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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

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RELEASED

The Honorable Geraldine A. Ferraro
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Human
Resources
Committee on Post Office and
Civil Service
House of Representatives



Dear Madam Chairwoman:

Subject: [INS Staffing Levels] (FPCD-81-67)

Your letter of March 6, 1981, requested that we review the staffing levels for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). On May 28, 1981, we provided your office with the results of our work; specifically, information on the authorized strength for INS and the Justice Department, including INS, for the past 5 fiscal years, and information on whether actual staffing had reached ceilings imposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (See encs. I and II.) We also provided information for use in the June 15, 1981, hearings on INS personnel ceiling reductions.

Additionally, in response to your request, this letter reports on (1) the allocation of INS staff to the regional, district, and headquarters offices, (2) INS's personnel ceiling reductions, and (3) INS's lack of an adequate work measurement system. Detailed information concerning the staff allocation to INS offices since fiscal year 1977 is included in enclosure III.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

We conducted our review from March through June, 1981. We interviewed officials responsible for administering some of the programs operating under personnel ceiling reductions to obtain their views on the impact of these reductions. We reviewed INS records which discuss the effects of the reductions and also discussed the rationale for these reductions with OMB.

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We interviewed other INS officials concerned with budgetary and personnel matters and reviewed INS records and documents related to workload and authorized/actual staffing levels. We also obtained information from the Department of Justice on its authorized and actual staffing levels.

We reviewed independent studies which, in part, discuss INS staffing and workload levels and also reviewed an internal study on INS's New York District Office which, in part, discusses problems with INS's workload measurement and reporting systems.

Because of INS's unreliable workload measurements and workload reporting system, we did not determine if staff had been proportionately allocated (based on workload) to INS offices or analyze the effect of the recent hiring freeze and personnel ceiling reductions on INS's ability to perform its mission.

REDUCTIONS PLANNED IN INS PERSONNEL CEILINGS

OMB reduced INS's personnel ceiling by 350 full-time permanent positions for fiscal year 1981, and plans a reduction of 750 positions for 1982. These reductions, according to INS, are in specific program areas: inspections, adjudications, investigations, status verifications, and records. (See encs. IV and V for information on these programs/reductions.)

In addition, the funds used to pay for overtime inspectional activities were substantially reduced. According to INS, this reduction was made in anticipation of legislative changes, recently proposed by the Justice Department, to the 1931 Overtime Act. (See enc. V.)

INS records state that workloads in the affected program areas are increasing and that the personnel ceiling reductions will result in larger work backlogs. For example, INS indicates that, as of December 1980, there is a backlog of about 55,000 adjudication cases, representing 68 work years. INS further indicates that personnel reductions in its inspection program will result in extremely long waiting times at airports during peak periods, and will reduce program effectiveness. INS records indicate that backlogs in the other program areas will also occur because of the personnel ceiling reductions.

According to OMB, the reductions were made because the Administration "believes that INS has failed to optimize the use of its resources within the current policy and legal framework." However, OMB was unable to cite any studies or provide any documents which discuss specifically how INS can use its personnel resources more effectively.

MANAGEMENT REPORTS CITE NEED FOR
INCREASED STAFFING

Recent studies have cited the need for additional personnel within INS. The House Committee on Government Operations issued a report on October 17, 1980, (House Report No. 96-1459) on INS's record management problems. The report recognizes the managerial and budgetary problems experienced by INS and the resulting impact on records management. It also states:

"Much of INS's problems result from the agency's not having enough employees in jobs dealing directly with the public.

"Because the number of employees to do the work has generally remained static, INS's recordkeeping has strained under this increasingly heavy load, buckled, and finally fallen down."

Public Law 95-412, passed October 5, 1978, established the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy to study and evaluate existing laws, policies, and procedures. On March 1, 1981, the Commission's final report stated that the Select Commission has been convinced by arguments in favor of strengthening the enforcement capabilities of the INS. According to the report, in recent years the INS enforcement budget has not kept pace with its increasing workload. Instead INS resource and personnel levels have grown only marginally, though data would indicate that the number of persons seeking illegal entry to the United States has substantially increased. The report went on to say that while increases in resources and personnel will not in themselves be wholly effective without the important internal reforms recommended elsewhere, the increased enforcement capability they can provide should be an integral part of the package of recommendations to curb the flow of illegal immigration.

Regarding port-of-entry inspections, the report noted:

"The flow of people across U.S. borders for business and pleasure has nearly overwhelmed Federal inspection agencies. Additional personnel are

needed to deal with this flow so that people will pass through the inspection process within an acceptable amount of time without sacrificing the effectiveness of a process which deters illegal entry."

INS LACKS ADEQUATE WORK MEASUREMENT DATA

Documents provided by INS state that it lacks (1) adequate workload measurements and (2) accurate workload and productivity statistics. Such information is essential for effectively controlling the work force and for determining staffing needs.

