted in 2004 establishes that Iranian religious minorities designated as category members may benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard for determining a well-founded fear of persecution.

2. Voluntary Repatriation

Since the fall of the Taliban, voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan has proceeded on a massive scale, both with and without UNHCR assistance. UNHCR estimates that some two million Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan in 2002, the majority of them from Pakistan and Iran. Hundreds of thousands more returned in 2003 and 2004. The greater-than-expected numbers of returnees has taxed the capacity of the UN and other humanitarian organizations to conduct and/or monitor repatriation of Afghan refugees. Sporadic inter-factional fighting and persistent drought have led to a

continued small outflow of Afghans, primarily into Pakistan.

Given the prospect for continuing political reforms in Iraq it is hoped that the majority of the 400,000 Iraqi refugees located throughout the Middle East and Europe will be able to return home in coming months, although the security situation will remain an important consideration in repatriation.

3. Local Integration

Few countries in the region offer local integration to refugees. Recently, UNHCR and the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan signed a Tripartite Agreement that provides for the orderly, voluntary return of Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan through the end of 2005. UNHCR reports that the Government of Pakistan may soon consider registering and issuing work permits to non-Afghan refugees who have been resident in Pakistan for several years and who do not intend to return to their home countries.

India does not have a clear national policy for the treatment of refugees, and UNHCR has no formal status there. India recognizes and aids certain groups, including Tamils and Tibetans, in 130 camps throughout the country. It permits UNHCR to assist other groups, primarily Afghans, Iranians, Somalis, Burmese, and Sudanese. Many Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils in India are permitted to work and receive social benefits.

4. Third Country Resettlement

The absence of legal protection for asylum-seekers in the region leaves many refugees at risk of refoulement. The situation is

especially precarious for Iranians and Iraqis, who are often viewed with suspicion or hostility in neighboring countries.

In 2003, UNHCR continued its attempts to reduce the backlog of refugees awaiting status determinations in the Middle East. Principal resettlement countries operating in the region include the United States, Sweden, Canada, Norway, Australia, Finland, Denmark, and New Zealand. UNHCR considers family reunification, protection issues, and vulnerability in countries of first asylum when determining which individuals to refer to resettlement countries.

Historically the United States has resettled Iranian, Iraqi, and Afghan refugees from the region. With repatriation now a reality for Afghans and a real possibility for many Iraqis, we expect to process only extremely vulnerable refugees who cannot return to their homes from those countries. We will continue to resettle Iranian religious minorities through our programs in Turkey and Austria and Afghan Women at Risk (WAR) and other vulnerable cases through Pakistan.

Middle Eastern and South Asian refugees in Europe avail themselves of the asylum systems of the countries in which they are located. In Vienna, however, certain Iranian religious minorities (Baha'is, Zoroastrians, Jews, Mandeans, and Christians) may be processed for U.S. resettlement using special procedures authorized by the government of Austria.

PRM currently has refugee processing facilities in Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, India,

and Pakistan. PRM's processing contractors in Turkey and Egypt also process refugees in Yemen, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Syria. In addition, USCIS conducts circuit rides to other locations in the region on an as-needed basis.

5. FY 2004 U.S. Admissions

Security name check procedures introduced in the aftermath of September 11 have been streamlined in FY 2004. Current estimates are that we will admit some 2,500 refugees from the region in FY 2004. This total will include 1,700 Iranians processed in Austria and Turkey and several hundred additional refugees processed in Pakistan and elsewhere in the region. A small number will also be processed in Russia and Central Asia.

6. FY 2005 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed regional ceiling for refugees from the Near East and South Asia for FY 2005 is 2,500 and includes primarily Iranian religious minorities and vulnerable Afghans. It also includes some 1,000 refugees approved in FY 2002 and 2003 who will not have completed processing by the end of FY 2004.

Proposed FY-2005 Near East/South Asia program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2004</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>400</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification refugees</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>2,500</i></u>

7. Possible Future Groups

We are monitoring verification efforts underway in Nepal of as many as 70,000 Bhutanese refugees with a view toward possible resettlement of those for whom neither repatriation nor local integration is viable. We are looking at populations of Iranian Kurds throughout the region, especially in Turkey. We are also gathering information on groups of Afghans in the former Soviet Union and the various refugee populations in Libya.

IV. DOMESTIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

The demographic characteristics of arrivals from the 15 largest source countries (which contributed 98% of FY 2003 arrivals into the United States) illustrate the variation among refugee groups. (See Table III.) Median age ranged from 12 years for arrivals from Kenya to 32 years of age for arrivals from Cuba. The median age for all refugees resettled in FY 2003 was 22 years. Fifty-seven percent of refugees from Iraq were female. Fifty-five percent of refugees from Somalia were female, and between fifty-two and fifty-three percent of refugees from the former Soviet Union, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone were female. Males were proportionately the majority of refugees from several other countries, but none more than fifty-eight percent of the total.

Considerable variation among refugee groups can be seen among specific age categories. Arrivals under the age of five varied from a high of 21% of the Kenyans to a low of 1% of those from Ethiopia. Arrivals of school-age children (five to 17 years of age) varied from a high of 45% for Afghans to a low of 18% for Cubans. Arrivals of working-age (16 to 64 years of age) varied from 86% for Ethiopians to a low of 42% for those from Kenya. Arrivals of

retirement-age (65 years or older) varied from a high of 12% for arrivals from Cuba to a low of less than 1 percent from the Sudan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Burma, and Iraq. For all arrivals, 9% were under the age of five, 29% were of school age, 63% were of working age, and 5% were of retirement age. (See Table IV.)

During FY 2003, 76% of newly arrived refugees resettled in 15 States. California (15%) resettled the largest number of refugees, followed by Washington state (10%), New York (8%), Minnesota (6%), Texas (5%), Georgia and Pennsylvania (4%), Arizona, Florida, Illinois (3%), Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Virginia with just under 3% of newly arrived refugees, and Ohio with 2% of refugee arrivals. Table V presents arrivals by state of initial resettlement for FY 2003.

In FY 2003, the 15 largest source countries contributed over 98% of arrivals into the United States. Because of the changing world situation, the number of refugees admitted and the distribution of admissions vary somewhat from last year's figures. Refugee countries of origin included the former USSR (31 percent of all refugees in FY 2003, 37 percent of all refugees in FY 2002), the former Yugoslavia (9 percent in FY 2003, 20 percent in FY 2002), Vietnam (5 percent in FY 2003, 12 percent in FY 2002), Cuba (1 percent in FY 2003, 7 percent in FY 2002), Afghanistan and Iran (14 percent in FY 2003, 6 percent in FY 2002), Sudan (7 percent in FY 2003, 3 percent in FY 2002), Liberia and Iraq (11 percent in FY 2003, 2 percent in FY 2002), and Ethiopia, Somalia and Sierra Leone (17 percent in FY 2003 and about 1 percent each in FY 2002). Table VI presents arrivals by country of origin for FY 2003.

TABLE III
MEDIAN AGE AND SEX FOR REFUGEE ARRIVALS FY 2003

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	RANK (# OF ARRIVALS)	MEDIAN AGE	% FEMALE/ % MALE
All Countries Combined		22.0	49.8 / 50.2
Former Soviet Union	1	26.0	51.8 / 48.2
Liberia	2	18.0	52.5 / 47.5
Former Yugoslavia	3	28.0	48.5 / 51.5
Iran	4	26.5	44.0 / 56.0
Sudan	5	22.0	41.9 / 58.1
Somalia	6	19.0	54.5 / 45.5
Ethiopia	7	20.0	47.0 / 53.0
Vietnam	8	29.0	48.9 / 51.1
Afghanistan	9	17.0	52.2 / 47.8
Sierra Leone	10	19.0	52.7 / 47.3
Cuba	11	32.0	47.2 / 52.8
Iraq	12	18.0	57.1 / 42.9
Kenya	13	12.0	48.8 / 51.2
Congo (DROC)	14	17.0	47.0 / 53.0
Burma	15	27.0	44.5 / 55.5
All other	--	21.5	