In a prior GAO report, we stated that work force requirements and staffing management decisions made without credible work force planning data are suspect, open to challenge, and can result in arbitrary and very subjective resource actions. This situation can result in the mismatch of personnel with the workload of an agency, as well as perpetuate many symptomatic program and personnel management problems. 1/

On January 4, 1980, INS's Office of Field Inspections and Audit reported that one overriding problem in the New York district was a "lack of well defined, accurate work measurements to help managers control and guide operations." It also noted that this was a servicewide problem and that INS's work measurement reports needed to be studied and revised so they could be used as a reliable and meaningful management tool. Our work also revealed inaccuracies in INS's workload statistics.

In February 1981, the President's Management Improvement Council reported on its assessment of INS's personnel management. Among other things it recommended that INS conduct an in-depth evaluation of the content, relevancy, and collection of workload statistics. According to the Council, INS has agreed on the need for such a review but has been unable so far to provide resources to conduct it.

1/"Federal Work Force Planning: Time For Renewed Emphasis," (FPCD-81-4, Dec. 30, 1980).

CONCLUSIONS

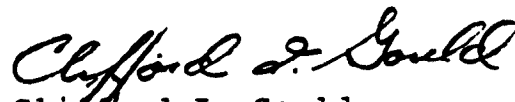
Well defined work measurements and accurate workload reporting are vital components of an effective work force planning system. Without these components, personnel allocations and reductions, such as occurred at INS, are suspect, open to challenge, and can result in arbitrary and very subjective resource actions.

OMB is unable to cite specific evidence as to how INS could more effectively use its personnel resources, even though this was the basis for reducing INS staffing levels. Neither OMB nor INS has any assurance that personnel resources have been allocated and reductions have been made in proportion to workload.

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We hope that this information, and that previously provided to the Subcommittee, proves suitable for your needs. As agreed with your office, we did not obtain written comments on this report. Also, as arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this letter earlier, we will make no further distribution of this report until 45 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to other interested parties. If, within the 45-day period, it becomes apparent that the information contained in this letter will be used in subsequent congressional hearings, please notify us.

Sincerely yours,


Clifford I. Gould
Director

Enclosures - 5

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE: STAFFING LEVELS AND
CEILINGS SINCE FISCAL YEAR 1977 (note a)

	Fiscal Year				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
Authorized full-time permanent positions	<u>52,665</u>	<u>54,528</u>	<u>55,995</u>	<u>56,911</u>	<u>55,679</u>
Actual end of year					
Full-time permanent	50,986	52,871	52,734	53,460	b/53,577
Other than full-time permanent	<u>1,569</u>	<u>1,889</u>	<u>1,838</u>	<u>2,215</u>	b/ <u>1,887</u>
Total	<u>52,555</u>	<u>54,760</u>	<u>54,572</u>	<u>55,675</u>	b/ <u>55,464</u>
OMB ceiling end of year					
Full-time permanent	51,920	53,447	54,053	55,768	52,980
Other than full-time permanent	<u>1,806</u>	<u>1,636</u>	<u>1,591</u>	<u>1,632</u>	<u>1,919</u>
Total (note c)	<u>53,726</u>	<u>55,083</u>	<u>55,644</u>	<u>57,400</u>	<u>54,899</u>

a/Includes INS staffing levels.

b/Actual on-board strength as of April 4, 1981.

c/According to the Justice Department, the ceiling includes reimbursable positions.

INS: STAFFING LEVELS AND CEILINGS
SINCE FISCAL YEAR 1977

	Fiscal Year				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
Authorized full-time permanent positions (note c)	<u>9,472</u>	<u>10,071</u>	<u>b/10,997</u>	<u>c/10,943</u>	<u>d/10,886</u>
Actual end of year Full-time permanent (note e)	8,812	9,859	9,695	9,993	<u>a/ 9,786</u>
Other than full-time permanent	<u>(f)</u>	<u>(f)</u>	<u>(f)</u>	<u>(f)</u>	<u>g/ 1,545</u>
Total	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,331</u>
OMB ceiling end of year Full-time permanent	9,046	9,827	10,110	10,445	9,739
Other than full-time permanent	<u>731</u>	<u>731</u>	<u>678</u>	<u>729</u>	<u>684</u>
Total	<u>9,777</u>	<u>10,558</u>	<u>10,788</u>	<u>11,174</u>	<u>10,423</u>

a/Actual on-board strength as of April 4, 1981.

b/495 positions were not allocated in FY 1979 in anticipation of an equivalent cut in FY 1980.

c/227 positions were not allocated in FY 1980 in anticipation of an equivalent cut in FY 1981.

d/170 positions were not allocated in FY 1981. The \$6 million saved, according to INS, was used to fund the pay raise.

e/Positions are for the pay period nearest the end of the fiscal year for which data was available.

f/Data not readily available.

g/On-duty as of April 18, 1981.