Countries			48.8 / 51.2
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TABLE IV
SELECT AGE CATEGORIES OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS FY 2003*

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	UNDER 5 YEARS	SCHOOL AGE (5-17)	WORKING AGE (16-64)	RETIREMENT AGE (= OR > 65)
All countries combined	8.9	29.1	62.7	4.7
Former Soviet Union	9.6	29.6	55.5	9.8
Liberia	10.9	37.8	56.0	1.7
Former Yugoslavia	6.0	23.6	70.8	4.0
Iran	4.9	19.7	76.9	3.0
Sudan	14.2	24.8	63.7	0.8
Somalia	13.6	32.1	54.3	4.2
Ethiopia	1.3	23.2	85.7	0.9
Vietnam	12.3	19.8	67.6	2.8
Afghanistan	5.4	45.3	57.1	1.5
Sierra Leone	3.9	34.1	68.4	3.3
Cuba	7.0	18.3	65.8	11.6
Iraq	7.8	41.5	57.8	0.3
Kenya	20.7	39.0	42.3	0.4
Congo (DROC)	8.1	43.2	55.1	0.0
Burma	11.0	24.5	69.0	0.5
All Other Countries	15.4	25.4	62.4	0.4

*Totals may exceed 100% due to over-lapping age categories.

TABLE V
REFUGEE ARRIVALS BY STATE OF INITIAL RESETTLEMENT, FY 2003

State	Refugee Arrival s	Amerasia n Arrivals	Total Arrivals to State	% of Total Arrivals
Alabama	46	0	46	0.16%
Alaska	28	0	28	0.10%
Arizona	967	0	967	3.44%
Arkansas	4	0	4	0.01%
California	4,166	12	4,178	14.85%
Colorado	472	0	472	1.68%
Connecticut	204	1	205	0.73%
Delaware	36	0	36	0.13%
District of Columbia	107	0	107	0.38%
Florida	911	7	918	3.26%
Georgia	1,080	4	1,084	3.85%
Hawaii	15	0	15	0.05%
Idaho	257	0	257	0.91%
Illinois	936	0	936	3.33%
Indiana	262	0	262	0.93%
Iowa	220	7	227	0.81%
Kansas	99	0	99	0.35%
Kentucky	314	0	314	1.12%
Louisiana	77	0	77	0.27%
Maine	105	0	105	0.37%
Maryland	786	0	786	2.79%
Massachusetts	807	0	807	2.87%
Michigan	443	5	448	1.59%
Minnesota	1,749	0	1,749	6.22%
Mississippi	3	0	3	0.01%
Missouri	437	4	441	1.57%
Montana	34	0	34	0.12%
Nebraska	211	0	211	0.75%
Nevada	185	0	185	0.66%
New Hampshire	240	0	240	0.85%
New Jersey	562	0	562	2.00%
New Mexico	27	0	27	0.10%
New York	2,239	5	2,244	7.98%
North Carolina	576	4	580	2.06%
North Dakota	105	0	105	0.37%
Ohio	655	0	655	2.33%
Oklahoma	54	6	60	0.21%

State	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasia n Arrivals	Total Arrivals to State	% of Total Arrivals
Oregon	789	0	789	2.80%
Pennsylvania	1,227	0	1,227	4.36%
Rhode Island	129	0	129	0.46%
South Carolina	110	0	110	0.39%
South Dakota	159	0	159	0.57%
Tennessee	451	0	451	1.60%
Texas	1,520	12	1,532	5.45%
Utah	400	0	400	1.42%
Vermont	78	0	78	0.28%
Virginia	796	0	796	2.83%
Washington	2,750	0	2,750	9.77%
West Virginia	2	0	2	0.01%
Wisconsin	236	0	236	0.84%
Wyoming	1	0	1	0.00%
TOTAL	28,067	67	28,134	100.0%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement

Note: Arrival figures do not reflect secondary migration.