ALLOCATION OF STAFF TO INS OFFICES
SINCE FISCAL YEAR 1977 (note a)

	<u>Authorized full-time permanent force</u>				
	<u>Fiscal Year</u>				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u> <u>(note b)</u>
Headquarters office (note c)	<u>843</u>	<u>959</u>	<u>1,090</u>	<u>1,198</u>	<u>1,186</u>
Eastern Regional Office	131	135	138	136	151
District Offices:					
Baltimore	59	66	74	72	72
Boston	148	151	159	157	156
Buffalo	230	233	239	234	234
Hartford	59	59	62	59	59
Newark	222	232	245	226	223
New York	1,028	1,029	1,027	984	967
Philadelphia	127	132	130	125	125
Portland (Maine)	80	83	83	81	82
St. Albans (Vt.)	80	85	86	85	88
San Juan	151	155	153	151	150
Washington, D.C.	<u>124</u>	<u>137</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>146</u>	<u>143</u>
Total	<u>2,439</u>	<u>2,497</u>	<u>2,543</u>	<u>2,456</u>	<u>2,450</u>
Southern Regional Office	104	113	120	116	120
District Offices:					
Atlanta	62	75	84	84	88
Dallas	68	86	101	100	98
El Paso	210	239	245	231	230
Harlingen	0	156	175	172	169
Houston	72	89	125	122	120
Miami (Fla.)	310	331	346	330	345
New Orleans	68	78	89	84	85
San Antonio	<u>352</u>	<u>215</u>	<u>225</u>	<u>202</u>	<u>195</u>
Total	<u>1,246</u>	<u>1,382</u>	<u>1,510</u>	<u>1,441</u>	<u>1,450</u>
Northern Regional Office	84	89	92	91	94
District Offices:					
Anchorage	19	22	22	23	23
Chicago	346	347	348	332	325
Cleveland	86	88	86	81	81
Denver	66	72	76	78	78
Detroit	178	179	176	176	177
Helena (Mont.)	53	52	59	59	58
Kansas City (Mo.)	45	48	51	50	50
Omaha	21	22	24	23	23
Portland (Ore.)	32	34	37	33	32
St. Paul	90	94	92	93	95
Seattle	<u>146</u>	<u>152</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>149</u>
Total	<u>1,166</u>	<u>1,199</u>	<u>1,217</u>	<u>1,186</u>	<u>1,185</u>
Western Regional Office	110	115	122	147	152
District Offices:					
Honolulu	74	84	84	83	84
Los Angeles	499	524	563	521	518
San Diego	279	303	332	314	315
Phoenix	112	131	139	139	139
San Francisco	<u>296</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>344</u>	<u>335</u>	<u>333</u>
Total	<u>1,370</u>	<u>1,477</u>	<u>1,584</u>	<u>1,539</u>	<u>1,541</u>

a/Excludes border patrol sectors.

b/Authorized as of April 4, 1981.

c/Includes overseas districts.

INS PROGRAM AREAS WITH MAJOR PERSONNEL/
BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Adjudications

This function involves decisions on such subjects as extension of temporary stay, authorization to engage in employment, and adjustment of status to permanent resident. A wide range of applications and petitions under the immigration laws are adjudicated by INS.

Inspections

The Inspections Program oversees the admission of all persons arriving at ports of entry in the 50 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. This program also administers the pre-inspection of persons departing from pre-clearance facilities in Canada, Bermuda, and the Bahamas for entry into the U.S.

Investigations and Status Verification

The Investigations Program involves nonimmigrant aliens who enter the United States. Its purpose is to (1) locate, apprehend, and remove undocumented aliens who are gainfully employed in this country, (2) maintain an enforcement capability which deters further illegal immigration, and (3) interdict nonimmigrant aliens who have fraudulently violated immigration and naturalization laws.

The Status Verification Program involves investigations of cases referred from the Adjudications and Naturalizations activities in order to verify entitlements prior to the final adjudication of a case. The program, according to INS, serves the public by preserving the integrity of the application and petition process and by providing a deterrent to the abuses of the process.

Records

This program involves the use and maintenance of a records system which is responsive to INS operating units and other Government law enforcement agencies.

INS STAFFING AND FUNDING CHANGES

<u>Program</u>	<u>FY 1981 staffing levels</u>	<u>OMB FY 1981 reduction</u>	<u>Present FY 1981 ceiling</u>	<u>Proposed FY 1982 ceiling</u>	<u>Net reduction from FY 1981 staffing levels</u>
Adjudications	855	50	805	570	285
Inspections	1,559	100	1,459	1,359	200
Investigations and status verification	1,051	200	851	648	403
Records	<u>958</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>958</u>	<u>890</u>	<u>98</u>
Total	<u>4,423</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>4,073</u>	<u>3,467</u>	<u>986</u>

BUDGET REDUCTION

	<u>FY 1981 budget authority</u>	<u>OMB reduction</u>	<u>Present FY 1981 budget authority</u>	<u>Proposed FY 1982 budget authority</u>	<u>Net reduction</u>
	- - - - - (in millions) - - - - -				
Overtime (Budget Authority)	\$ <u>11.7</u>	\$ <u>1.7</u>	\$ <u>10.0</u>	\$ <u>6.5</u>	\$ <u>5.2</u>