TABLE VI
REFUGEE ARRIVALS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, FY 2003

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Total Refugee and Amerasian Arrivals	
	Number	%
AFGHANISTAN	1,446	5.14%
ALGERIA	3	0.01%
ANGOLA	20	0.07%
AUSTRIA	1	0.00%
BANGLADESH	1	0.00%
BENIN	3	0.01%
BURMA	200	0.71%
BURUNDI	12	0.04%
CAMBODIA	7	0.02%
CAMEROON	6	0.02%
CEN. AFRICAN REP.	1	0.00%
CHAD	1	0.00%
CHINA	8	0.03%
COLOMBIA	145	0.52%
CONGO	47	0.17%
COSTA RICA	1	0.00%
CUBA	301	1.07%
DEM. REP. CONGO	234	0.83%
DJIBOUTI	1	0.00%
EGYPT	14	0.05%
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	3	0.01%
ERITREA	23	0.08%
ETHIOPIA	1,669	5.93%
FORMER SOVIET UNION	8,728	31.02%
GHANA	7	0.02%
GUINEA	13	0.05%
INDIA	4	0.01%
INDONESIA	16	0.06%
IRAN	2,428	8.63%
IRAQ	294	1.04%
IVORY COAST	5	0.02%
JORDAN	1	0.00%
KENYA	246	0.87%
LAOS	13	0.05%
LEBANON	4	0.01%
LIBERIA	2,915	10.36%
NIGERIA	47	0.17%
PAKISTAN	27	0.10%

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Total Refugee and Amerasian Arrivals	
	Number	%
PHILLIPINES	2	0.01%
POLAND	1	0.00%
RWANDA	50	0.18%
SENEGAL	1	0.00%
SIERRA LEONE	1,350	4.80%
SOMALIA	1,708	6.07%
SRI LANKA (CEYLON)	7	0.02%
STATELESS	3	0.01%
SUDAN	2,090	7.43%
SYRIA	4	0.01%
THAILAND	2	0.01%
THE GAMBIA	8	0.03%
TOGO	35	0.12%
UGANDA	5	0.02%
UNKNOWN	10	0.04%
VIETNAM *	1,461	5.19%
YEMEN	1	0.00%
FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	2,500	8.89%
ZAMBIA	1	0.00%
TOTAL	28,134	100.00%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement

*Arrivals from Vietnam include 67 Amerasians.

TABLE VII
ESTIMATED COSTS OF REFUGEE PROCESSING, MOVEMENT, AND
RESETTLEMENT
FY 2004 AND FY 2005 ESTIMATES
(\$ MILLIONS)

AGENCY	ESTIMATED FUNDING FY 2004 (BY ACTIVITY)	ESTIMATED FUNDING FY 2005 (BY ACTIVITY)
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY		
<i>BUREAU OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES</i>		
Refugee Processing:	15.3	39.6*
DEPARTMENT OF STATE		
<i>Bureau for Population, Refugee, and Migration</i>		
Refugee Admissions:	186.0**	158.7
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES		
<i>Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement</i>		
Refugee Resettlement:	447.6***	473.2***
TOTAL	648.9	671.5

* Includes FY 2005 costs associated with the creation of a DHS Refugee Corps.

** Includes FY 2003 carry forward of \$22.5 million and \$14 million in recoveries.

*** Does not include costs associated with the Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or SSI programs. Eligibility for ORR's refugee services includes Asylees, Cuban and Haitian Entrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam, victims of a severe form of trafficking and some victims of torture. None of these additional groups is included in the refugee admissions ceiling.

TABLE VIII

UNHCR Resettlement Statistics by Resettlement
Country
CY 2003
Departures

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL ADMISSIONS
United States	15,588	53.98%
Canada	4,991	17.28%
Australia	4,354	15.08%
Norway	1,391	4.82%
Sweden	805	2.79%
Denmark	518	1.79%
Finland	451	1.56%
New Zealand	443	1.53%
Netherlands	137	.47%
Great Britain	119	.41%
Germany	82	.28%
Other*	219	.76%
TOTAL	29,098	100%

* Principally to Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Chile, Iceland, Brazil, and Austria.

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees