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REPORT BY THE

# Comptroller General

OF THE UNITED STATES

## More Can Be Done To Speed The Entry Of International Travelers

Unnecessary delays in the inspection of travelers entering the United States can and should be eliminated. Immigration, Customs, and Agriculture have agreed to adopt a "one-stop" inspection process, which should reduce delays in the time-consuming clearance process.

However, the one-stop procedure will be more effective if inspection policies are changed so that passengers undergo primary inspections before they claim their baggage and hand baggage is examined on a selective basis.

The U.S. approach to one-stop inspection is based solely on the willingness of the agencies to cooperate; this has been a problem in the past. If lack of cooperation causes the current effort to implement one-stop inspections to fail, there are alternatives which should be considered.



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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
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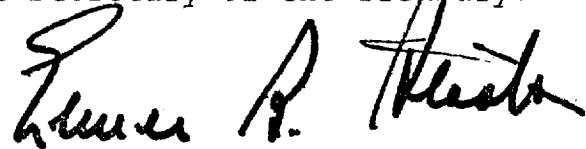
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The Honorable Russell B. Long  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
The Honorable Al Ullman  
Chairman, Committee on  
Ways and Means  
House of Representatives

*See 11/1/78*  
*4/10/78*

This report on the Federal inspection process summarizes what the Federal inspection agencies are doing to speed the entry of international travelers and recommends additional steps which will further expedite the entry process. We performed this review in response to section 216 of the Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act of 1978.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Agriculture; the Attorney General; and the Secretary of the Treasury.

  
Comptroller General  
of the United States

D I G E S T

Unnecessary delays in inspecting travelers entering the United States can and should be eliminated. Travelers can wait for hours for separate Immigration, Customs, and occasional Agriculture inspections, which together take only a few minutes. Air travelers, in particular, are dissatisfied with long delays, and their dissatisfaction is heightened by the comparisons they can make with foreign inspection systems, which move people much quicker.

Delays are caused by the

--sheer numbers of arriving individuals--

245 million by land, 25 million by air, and  
4 million by sea, during fiscal year 1978;

--arrival of individuals during peak periods--

certain hours of the day, days of the week,  
and weeks of the year; and

--enforcement policies of Agriculture and Customs.

No single solution exists to the problem of expediting travelers while enforcing the various immigration and import laws and regulations. However, Government agencies can take steps which will help.

ENFORCEMENT POLICIES SHOULD  
BE CHANGED

The Federal inspection agencies are undertaking cooperative efforts to speed the entry of air travelers. The agencies have agreed upon a one-stop system where one inspector carrying out the functions of all agencies screens individuals to separate the few travelers requiring detailed inspection from the majority that do not. This approach should speed the process; however, more could be done if the agencies would change their enforcement policies.

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Because Customs requires travelers to have their checked baggage with them before inspection, major modifications are necessary at most airports before the one-stop system can be adopted. Resources to make these changes are not available; thus, about 60 percent of the international air travelers will continue to be cleared under a two-stop process.

If the initial screening took place while travelers waited for their baggage, one-stop inspections could be implemented without major facility modifications. Also, the time travelers spend in the inspection process would be further reduced.

Agriculture's requirement that all hand-carried items (but not checked baggage) be inspected for prohibited plants and foods slows the inspection process. A more selective inspection approach should be adopted.

The experiences of other countries strongly suggest that these changes would speed the inspection process without diluting law enforcement. Other countries use inspection methods which do not require the travelers to have all their baggage when going through primary inspection and do not examine all hand-carried items for agricultural products. For example, in Canada, air travelers are interviewed by primary Customs inspectors before they claim their baggage. On the basis of this interview, about 90 percent of the travelers are permitted to bypass further inspections, claim their baggage, and exit. Under the red/green system widely used in Europe, travelers are checked by immigration, claim their baggage, and choose the red exit if they have items to declare or the green exit if they have nothing to declare.

Violations, including drugs, detected under the U.S., European red/green, and Canadian one-stop systems are comparable: less than 1/10 of 1 percent of incoming travelers are found in violation of customs laws and regulations.

For many travelers entering by sea, the inspection process has been improved through modified enforcement policies. Applying these policies to the remaining sea travelers and selectively inspecting hand baggage will speed the process. However, because baggage unloading accounts for much of the time consumed in the entry process, it will still be lengthy.

## INTERAGENCY COOPERATION--A PROBLEM

The success of one-stop inspections is based solely on the willingness of Immigration, Customs, and Agriculture to cooperate. However, the different missions of the agencies--Immigration focuses on the entry of people, while Customs on the entry of goods--has made interagency cooperation a problem in the past.

Although one-stop processing has been in effect for decades at land border crossings, an attempt to implement it at airports failed. That attempt failed, in large part, because Customs believed that other agencies' inspectors did not give adequate attention to Customs matters when inspecting travelers.

The inspection agencies have agreed again to implement one-stop inspections. If the current cooperative effort does not work, there are alternatives, other than a return to the old system. One is to adopt the red/green system, which leaves the inspection agencies in charge of their traditional functions. Another is for the President, through reorganization authority, or the Congress, through legislation, to make one agency responsible for inspections.

## OTHER MEANS OF EXPEDITING CLEARANCE COULD BE COSTLY

Some solutions to speed entry could present problems. Such solutions include preclearance of travelers in foreign countries and use of in-transit lounges at U.S. airports for people deplaning only to connect to an outbound flight.

Preclearance--inspecting U.S.-bound travelers before they leave foreign airports--relieves congestion in U.S. airports and reduces delays for travelers inspected at U.S. airports; however, it is not entirely satisfactory from a law enforcement standpoint. Presently, 22 percent of international air travelers entering the United States have been precleared at the eight sites in Canada, Bermuda, and the Bahamas.

Immigration and Agriculture believe preclearance is effective because it allows them to interdict persons and products before they leave the source country. Customs, on the other hand, has experienced enforcement problems as a result of having to rely on the

host country to provide secure facilities and to take action against violators.

Preclearance is also expensive. Maintaining inspectors in foreign countries costs far more than having them in the United States. So far the airlines have paid part of that cost, but some have questioned whether they should continue to do so.

Transit lounges are widely used in foreign countries to relieve congestion. Passengers who are arriving only to connect with another international flight are exempted from inspection. Not subjecting these people to inspection eases the workload and thus facilitates the inspection of other travelers.

U.S. airports generally are not designed to easily implement such procedures and changes would require costly modifications to airport terminals. Transit lounges would ease congestion, but the relatively small volume of in-transits (about 2 percent of all arrivals in fiscal year 1978) may justify them at only a few airports.

#### USE OF CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM SHOULD BE CONTINUED

The Customs Declaration form is useful for enforcement purposes. GAO believes the use of the form should be continued. Most travelers are satisfied with the clarity of the form and the time required to fill it out. Travelers usually receive the form and complete it while enroute. If the form were not completed, the traveler would have to make a declaration during the inspection, thereby slowing the process.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

To speed the entry of international air and sea travelers, GAO recommends that

- primary inspections be conducted before travelers claim their checked baggage and
- inspectors selectively inspect travelers and their possessions for agricultural products.

## AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO'S EVALUATION

Treasury and Customs maintain that citizen bypass and the one-stop system now being implemented can expedite the entry of travelers without weakening law enforcement better than the system recommended by GAO. They claim (1) a system similar to that proposed by GAO was tried some years ago and neither expedited passenger entry nor adequately enforced the law and (2) the GAO system would require as much facility modification as the system now being implemented.

These assertions are not supported by past studies or available current data. In a 1973 study, GAO reported that the earlier system did facilitate passenger entry. Also, a 1970 Customs report showed enforcement problems resulted from interagency involvement and not from system design weaknesses. GAO does not believe that it would require as much facility modification to implement its recommendation as Customs indicated. The system was implemented before without major modifications. Also, other actions to speed up passenger processing have been taken since then. The fact that the system GAO recommends is working well in Canada provides added assurance that it can work in the United States. (See pp. 17 to 20.)

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's written comments did not specifically address GAO's recommendation that inspectors selectively inspect travelers and their possessions for agricultural products. In discussions with GAO, however, Service officials said they are receptive to selective inspections and have instituted them for cruise ships and charter flights returning from low-risk areas. But the Service is reluctant to further lessen the baggage inspection requirements without first evaluating the change. Considering that only very few air travelers have prohibited agricultural products, GAO believes the Service should change its requirements that all hand baggage be examined. (See pp. 20 and 21.)

Both Justice and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service state that preclearance, in addition to the benefits cited by GAO, reduces the overall number of inspectors needed. Customs, on the other hand, said preclearance increases staff cost. The many factors involved in preclearance and the difference in agencies' views make the future of preclearance uncertain. (See p. 24.)



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## CHAPTER 1

### EXPEDITING THE CLEARANCE OF INTERNATIONAL

#### TRAVELERS--A CHALLENGE

Spurred by complaints from travelers, the Congress wrote into the Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act of 1978 a requirement that we study the clearance process for individuals entering the United States and recommend ways to expedite the process, particularly for air and sea travelers, without weakening law enforcement.

#### INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS--A LARGE AND VARIED GROUP

About 274 million individuals entered the United States from foreign countries in fiscal year 1978. By far, the greatest number of travelers entering the country came in at land border crossings. About 245 million individuals crossed the borders between Canada or Mexico and the United States in vehicles or on foot.

About 25 million travelers entered the country by air. This method of travel has been the fastest growing, having mushroomed in the past 19 years from 3.7 million--an increase of over 500 percent. Air travel is projected to increase 60 percent by 1990, to about 40 million.

About 4 million travelers entered the country by sea, about half via ferry boats. Of the remainder, most were travelers on vacation cruise ships, entering primarily through New York and Miami.

#### THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS

To varying degrees, these travelers were inspected by one or more of the following Federal agencies:

--The Immigration and Naturalization Service, an agency of the Department of Justice, determines the admissibility of each individual seeking entry into the country. In fiscal year 1978, Immigration used 1,500 staff years for inspections.

--The Customs Service, an agency of the Department of the Treasury, collects revenue on imported products, interdicts and seizes contraband (including narcotics and illegal drugs),

and enforces more than 400 provisions of law for 40 other Federal agencies. In fiscal year 1978, Customs used 2,100 staff years for inspections.

--The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, an agency of the Department of Agriculture, inspects plants, foods, and animals and prevents the entry of those diseased or infected. In fiscal year 1978, Agriculture used 180 staff years for inspections.

EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

At the ports of entry we visited, the time used for the inspection was minimal, generally less than 2-1/2 minutes. But the time required for the entire process--waiting to claim baggage, waiting in inspection lines, and actually being inspected--varied considerably, as shown below.

Average Processing Time for International Travelers

<u>Location</u>	<u>Air travelers</u>	<u>Sea travelers</u>	<u>Land travelers</u>
	- - - - - (minutes) - - - - -		
Los Angeles	81	-	-
Miami	59	177	-
New York	52	173	-
San Ysidro	-	-	29
Detroit	-	-	2

Travelers are dissatisfied with the inspection process if it takes too long. An analysis of air travelers' responses to our questionnaire showed they became less satisfied as processing time exceeded 45 minutes:

Percent of Air Travelers Dissatisfied  
With Processing Time

<u>Location</u>	<u>Travelers cleared in less than 45 minutes</u>	<u>Travelers cleared in 45 minutes or more</u>
Los Angeles	4.3	35.5
Miami	9.7	42.9
New York	4.2	37.8
Weighted average	5.2	38.9

As can be seen, the proportion of dissatisfied travelers increased sevenfold when the processing time exceeded 45 minutes. Travelers cleared in 45 minutes or more also experienced greater inconveniences than those travelers cleared faster. Some delayed travelers said they missed connecting flights or arrived late for appointments because of the delay.

Air travelers' comments on the delays they experienced are paraphrased below:

Miami is the most awkward and slowest Customs area I have experienced in the world.

There is no apparent reason for the delay. Why did it go so speedily in Italy and West Germany?

The delay while waiting for Customs to clear passengers was ridiculous. I waited 1-1/2 hours to pass through Customs. The confusion among the passengers added to the havoc and chaos, not to mention tempers.

On my return from Europe, it took 2 hours and 50 minutes to clear Immigration and Customs, which you must agree is totally intolerable yet unfortunately not uncommon in this port.

Although sea travelers spent nearly 3 hours in the inspection process, most of this time (1-1/2 hours) was spent waiting for their baggage to be off loaded. Nevertheless, these travelers were much more positive in their reactions. Only about 6 percent of them were dissatisfied with the inspection process, compared to about 18 percent of air travelers.

This more positive reaction is likely attributable to the nature of sea travel versus air travel. About 95 percent of the sea travelers responding to our questionnaire were traveling for pleasure, spending 1 week or more on a ship. Therefore, they were not as apt to be as concerned about a delay as air travelers. Not all sea travelers were satisfied, however, and some comments are paraphrased below:

Unfortunately when returning on a Saturday from a cruise, there are usually 4 or 5 ships docking at one time. Hence, you can have 3,000 to 4,000 people on the ships but certainly not enough inspectors for all.

I understand the serious delay was encountered because 2 ships docked at the same time. There were not enough Customs people to handle the situation.

The entire inspection took approximately 2 hours of standing in lines aboard ship. For us, it wasn't too bad; but for anyone older or not in good health, it would be a nightmare.

PEAKING--A PROBLEM WITH  
NO SOLUTION IN SIGHT

Peaking, the practically simultaneous mass arrival of passengers, occurs during certain hours of the day, days of the week, and times of the year. Peaking is caused, in large part, by the desire of travelers to arrive within certain time periods. Because the airlines and ship operators compete to satisfy that desire, it is doubtful the problem can be relieved.

Peaking adds to delays because the inspector work force and physical facilities cannot handle the volume. During major peaks, space is often not available to park airplanes or ships, unload baggage, or accommodate those people waiting for Immigration or Customs inspections. To cope, travelers are kept on board aircraft or ships for hours until the congestion has eased.

At airports, peaking occurs daily when airlines schedule arrivals at about the same time, particularly during heavily traveled summer vacation months. At the airports we visited, the average processing time increased during peak times, as shown below:

Average Processing Time for  
International Air Travelers

<u>Location</u>	<u>Nonpeak time</u> (minutes)	<u>Peak time</u> (minutes)	<u>Percent increase</u>
Los Angeles	66	103	56
Miami	42	72	71
New York	35	69	97

Airport officials said the delay problem becomes more serious in the summer months because the volume of travelers increases about 75 percent over the volume of travelers arriving during the period of our review. Specifically:

- At Los Angeles, officials said some travelers take 2 to 3 hours to clear the inspection process during the summer months.
- At Miami, officials said congestion in the Customs area becomes so bad it creates health problems. Waiting time can be as much as 4 hours.
- At New York, officials said international travelers arriving in July and August sometimes double the number arriving in winter months, causing tremendous lines and unreasonable delays.

Similar to airports, seaports also have a peaking problem. The problem normally occurs on Saturday morning when cruise ships arrive in port, unload, and then reload for departures on new cruises which end on a subsequent Saturday. At the Miami and New York seaports, Customs officials said that during peak periods, processing delays of up to 4 hours occur.

Within this environment, Federal agencies are trying to do two contradictory jobs: they are trying to minimize passenger delays but still effectively enforce laws. The challenge is to maintain a balance between these two objectives so that each can be accomplished without compromising the other.

## CHAPTER 2

### INSPECTION AGENCIES CAN

#### EXPEDITE CLEARANCE PROCESS

Unnecessary delays in inspecting people entering the United States can and should be eliminated. Travelers can wait for hours to complete separate Immigration, Customs, and occasional Agriculture inspections, which together take only a few minutes. Air travelers, in particular, are dissatisfied with long delays, and their dissatisfaction is heightened by the comparisons they can make with foreign inspection systems, which move people much quicker.

The Federal inspection agencies are undertaking cooperative efforts to speed the entry of air travelers. The agencies have agreed upon a one-stop approach where an inspector trained in the functions of all agencies screens passengers to separate the few travelers requiring detailed inspections from the majority that do not. This approach should speed the entry process; however, one-stop inspections will not be fully implemented at airports in the foreseeable future. The experiences of other countries strongly suggest that more could be done, without weakening law enforcement, if the agencies would change their enforcement policies.

A continuing concern is the fact that the success of one-stop inspections at airports rests entirely on the willingness of the inspection agencies to participate. A similar cooperative effort was undertaken in the past but was abandoned largely because one agency was dissatisfied with the attention other agencies gave to its responsibilities.

#### ENFORCEMENT POLICIES SHOULD BE CHANGED

Because Customs requires travelers to have their checked baggage with them before inspection, major modifications are necessary at most airports before the one-stop system can be adopted. If, as in Canada, the initial screening took place while travelers waited for their baggage, one-stop inspections could be implemented without major facility modifications. Also, the time travelers spend in the inspection process would be further reduced. Similarly, Agriculture's requirement that all hand-carried items (but not checked baggage) be inspected for prohibited plants and foods slows the inspection process. A more selective inspection approach should be adopted.



Implementing one-stop inspections  
at airports will be slow

The inspection agencies have agreed to adopt a one-stop inspection process at airports, but they are implementing the process in phases as airports are remodeled or new ones built. For the foreseeable future, only about 40 percent of air travelers will receive one-stop inspections.

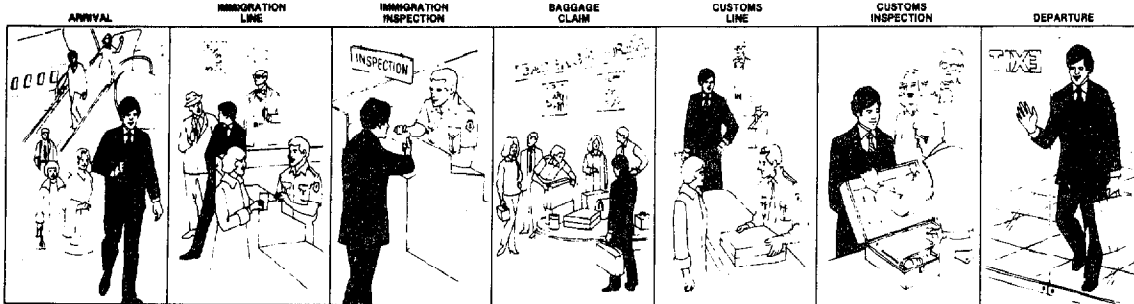
Before the 1940s, all travelers went through a two-stop inspection process--one for Immigration and one for Customs. The growth of automobile travel resulted in traffic that could not be handled by the available inspection facilities and work forces at land borders. Delays occurred. Starting in the 1940s at the Canadian border and 1960s at the Mexican border, a one-stop process was implemented because there was no reasonable alternative. An Immigration or Customs inspector now performs primary inspection for each agency. If problems arise, the traveler is referred to an Agriculture, Immigration, or Customs secondary inspector for further inspection.

The process at airports and seaports has traditionally been more complex. These travelers have been cleared through a two-stop Federal inspection involving Immigration and Customs. This system has been used because many Federal inspection officials viewed air and sea travelers as greater enforcement risks than land travelers and, until recently, the number of travelers was manageable.

At airports and seaports, Immigration inspection is completed before travelers claim their baggage and consists of an interview and check of documents to determine whether the individual can be admitted. The Immigration inspectors are also alert for possible health problems. Aliens entering this country permanently are photographed and fingerprinted at secondary inspection.

After travelers claim their baggage, a Customs inspection is made, which consists of an interview of individuals or heads of families. At locations equipped with Treasury Enforcement Communications System terminals, the inspector enters the traveler's name and date of birth for a computer check against a list of known or suspected violators. The inspector reviews the traveler's Customs Declaration and examines at least all hand-carried baggage. Department of Agriculture inspectors are often available for examining plants, animals, and food on referral from Customs inspectors.

This airport inspection process is illustrated in the following chart:



On August 8, 1978, the Commissioners of Immigration and Customs and the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service agreed to establish a one-stop inspection at U.S. airports. This inspection is to be performed after travelers have all their baggage. The inspectors are to be trained to perform routine inspection for the three agencies, similar to land border primary inspections. Passengers known or suspected to need more detailed inspections will be sent to secondary inspection areas staffed with inspectors expert in the area questioned. One-stop inspections will be implemented in two phases:

- Phase I, called citizen bypass, will start as soon as possible. Because of space limitations, only U.S. citizens with passports will bypass the Immigration inspection. Thus, they will go through one stop at Customs, where the Customs inspector will perform Immigration and Customs clearance.
- Phase II will start when airports are remodeled or new ones built. New inspection areas will be built to provide one-stop inspection for all travelers.

The Federal inspection agencies are providing citizen bypass at 17 airports and one-stop inspections for all travelers only at Philadelphia International Airport. As of August 1979, this provided one-stop service to about 35 percent of all international air travelers. By 1981, Customs plans to expand one-stop inspections to four more airports, which would cover an additional 5 percent of all air travelers.

Expanding the one-stop inspection beyond these efforts will be extremely slow. According to Customs officials, one-stop inspections at airports cannot be used widely until inspection facilities are remodeled or new ones are built. This remodeling includes relocating the Immigration inspection area to form a combined Immigration/Customs inspection area. Customs officials believe about 50 percent more space is needed in the baggage and Immigration/Customs areas for the travelers who will arrive in the baggage area earlier under a one-stop process.

Resources to make these changes are not readily available. Because facility changes cannot be made quickly and Customs has no firm plans to expand one-stop or citizen bypass inspections beyond 1981, about 60 percent of the international air travelers will continue to be processed under a two-stop process for the foreseeable future.

While citizen bypass and one-stop processing may ultimately reduce processing time, the gain will be limited because travelers must still claim their baggage and then submit to inspection. Further, officials of other countries told us that because citizen bypass always puts foreigners in the "back of the line," it creates an unfavorable impression.

#### Changing policies will expedite one-stop implementation

If, as in Canada, primary inspections were conducted before travelers claimed their baggage, one-stop inspections could be quickly implemented with little change to existing facilities. Also, the inspection process would be speeded up. The picture on page 10 illustrates the inconvenience and delay caused by Customs' requirement that travelers claim their baggage before inspection.

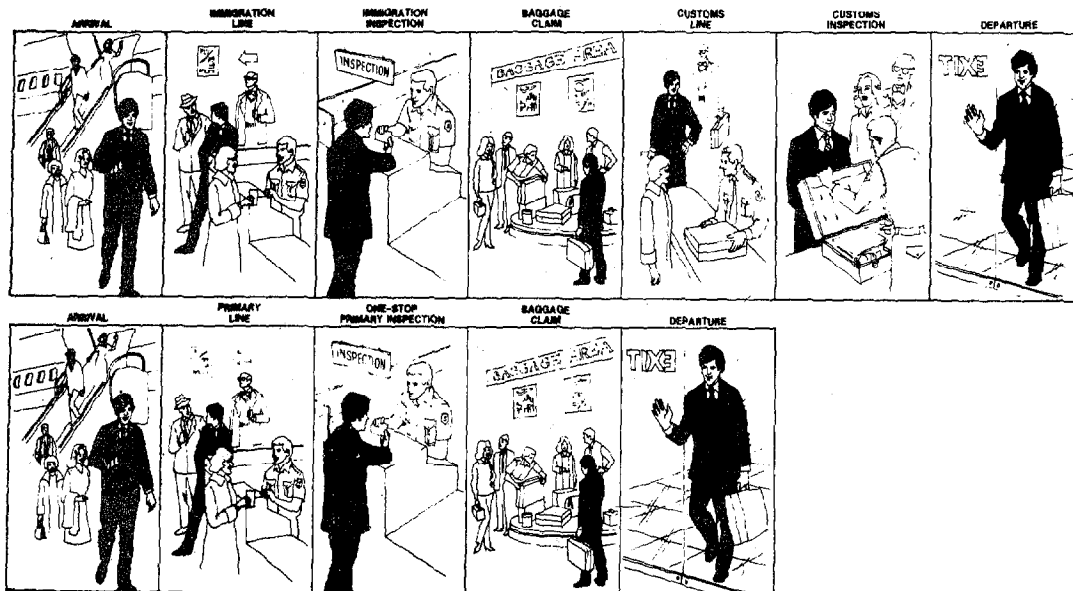
Average processing time at the U.S. airports we visited ranged from 52 to 81 minutes. Canadian officials said their goal is to clear passengers within 30 minutes, and flights we observed in Toronto and Montreal took between 15 and 20 minutes to clear.

If Customs changed its policy to permit primary inspection before passengers claim their baggage, one-stop inspections could be implemented quickly. Present Immigration booths could be used for one-stop processing, and present Customs inspection counters could be used for more detailed examinations when they are needed. This change would require only minor modification to existing facilities.



**TRAVELER STRUGGLING WITH BAGGAGE IN CUSTOMS INSPECTION LINE AT AIRPORT.**

In addition, primary inspections would begin during the approximately 20 minutes needed to deliver baggage at airports. The benefits of taking advantage of this time are illustrated below. The chart compares the two-stop U.S. process (which will confront 60 percent of incoming travelers for the foreseeable future) to one incorporating a feature of one-stop primary inspection before baggage delivery.



Changing policies will  
not weaken enforcement

Many other countries' inspection systems do not require travelers to have their baggage before primary inspections and do not require examination of all hand-carried items for agricultural products. The law enforcement experiences of these countries strongly suggest that their methods are no less effective than the U.S. method.

In the United States, Agriculture insists that Customs inspectors examine all hand-carried baggage because it believes people will most likely carry plants, animals, and food in this baggage. Customs believes that if air travelers have all their baggage in their possession when going through primary inspection, the inspector can make better judgments on the enforcement risk of the traveler.

However, according to inspectors, most Agriculture seizures result from information furnished by travelers on the declaration form or in response to questions asked by the Customs inspector, not as a result of inspecting hand-carried items. Also, we interviewed 49 Customs inspectors responsible for major seizures from air travelers. Of these, 37 said they would not have had to have seen the travelers with their checked baggage to decide the travelers needed a more detailed examination.

Both the Canadian one-stop system and the European red/green systems preserve the opportunity for Customs officers to see travelers with their checked baggage, albeit at the end rather than the beginning of the process. These officers can and do select travelers for detailed examination. Also, Canada and the countries we visited in Europe rely on selective agricultural inspections.

The variations in the systems do not appear to make a difference in their effectiveness. Violations, including drugs, detected under the U.S., European red/green, and Canadian one-stop systems are comparable: less than 1/10 of 1 percent of incoming travelers are found in violation of customs laws and regulations.

Canadian officials believe their one-stop system is effective and enforces the law better than their previous system, which was similar to the two-stop U.S. approach. In Canada, all air travelers are interviewed by primary

Customs inspectors before they claim their baggage. On the basis of the primary inspection, travelers are given a coded card which determines whether they require further Immigration or Customs inspections. Under this system, about 90 percent of the travelers are permitted to claim their baggage and leave the inspection area after relinquishing their coded card.

Travelers coded by the primary inspector for Immigration referral are inspected before they reach the baggage claim area. Others are referred to Customs' secondary inspection because they (1) owe duty, (2) fit the drug smuggler profiles, (3) may be bringing prohibited items into the country, or (4) are part of a random sample of travelers designated to keep profiles up to date and to assist in assessing risks of flights. Those referred are inspected by the Customs secondary inspector after they claim their baggage. In addition, secondary Customs inspectors may, at their discretion, choose to inspect travelers cleared at primary.

All the officials we spoke with in Europe viewed the red/green system favorably. They believed that it was a very rational and effective way to process increasingly large numbers of international travelers while still enforcing the country's laws and regulations. They said there had been no decline in the number of seizures of illegal items, such as drugs, firearms, or agricultural products, under the red/green system.

The red/green system usually includes an Immigration check of all arriving travelers. Following this and while waiting for their baggage, travelers can review pictorial or written explanations of what they must and need not declare. After the travelers have picked up their baggage, they proceed to exits which are clearly marked either red or green. The red exit is for individuals with items to declare, and the green for those with nothing to declare.

At the red exit, Customs inspectors collect any duty which may be due. In addition, the Customs inspector can further search the traveler's baggage. Customs inspectors at the green exit view travelers and select some for inspection to challenge their assertion that they have nothing to declare. Customs inspectors question the selected individuals and search their baggage to whatever degree the inspectors feel appropriate to ensure that the traveler has nothing to declare.

Inspections at seaports--a  
mixture of enforcement policies

Modification of Immigration's and Customs' enforcement policies has helped improve the inspections of many sea travelers. Applying these changes to the remaining sea travelers and selectively inspecting hand baggage will speed the entry process. However, since baggage unloading accounts for much of the time consumed, the process will still be lengthy.

For cruises of 7 days or less, Immigration inspects only those U.S. citizens who boarded the ship in a foreign country and all entering aliens. Customs conducts a primary inspection on board ship before the passengers claim their baggage. Customs and Agriculture inspectors examine all hand-carried items for agricultural purposes as the passengers disembark. Passengers cleared in Customs primary inspection may exit immediately after picking up their baggage by turning in their declaration at the exit gate. Passengers are inspected after they claim their baggage if the primary inspector coded their declarations for secondary inspection or if the inspectors in the baggage claim area chose them for more detailed inspection.

Because of staff reductions and the increased traffic carried on larger capacity vessels, Miami Customs officials implemented what is essentially a red/green inspection system for all cruises. Since March 1979, only passengers who (1) have to pay duty, (2) have agricultural products for examination, or (3) boarded the ship at a port other than Miami are required to report to Customs for primary inspection. Passengers are informed of these requirements before the primary inspection process begins. Those who are not required to report to Customs are free to leave the dock after picking up their baggage. Roving inspectors in the baggage claim area pick out some passengers for secondary inspection. Customs and Agriculture inspectors examine all hand-carried items for agricultural purposes as the passengers disembark.

For cruises lasting more than 7 days at other ports, the inspection agencies conduct two-stop inspections--an Immigration inspection on board ship and a Customs inspection on the dock after the passengers claim their baggage. Customs believes that because these passengers have visited several ports, they pose a higher enforcement risk.

Changing enforcement policies to allow Customs to perform primary inspections on board ship will save time for the traveler. The contention that passengers who traveled more than 7 days are a high enforcement risk cannot be supported or refuted because the enforcement statistics do not disclose the length of the trip. What is known, however, is that sea travelers are a lower enforcement risk than air travelers; less than 1/100 of 1 percent are found in violation, compared to less than 1/10 of 1 percent for air travelers. The enforcement agencies should be no less committed to expediting the inspection of sea travelers than those arriving by air.

#### INTERAGENCY COOPERATION--A PROBLEM

Although one-stop processing has been in effect for decades at our Nation's land border crossings, attempts to implement it at airports have not been successful, largely because of breakdowns in interagency cooperation. Beginning in 1968, the inspection agencies used a process which featured one-stop primary inspections before passengers claimed their baggage at several U.S. airports. In 1970, Customs unilaterally decided to withdraw from the system because its officials believed that (1) other agencies' inspectors did not give adequate attention to Customs matters in the primary inspections and (2) primary inspections, conducted before passengers claimed their baggage, were not effective for Customs purposes.

When one-stop primary inspections at U.S. land border crossings were instituted several decades ago, neither Immigration nor Customs was put in charge of the screening function. Rather, inspectors from both agencies were cross-trained to perform Immigration and Customs duties. While the vast majority of international land travelers are processed with the minimum amount of delay under a one-stop system, both agencies are dissatisfied with the quality control over the process.

The different missions of the two agencies--Immigration focuses on the entry of people, while Customs on the entry of goods--make it difficult for the two agencies to agree on a standard for primary inspections. Neither agency feels the other is as conscientious as it could be in enforcing the other agency's requirements. As one official told us, "Unless you put one uniform on inspectors, you run the risk of Customs staff concentrating on their area of expertise while doing a perfunctory Immigration job and vice versa."



Immigration and Customs officials are concerned about the effect dual management has on the morale and performance of their staffs. Typical concerns about dual management are:

- Promotions are based on different criteria.
- Immigration inspectors feel Customs inspectors have a better overtime situation and are paid better.
- While on the job, inspectors are faced with two sets of bosses.

Another example of how a cooperative one-stop inspection system failed is the Nassau preclearance site. Officials from Immigration, Customs, and Agriculture all told us that a one-stop system worked well there for 17 years. Nevertheless, it was changed to a two-stop system because Immigration management wanted their agency to maintain a more prominent presence.

The inspection agencies have renewed their efforts to implement one-stop inspections; continuation of the system, however, rests solely on interagency cooperation. If the current cooperative effort does not work, there are alternatives. One is to leave the inspection agencies in charge of their traditional functions. In such a case, Customs could adopt the red/green system, and the entry of travelers could be speeded up. Another alternative is for the President, through reorganization authority, or the Congress, through legislation, to make one agency responsible for inspections.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The two-stop inspection process unnecessarily delays people entering the country, particularly air travelers. Although the U.S. inspection agencies have agreed to implement a one-stop inspection process at airports, most air travelers will not benefit from the one-stop system in the foreseeable future. The agencies' enforcement policies (1) require major modification of airport facilities before the one-stop process can be implemented and (2) restrict the amount of time that can be saved under the one-stop process.

If Customs and Agriculture changed their baggage inspection policies, the inspection agencies could implement one-stop inspections much sooner. Also, the system would move people quicker. The available evidence suggests that these changes would not adversely affect law enforcement.

The one-stop inspection system relies solely on the willingness of Customs, Agriculture, and Immigration to cooperate. Failure to cooperate has been a problem in the past. If the effort to implement a one-stop inspection system fails, there are alternatives, such as the red/green system or a single inspection agency.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To speed the entry of international air and sea travelers, we recommend that

--the Secretary of the Treasury direct the Commissioner of Customs to conduct primary inspections before travelers claim their checked baggage and

--the Secretary of Agriculture direct the Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, to require inspectors to selectively inspect travelers and their possessions for agricultural products.

### AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

Treasury and Customs maintained that citizen bypass and the one-stop system now being implemented can expedite the entry of travelers without weakening law enforcement better than the system we recommended. They claimed that less than 20 percent of all arriving air passengers will experience the conventional two-stop system by the end of fiscal year 1981. Customs stated it would be premature to embark on the system we recommended because it had been tried and dropped almost 10 years ago. Customs believes our system would require at least as much facility modification as the costly one-stop system Customs and the other inspection agencies have been developing.

Both Treasury and Customs asserted that the one-stop inspection experiment terminated by Customs in 1970, which was essentially the inspection system we are recommending,

neither expedited passenger entry nor adequately safeguarded enforcement requirements. Customs stated also that the experiment was ended for reasons other than a lack of cooperation among inspection agencies.

These assertions, if correct, would be cause for a complete reassessment of our position. However, they are not supported by past studies or any available current data. The fact that the system we recommend is working well in Canada provides added assurance that it can work in the United States.

In our May 30, 1973, report, "A Single Agency Needed to Manage Port-of-Entry Inspections--Particularly at U.S. Airports," B-114898, we pointed out that the one-stop experiment was initiated at New York's Kennedy Airport in 1968 to avert a breakdown in the inspection process expected to be caused by the large number of summer travelers. We reported that the system did facilitate passenger entry and that officials of the inspection agencies agreed that the one-stop inspection experiment had prevented breakdowns of operations in the summers of 1968, 1969, and 1970.

Why then did Customs pull out of the experiment in late 1970? Customs' March 11, 1970, evaluation report cited the following reasons:

- The system permitted a large number of passengers and things to enter without being processed by a Customs officer.
- Customs supplied 50 percent of the manpower assigned to primary inspections which resulted in the accomplishment of other agencies' missions at the expense of Customs' mission.
- Customs had no control over the selection of the personnel assigned to primary screening by the other agencies and these agencies did not have the same recruiting standards or enforcement orientation as Customs.
- Customs was inhibited from giving direction or instruction to other agencies' personnel.

--The system resulted in an insufficient number of referrals to Customs secondary inspection of suspected smugglers and excessive referrals for inconsequential problems.

The study concluded that multiple agency involvement in primary inspections made it most difficult to make changes calculated to improve Customs enforcement and impossible to make changes if they affected the program of the other agencies.

To assert at this time, as Customs does, that inter-agency cooperation was not a major factor in its withdrawal is not supportable. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that the one-stop system now being implemented provides for the same type of multiagency involvement in primary inspections. Thus, the enforcement deficiencies that Customs cited are not relevant to a decision on which of the two systems should be adopted. Considering what happened in the past, the fact that the success of either system still rests entirely on the willingness of the inspection agencies to participate is a matter of continuing concern.

The Treasury and Customs statement that less than 20 percent of air travelers will experience conventional two-stop inspections by the end of fiscal year 1981 needs clarification. It should not be inferred that 80 percent of the travelers will experience one-stop inspections. Only U.S. citizens with passports receive one-stop inspections at airports using citizen bypass. Because half of all travelers are foreigners or U.S. citizens traveling without passports, only 40 percent (one-half of the 80 percent) will be processed through one-stop inspections. The remaining 60 percent will continue to experience two-stop inspections. Customs has no firm plans to expand the one-stop process or citizen bypass to additional airports after 1981.

Justice commented that it had no objection to conducting primary inspections before passengers claimed their baggage, as we recommended. Customs, on the other hand, maintains the ability of an inspector to observe the amount and type of bags accompanying a traveler is essential. Customs points out that under the one-stop experiment, primary inspections were conducted before passengers claimed their bags and smugglers were able to detect if they had been selected for a secondary inspection. This occurred because the primary

inspector gave passengers colored cards which determined whether or not the passengers needed a secondary examination or could depart after claiming their baggage. Obviously, it was easy for smugglers to see which color was used to designate passengers for thorough baggage search.

Canada uses a numerical coding system which is much more difficult to break. The numbers written on a card given to travelers after primary inspection determine whether they have been referred to secondary inspection. Supervisors change the number daily and during a given day to make it more difficult for smugglers to break the code.

Customs believes that our recommended system would require major modifications to expand the queuing space for primary inspections. Our position that one-stop inspections could be implemented with minor facility changes is based on the experience with the one-stop experiment in 1968-1970 and subsequent actions, which were designed to move people through the inspection process quicker than previously possible. These were

- changes in Customs' enforcement philosophy embracing greater selectivity and emphasis on passenger interviews rather than baggage inspections,
- the recent merging of Immigration's and Customs' enforcement information systems permitting rapid identification of subjects of interest to both agencies, and
- tariff law changes increasing duty-free limits and simplifying duty calculations.

These changes, coupled with our recommendation for greater selectivity in hand baggage inspections, will speed the flow of people and minimize the amount of queuing space needed. Customs officials could provide no data to support their position that the facility modifications required to implement our recommendation would be as great or greater than those required for the one-stop system they intend to implement, which must provide queuing space for both passengers and their baggage.

Given the expected growth in air travel, major facility modifications may ultimately be required for either approach. But even if Customs' assertion is correct, which system should be adopted?

The flaw in the inspection agencies' one-stop approach is that nothing happens until passengers pick up their checked baggage. Customs believes this approach will spur the airlines to speed their baggage delivery so that the passenger's checked baggage will be available when the passenger reaches the baggage carousel. However, Customs officials could cite few specific steps the airlines could take to achieve this goal. Should airports be modified on the presumption that the goal will be met?

We believe it likely that baggage delivery will continue to take some time. The agencies should use that time to begin their primary inspection. The airlines will still have an incentive to deliver baggage as quickly as possible, since baggage delivery will then be the only obstacle to most passengers departing.

In this connection Customs has established an initial goal of processing 70 percent of the passengers within 1 hour of arrival. Responses to our questionnaire showed that passengers became unhappy with the process when it took over 45 minutes. Customs' goal, if met, guarantees a substantial number of dissatisfied travelers.

Customs rejects out-of-hand the red/green system as an alternate inspection process. Customs implies that the system amounts to an absence of inspection for passengers leaving through the green channel. This is not so. Inspectors at the green channel view passengers and their baggage as they exit and can stop passengers for a thorough inspection. While it is a departure from traditional Customs practices, the red/green system is recommended by the Customs Cooperation Council (an international organization) and has been adopted by 24 other nations. If the effort to implement a one-stop inspection fails, the red/green system is an alternative.

While the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service did not specifically address our recommendations, the Service agreed that unnecessary delays exist which can and should be eliminated. In discussions, Service officials told us they are receptive to the concept of selectively inspecting travelers to speed clearance while enforcing the law. In fact, Service officials pointed out that for cruise ships and charter flights returning from low-risk areas they had eliminated the requirement that all hand-carried baggage be inspected because these passengers present less risk of introducing plant or animal pests or diseases than other travelers. The Service is reluctant to further lessen inspection requirements without first evaluating the changes.

According to inspectors, most agricultural seizures resulted from information contained on the Customs Declaration form or information obtained through the passenger interview, not from examining hand-carried baggage. The Service's seizure data showed that very few travelers have prohibited agricultural products. Yet all have their hand baggage inspected. Therefore, we believe the Service should eliminate the requirement that all hand-carried baggage be inspected and vary its inspection requirements according to the risk presented by the passengers. For some flights this could mean examining all hand-carried baggage.

The Service said that New Zealand, Australia, and Japan are as concerned about the introduction of plant pests and animal diseases as the United States and for that reason have rejected the red/green system. We did not visit New Zealand or Australia, but in Japan, Agriculture inspectors interview and inspect travelers only on flights from high-risk areas.

## CHAPTER 3

### OTHER MEANS OF EXPEDITING

#### CLEARANCE COULD BE COSTLY

Some solutions to the delays in clearing travelers could present new problems. One option, expanding the pre-clearance in other countries of U.S.-bound travelers, would relieve the strain on U.S. inspection facilities but would be expensive and could present enforcement problems to Customs. Another option, lounges for travelers arriving in the United States but bound for other countries, requires airport modifications. This option is both an expensive and long-range solution.

#### PRECLEARANCE--A COSTLY WAY TO RELIEVE CONGESTION

Preclearance alleviates congestion in the United States by inspecting U.S.-bound travelers before they leave foreign airports. Upon arriving at a U.S. airport, the travelers are not subject to further inspection. However, preclearance is expensive and is not entirely satisfactory from a law enforcement standpoint.

Preclearance operations are at Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Calgary in Canada; Bermuda; and Nassau and Freeport in the Bahamas. Suggestions have been made for expanding preclearance to other countries, such as Germany, Mexico, and Japan.

Presently, 22 percent of international air travelers entering the United States have been precleared. Processing these travelers through domestic clearance areas would add to an already crowded situation. There are other advantages:

- Immigration can deny entry to individuals before they arrive in the United States.
- Agriculture can intercept unwanted goods before they enter the United States.
- Travelers are more receptive to the inspection process at the beginning of the trip when they are not tired.

There are also disadvantages. Preclearance is expensive because it entails moving inspectors to foreign countries and



paying them supplemental costs while living there. In fiscal year 1978, Immigration incurred costs of about \$4.3 million and Agriculture about \$165,000 to staff preclearance sites. Customs incurred costs of about \$7.6 million but was reimbursed by airlines for \$2.2 million for the supplemental costs associated with inspectors living in foreign countries. In addition, Customs was reimbursed \$2.3 million for overtime work. The Air Transport Association of America and user airlines question whether the charge should continue since Immigration and Agriculture are not reimbursed. However, if the airlines do not pay, then the taxpayer would have to assume that cost or the preclearance sites would close, thereby increasing the strain on U.S. inspection facilities.

In addition to cost, another disadvantage is the need for Customs to rely on the host country to take enforcement steps when a violation is discovered. U.S. Customs officers have no enforcement authority in foreign countries. Also, the inspection agencies must rely on foreign airport operators for secure space.

AIRPORTS WOULD HAVE TO BE REMODELED  
TO INSTALL TRANSIT LOUNGES

Foreign countries widely use transit lounges to relieve congestion in inspection areas. Persons are exempted from Immigration and Customs inspections when their sole purpose for landing in a country is to make connections with another international flight. Up to 10 percent of travelers in the foreign airports we visited were of the "in-transit" status. These travelers are directed to a controlled area where they can wait for their onward flight. This area provides them access to their flight but not to the general public and the rest of the airport. Thus the workload of both Immigration and Customs inspectors is eased and the processing of other travelers is expedited.

U.S. airports generally are not designed to route in-transit passengers directly to a connecting international flight. Customs permits these passengers to bypass inspection if the airlines escort the travelers from the inspection facility to their departing flight. This is a cumbersome procedure that requires the airlines to either assign their personnel or hire guards to escort travelers between terminal buildings. For that reason, the airlines recommend that in-transit lounges be added to airports as facilities are built or remodeled.

In fiscal year 1978, about 500,000 people were admitted into the United States as in-transits, or about 2 percent of all air arrivals. Officials estimated that about 10 percent

of arriving travelers at Los Angeles and Miami airports are in transit, and the new facilities soon to be opened there will contain in-transit lounges.

Transit lounges, like those in foreign countries, could be built in this country but would require major and costly modifications to airport terminals. The relatively small volume of in transits may justify the lounges at only a few airports.

### CONCLUSIONS

Expanding preclearance or introducing transit lounges would relieve congestion in clearance areas in U.S. airports and reduce delays caused by the congestion. But these are long-range solutions that should be considered carefully because of cost factors. Our recommendations in chapter 2 for expediting processing could limit the extent additional preclearance sites or transit lounges are needed.

### AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

In their written comments, the Federal agencies had differing opinions on preclearance as a solution to clearance problems in U.S. airports. All were silent on the use of transit lounges.

Both the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Justice agree that preclearance results in operational benefits--prohibited goods and persons can be detected before leaving the country of origin. Both stated that preclearance may be cost effective because it reduces the number of inspectors needed overall. Customs, on the other hand, said preclearance increases, rather than reduces, staff costs because when Customs inspectors are not clearing passengers at domestic locations, they are moved to cargo locations for the remainder of the workday. This cannot be done at preclearance sites.

The many factors involved and the differences of opinion among the inspection agencies leave the future role of preclearance uncertain.

CHAPTER 4

USE OF CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM

SHOULD BE CONTINUED

The Customs Declaration form helps expedite the inspection process. Travelers can complete the form while enroute, since airline and ship companies usually give the form to travelers during the trip. Inspection agencies find the form useful, and most travelers have no problems with it.

U.S. citizens entering the country by air and sea are required to complete a Customs Declaration. The form asks travelers to answer questions concerning

- their name, address, citizenship, date of birth, vessel or airline and flight number, and name of accompanying family members;
- compliance with certain Agriculture and Customs laws; and
- articles acquired abroad and their costs.

Of the international travelers responding to our questionnaire, 894 out of 1027 were satisfied with the clarity of the form and 869 out of 1018 were satisfied with the time required to fill it out. Their responses are shown as percentages in the following table:

Satisfaction level	<u>Percentage of travelers</u>	
	<u>Clarity of form</u>	<u>Time required to fill out form</u>
Satisfied	87.1	85.4
Dissatisfied	3.7	2.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<u>9.2</u>	<u>12.3</u>
Total	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Customs and Agriculture officials believe these forms are needed as signed evidence for enforcement purposes, to provide documentation for seizures, and for statistical data. Also, if the form were not available while enroute, the traveler would have to make a declaration during the inspection, thereby slowing the process. We believe the use of the declaration form should be continued.

## CHAPTER 5

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

We conducted this review in response to section 216 of the Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-410, October 3, 1978). Our objective was to identify and evaluate ways to expedite the clearance of international travelers, primarily air and sea travelers, through the Federal inspection process while adequately enforcing laws and regulations.

In the United States, we conducted our review at the headquarters of the three inspection agencies, three major airports, two major seaports, and two major land border crossings. We included land border crossings because the inspection agencies have used one-stop inspections at these places for several years. The locations selected and their traveler volume in fiscal year 1978 (October 1, 1977 - September 30, 1978) follow.

<u>Port</u>	Volume of travelers in <u>fiscal year 1978</u>  (millions)
New York (J.F. Kennedy) Airport	5.7
Miami Airport	1.9
Los Angeles Airport	1.6
New York Seaport	0.2
Miami Seaport	0.5
Detroit, Mi., land border	11.2
San Ysidro, Calif., land border	<u>35.8</u>
Total	<u>56.9</u>

At these locations we (1) collected data on the resources used and results obtained from inspection of travelers and their possessions; (2) observed inspections; (3) reviewed policies, procedures, and internal reports concerning the inspection process; and (4) interviewed inspectors and officials of the inspection agencies concerning their procedures and ways to expedite the process. Due to the time constraints from October 3, 1978, when Public Law 95-410 was approved, and

its September 1, 1979, reporting deadline, our field work had to be conducted during the period December 1978 to April 1979, which is a nonpeak travel season for all locations except the Miami seaport.

At the airports and seaports, we sent a random sample of travelers a questionnaire concerning their experiences with the Federal inspection process. At Miami and New York we sampled all travelers regardless of the terminal they arrived at. In Los Angeles, we excluded travelers arriving at the main airport terminal because officials believed on-going construction affected processing to such an extent that the questionnaire results would be meaningless. We mailed questionnaires to travelers who entered the United States between November 16, 1978, and December 31, 1978, because:

--We wanted to reach travelers soon after they returned, while their memories of the experience would still be fresh.

--Public Law 95-410 raised the duty-free exemption and levied a flat rate of duty on travelers' purchases, effective November 2, 1978. We wanted to give Customs inspectors experience in applying the new procedures before asking travelers for their opinions.

In foreign countries, we reviewed the U.S. preclearance operations at Toronto and Montreal, Canada, and Nassau and Freeport, the Bahamas. We also visited Canada, Great Britain, West Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and Hong Kong. In these places we observed inspections, obtained data on the procedures employed by the inspection agencies, and interviewed officials of the agencies. We also discussed issues involved in facilitating international travel with staff of the Customs Cooperation Council and the European Economic Community in Brussels, Belgium, and staff of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal, Canada.

A detailed description of our sampling and questionnaire analysis methodology is in appendixes I and II.

SAMPLING AND QUESTIONNAIREANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

We developed a questionnaire to measure traveler satisfaction with the Federal inspection process at international airports and seaports. We mailed questionnaires to international travelers randomly selected from Customs Declaration forms available at three airports and two seaports. Declaration forms are submitted by each individual or family processed by Customs.

SELECTING INDIVIDUAL CASES

The declaration forms are divided into two groups, separating those travelers who paid Customs' duty from those who did not. We sampled each set of declarations at each location separately for a total of 10 sample groups. Of the estimated 760,000 U.S. citizen cases available at the five locations, 1,214 cases were chosen. We mailed each of these travelers a questionnaire. (See app. II.)

DATA WEIGHTING AND SAMPLING ERROR RATES

We weighted the sample data to reflect the relative size of each sample universe to the overall universe of cases in the five locations.

The figures presented in appendix III are subject to sampling error rates of from +1.1 percent to +9.9 percent except for the following: (1) question three (part 4) +0.05 percent to +2.0 percent and (2) questions seven (all parts) and eleven +1.1 percent to +64.9 percent. The error rate for question three (part 4) was extremely low because it applied only to a small percent of travelers--those who paid duty. Questions seven and eleven had high error rates because only a portion of the sample was asked to answer those questions, which resulted in a very small number of applicable responses.

PURPOSE OF ANALYSIS

We made our analysis to determine the level of satisfaction with processing and the factors the international travelers believed influenced the timeliness of the inspection process. We used chi-square test of independence to

(1) establish whether there were associations among the variables tested and (2) to determine the significance of identified associations.

To illustrate, we matched the amount of time to process with traveler satisfaction levels for the three airports in total. The following table shows our results.

Combined Data for the Three Airports in the Sample

	<u>Minutes to process</u>	
	<u>Under 45</u>	<u>45 or more</u>
	(percent)	(percent)
Satisfied	85.4	48.4
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9.4	12.7
Dissatisfied	<u>5.2</u>	<u>38.9</u>
Total	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

This table shows that 85 percent who were processed in less than 45 minutes said they were satisfied with the time it took to process. Conversely, 39 percent who were processed in 45 or more minutes said they were dissatisfied with the time it took to process.

Are the percentages shown above significant or are they merely the result of chance? The chi-square test of independence was used to assure that the table shown above and other analyses represented the universe and were not obtained by chance.

SUMMARY OF TRAVELERS SAMPLED  
AND MAILED QUESTIONNAIRES

<u>Location</u>	<u>Period</u>		<u>Universe</u>	<u>Questionnaires</u>	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>		<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Returned</u>
New York Airport	11-16-78	12-31-78			
Free			497,000	130	114
Duty			28,200	128	110
Miami Airport	11-16-78	12-31-78			
Free			137,000	123	103
Duty			9,500	130	107
Los Angeles Airport	11-16-78	12-31-78			
Free			44,400	123	100
Duty			29	29	22
New York Seaport	11-16-78	12-31-78			
Free			2,600	152	138
Duty			880	149	132
Miami Seaport	11-16-78	12-31-78			
Free			37,700	125	114
Duty			4,900	125	118
Total			<u>762,209</u>	<u>1,214</u>	<u>1,058</u>





U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

**SURVEY OF  
INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' EXPERIENCE  
WITH THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS**

NEW YORK SEAPORT/

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. General Accounting Office is an agency of Congress responsible for evaluating Federal programs. Congress has asked us to examine the Federal inspection process that international travelers must go through. The aim of our study is to determine how this inspection process could be improved. An important objective of this study is to find out from international travelers what they think about the current procedures.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain valuable input from international travelers like yourself. Without your response our work will be made more difficult, and we may not be able to fully identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

Throughout this questionnaire there are numbers printed within parentheses to assist our keypuncher in coding your responses. Please disregard these numbers.

We have made this questionnaire as short and simple to answer as we could. Please take the time to answer and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

In answering questions 1 to 7, please consider only your experiences regarding the inspection you went through when you returned to the U.S. on the date stated in the attached letter.

1. Was your trip primarily for business or pleasure? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Business	5	(7)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure	95	
	100	

2. After you left the plane/ship, about how many minutes did it take you to go through the entire inspection process? Include any time spent obtaining your luggage, entering the inspection area and going through the inspection process. (Enter total number of minutes; for example enter 20 for 20 minutes.)

     Number of minutes (8-10)

1/ Percentages shown next to questions summarize responses of 270 travelers answering our questionnaires. Percentages are rounded.

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection process? (Check one box for each line.)

APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	6) Does not apply	
1) Time it took to leave plane/ship after arrival	36	33	7	11	13		(11)
2) Time it took to obtain your luggage	52	39	4	3	2		(12)
3) Courtesy of the inspection officer(s)	77	20	2	1	0		(13)
4) Time it took to compute duty/taxes	57	30	5	6	2		(14)
5) Time it took to get through the entire inspection process	51	36	5	5	3		(15)

4. You were required to fill out a customs declaration form before you went through inspection. How satisfied were you with the clarity of the form and the amount of time it took to fill out? (Check one box for each line.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	
1) Clarity of form	58	38	2	1	1	(16)
2) Time required to fill out form	60	37	1	2	0	(17)

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the inspection process? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	52	(18)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied	39	
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	
4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied	3	
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied	1	
	100	

(OVER)

<p>6. The time required to go through the inspection process can vary. Did the amount of time you spent entering or going through the inspection process cause any serious problems for you? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 6 (19)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 8.) <math>\frac{94}{100}</math></p> <p>7. Which, if any, of the following problems resulted from the time the inspection process took? <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Missed connecting transportation 7 (20)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Arrived late for appointment 46 (21)</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.) 47 (22)</p> <hr/> <p>8. In some instances, travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, the Bahamas, and Bermuda go through the U.S. federal inspection process before they board the plane. This procedure is called preclearance. Passengers who have been precleared do not have to go through an inspection process again in the U.S. The preclearance process requires that U.S. inspection staff be stationed in those foreign countries, resulting in additional cost to the government and airlines.</p> <p>Do you feel this procedure should be continued in these three countries? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 43 (23)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes 16</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain 19</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no 9</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No <math>\frac{13}{100}</math></p> <p>9. Do you feel these procedures should be expanded to other countries, where possible? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 39 (24)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes 15</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain 24</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no 8</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No <math>\frac{14}{100}</math></p>	<p>10. The preclearance procedures began in Canada in 1952 and have since been started in the Bahamas and Bermuda. Have you ever been through this preclearance process? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 40 (25)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 12.) 56</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain (Go to Question 12.) <math>\frac{4}{100}</math></p> <p>11. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the preclearance inspection process? <i>(Check one.)</i> APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied 53 (26)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied 32</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 9</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied 4</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied <math>\frac{2}{100}</math></p> <p>12. About how many times during the past two years have you gone through the U.S. inspection process as a result of travel by <u>sea</u> or <u>air</u>? <i>(Enter number.)</i></p> <p><input type="text" value=""/> Number of times. (27-29)</p> <p>13. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please enter them in the space below. (30)</p>
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PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE. THANK YOU.



U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

**SURVEY OF  
INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' EXPERIENCE  
WITH THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS  
MIAMI SEAPORT<sup>1/</sup>**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. General Accounting Office is an agency of Congress responsible for evaluating Federal programs. Congress has asked us to examine the Federal inspection process that international travelers must go through. The aim of our study is to determine how this inspection process could be improved. An important objective of this study is to find out from international travelers what they think about the current procedures.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain valuable input from international travelers like yourself. Without your response our work will be made more difficult, and we may not be able to fully identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

Throughout this questionnaire there are numbers printed within parentheses to assist our keypuncher in coding your responses. Please disregard these numbers.

We have made this questionnaire as short and simple to answer as we could. Please take the time to answer and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

In answering questions 1 to 7, please consider only your experiences regarding the inspection you went through when you returned to the U.S. on the date stated in the attached letter.

1. Was your trip primarily for business or pleasure? (Check one.)

	RESPONSE PERCENTAGES	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Business	4	(7)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure	$\frac{96}{100}$	

2. After you left the plane/ship, about how many minutes did it take you to go through the entire inspection process? Include any time spent obtaining your luggage, entering the inspection area and going through the inspection process. (Enter total number of minutes; for example enter 1,20 for 20 minutes.)

     Number of minutes (8-10)

<sup>1/</sup> Percentages shown next to questions summarize responses of 232 travelers answering our questionnaires. Percentages are rounded.

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection process? (Check one box for each line.)

APPLICABLE RESPONSE	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	6) Does not apply
1) Time it took to leave plane/ship after arrival	49	36	6	5	4	(11)
2) Time it took to obtain your luggage	51	37	4	4	4	(12)
3) Courtesy of the inspection officer(s)	73	19	3	5	0	(13)
4) Time it took to compute duty/taxes	52	36	2	7	3	(14)
5) Time it took to get through the entire inspection process	55	31	8	3	3	(15)

4. You were required to fill out a customs declaration form before you went through inspection. How satisfied were you with the clarity of the form and the amount of time it took to fill out? (Check one box for each line.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	
1) Clarity of form	63	28	6	1	2	(16)
2) Time required to fill out form	59	33	7	1	0	(17)

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the inspection process? (Check one.)

	RESPONSE PERCENTAGES	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	58	(18)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied	36	
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	
4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied	3	
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied	$\frac{1}{100}$	

(OVER)

6. The time required to go through the inspection process can vary. Did the amount of time you spent entering or going through the inspection process cause any serious problems for you? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 3 (19)
- 2)  No (Go to Question 8.)  $\frac{97}{100}$

7. Which, if any, of the following problems resulted from the inspection process? (Check all that apply.)

- 1)  Missed connecting transportation 68 (20)
- 2)  Arrived late for appointment 0 (21)
- 3)  Other (Please specify.)  $\frac{1}{36}$  (22)

8. In some instances, travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, the Bahamas, and Bermuda go through the U.S. federal inspection process before they board the plane. This procedure is called preclearance. Passengers who have been precleared do not have to go through an inspection process again in the U.S. The preclearance process requires that U.S. inspection staff be stationed in those foreign countries, resulting in additional cost to the government and airlines.

Do you feel this procedure should be continued in these three countries? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 38 (23)
- 2)  Probably yes 9
- 3)  Uncertain 19
- 4)  Probably no 10
- 5)  No  $\frac{24}{100}$

9. Do you feel these procedures should be expanded to other countries, where possible? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 35 (24)
- 2)  Probably yes 9
- 3)  Uncertain 22
- 4)  Probably no 7
- 5)  No  $\frac{27}{100}$

1/Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could check more than one answer.

10. The preclearance procedures began in Canada in 1952 and have since been started in the Bahamas and Bermuda. Have you ever been through this preclearance process? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 39 (25)
- 2)  No (Go to Question 12.) 58
- 3)  Uncertain (Go to Question 12.)  $\frac{3}{100}$

11. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the preclearance inspection process? (Check one.) APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Very satisfied 61 (26)
- 2)  Generally satisfied 30
- 3)  Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 4
- 4)  Generally dissatisfied 4
- 5)  Very dissatisfied  $\frac{1}{100}$

12. About how many times during the past two years have you gone through the U.S. inspection process as a result of travel by sea or air? (Enter number.)

     Number of times. (27-29)

13. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please enter them in the space below. (30)

PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE. THANK YOU.



U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

**SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS**

LOS ANGELES AIRPORT1/

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. General Accounting Office is an agency of Congress responsible for evaluating Federal programs. Congress has asked us to examine the Federal inspection process that international travelers must go through. The aim of our study is to determine how this inspection process could be improved. An important objective of this study is to find out from international travelers what they think about the current procedures.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain valuable input from international travelers like yourself. Without your response our work will be made more difficult, and we may not be able to fully identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

Throughout this questionnaire there are numbers printed within parentheses to assist our keypuncher in coding your responses. Please disregard these numbers.

We have made this questionnaire as short and simple to answer as we could. Please take the time to answer and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

In answering questions 1 to 7, please consider only your experiences regarding the inspection you went through when you returned to the U.S. on the date stated in the attached letter.

1. Was your trip primarily for business or pleasure? (Check one.)

	RESPONSE PERCENTAGES	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Business	16	(7)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure	$\frac{84}{100}$	

2. After you left the plane/ship, about how many minutes did it take you to go through the entire inspection process? Include any time spent obtaining your luggage, entering the inspection area and going through the inspection process. (Enter total number of minutes; for example enter 120 for 20 minutes.)

                    Number of minutes (8-10)

1/ Percentages shown next to questions summarize responses of 122 travelers answering our questionnaires. Percentages are rounded.

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection process? (Check one box for each line.)

	APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES						
	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	6) Does not apply	
1) Time it took to leave plane/ship after arrival	35	46	11	6	2		(11)
2) Time it took to obtain your luggage	13	35	18	17	17		(12)
3) Courtesy of the inspection officer(s)	56	36	7	1	0		(13)
4) Time it took to compute duty/taxes	48	38	9	5	0		(14)
5) Time it took to get through the entire inspection process	28	44	14	7	7		(15)

4. You were required to fill out a customs declaration form before you went through inspection. How satisfied were you with the clarity of the form and the amount of time it took to fill out? (Check one box for each line.)

	RESPONSE PERCENTAGES					
	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	
1) Clarity of form	42	42	12	4	0	(16)
2) Time required to fill out form	38	50	10	1	1	(17)

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the inspection process? (Check one.)

	RESPONSE PERCENTAGES	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	34	(18)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied	49	
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	
4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied	6	
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied	$\frac{1}{100}$	

(OVER)

6. The time required to go through the inspection process can vary. Did the amount of time you spent entering or going through the inspection process cause any serious problems for you? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 7 (19)
  - 2)  No (Go to Question 8.) 93 (20)
- 100

7. Which, if any, of the following problems resulted from the time the inspection process took? (Check all that apply.)

- APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES
- 1)  Missed connecting transportation 29 (20)
  - 2)  Arrived late for appointment 43 (21)
  - 3)  Other (Please specify.) 28 (22)

8. In some instances, travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, the Bahamas, and Bermuda go through the U.S. federal inspection process before they board the plane. This procedure is called preclearance. Passengers who have been precleared do not have to go through an inspection process again in the U.S. The preclearance process requires that U.S. inspection staff be stationed in those foreign countries, resulting in additional cost to the government and airlines.

Do you feel this procedure should be continued in these three countries? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 25 (23)
  - 2)  Probably yes 15
  - 3)  Uncertain 28
  - 4)  Probably no 13
  - 5)  No 19 (22)
- 100

9. Do you feel these procedures should be expanded to other countries, where possible? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 27 (24)
  - 2)  Probably yes 18
  - 3)  Uncertain 21
  - 4)  Probably no 6
  - 5)  No 28 (22)
- 100

10. The preclearance procedures began in Canada in 1952 and have since been started in the Bahamas and Bermuda. Have you ever been through this preclearance process? (Check one.) RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

- 1)  Yes 19 (25)
  - 2)  No (Go to Question 12.) 79
  - 3)  Uncertain (Go to Question 12.) 2 (2)
- 100

11. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the preclearance inspection process? (Check one.)

- APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES
- 1)  Very satisfied 26 (26)
  - 2)  Generally satisfied 58
  - 3)  Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 16
  - 4)  Generally dissatisfied 0
  - 5)  Very dissatisfied 0 (0)
- 100

12. About how many times during the past two years have you gone through the U.S. inspection process as a result of travel by sea or air? (Enter number.)

Number of times. (27-29)

13. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please enter them in the space below. (30)

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U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

**SURVEY OF  
INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' EXPERIENCE  
WITH THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS**  
MIAMI AIRPORT<sup>1/</sup>

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. General Accounting Office is an agency of Congress responsible for evaluating Federal programs. Congress has asked us to examine the Federal inspection process that international travelers must go through. The aim of our study is to determine how this inspection process could be improved. An important objective of this study is to find out from international travelers what they think about the current procedures.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain valuable input from international travelers like yourself. Without your response our work will be made more difficult, and we may not be able to fully identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

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We have made this questionnaire as short and simple to answer as we could. Please take the time to answer and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

In answering questions 1 to 7, please consider only your experiences regarding the inspection you went through when you returned to the U.S. on the date stated in the attached letter.

1. Was your trip primarily for business or pleasure? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1)  Business 44 (7)

2)  Pleasure 56  
100

2. After you left the plane/ship, about how many minutes did it take you to go through the entire inspection process? Include any time spent obtaining your luggage, entering the inspection area and going through the inspection process. (Enter total number of minutes; for example enter 121 for 20 minutes.)

     Number of minutes (8-10)

1/ Percentages shown next to questions summarize responses of 210 travelers answering our questionnaires. Percentages are rounded.

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection process? (Check one box for each line.)

APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	6) Does not apply	
1) Time it took to leave plane/ship after arrival	36	43	10	8	3		(11)
2) Time it took to obtain your luggage	18	36	15	19	12		(12)
3) Courtesy of the inspection officer(s)	55	35	7	2	1		(13)
4) Time it took to compute duty/taxes	36	40	13	7	4		(14)
5) Time it took to get through the entire inspection process	25	39	10	14	12		(15)

4. You were required to fill out a customs declaration form before you went through inspection. How satisfied were you with the clarity of the form and the amount of time it took to fill out? (Check one box for each line.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	
1) Clarity of form	40	47	9	4	0	(16)
2) Time required to fill out form	46	41	12	0	1	(17)

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the inspection process? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	26	(18)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied	48	
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	
4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied	9	
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied	6	
	100	

(OVER)

<p>6. The time required to go through the inspection process can vary. Did the amount of time you spent entering or going through the inspection process cause any serious problems for you? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 16 (19)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 8.) 84</p> <p style="text-align: right;">100</p> <p>7. Which, if any, of the following problems resulted from the time the inspection process took? <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Missed connecting transportation 46 (20)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Arrived late for appointment 9 (21)</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.) 45 (22)</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>8. In some instances, travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, the Bahamas, and Bermuda go through the U.S. federal inspection process before they board the plane. This procedure is called preclearance. Passengers who have been precleared do not have to go through an inspection process again in the U.S. The preclearance process requires that U.S. inspection staff be stationed in those foreign countries, resulting in additional cost to the government and airlines.</p> <p>Do you feel this procedure should be continued in these three countries? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 39 (23)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes 19</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain 16</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no 12</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No 14</p> <p style="text-align: right;">100</p> <p>9. Do you feel these procedures should be expanded to other countries, where possible? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 37 (24)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes 17</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain 15</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no 12</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No 19</p> <p style="text-align: right;">100</p>	<p>10. The preclearance procedures began in Canada in 1952 and have since been started in the Bahamas and Bermuda. Have you ever been through this preclearance process? <i>(Check one.)</i> RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 33 (25)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 12.) 63</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain (Go to Question 12.) 4</p> <p style="text-align: right;">100</p> <p>11. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the preclearance inspection process? <i>(Check one.)</i> APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</p> <p>1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied 67 (26)</p> <p>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied 23</p> <p>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 7</p> <p>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied 0</p> <p>5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">100</p> <p>12. About how many times during the past two years have you gone through the U.S. inspection process as a result of travel by <u>sea</u> or <u>air</u>? <i>(Enter number.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> _ _ _  Number of times. (27-29)</p> <p>13. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please enter them in the space below. (30)</p>
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PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE. THANK YOU.





U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

**SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE FEDERAL INSPECTION PROCESS**  
NEW YORK AIRPORT<sup>1/</sup>

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. General Accounting Office is an agency of Congress responsible for evaluating Federal programs. Congress has asked us to examine the Federal inspection process that international travelers must go through. The aim of our study is to determine how this inspection process could be improved. An important objective of this study is to find out from international travelers what they think about the current procedures.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain valuable input from international travelers like yourself. Without your response our work will be made more difficult, and we may not be able to fully identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

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We have made this questionnaire as short and simple to answer as we could. Please take the time to answer and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

In answering questions 1 to 7, please consider only your experiences regarding the inspection you went through when you returned to the U.S. on the date stated in the attached letter.

1. Was your trip primarily for business or pleasure? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1)  Business 40 (7)

2)  Pleasure  $\frac{60}{100}$

2. After you left the plane/ship, about how many minutes did it take you to go through the entire inspection process? Include any time spent obtaining your luggage, entering the inspection area and going through the inspection process. (Enter total number of minutes; for example enter 120 for 20 minutes.)

     Number of minutes (8-10)

<sup>1/</sup> Percentages shown next to questions summarize responses of 224 travelers answering our questionnaires. Percentages are rounded.

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection process? (Check one box for each line.)

APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	6) Does not apply	
1) Time it took to leave plane/ship after arrival	41	43	10	3	3		(11)
2) Time it took to obtain your luggage	18	28	22	13	19		(12)
3) Courtesy of the inspection officer(s)	55	36	7	2	0		(13)
4) Time it took to compute duty/taxes	46	31	15	4	4		(14)
5) Time it took to get through the entire inspection process	35	37	11	9	8		(15)

4. You were required to fill out a customs declaration form before you went through inspection. How satisfied were you with the clarity of the form and the amount of time it took to fill out? (Check one box for each line.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

	1) Very satisfied	2) Generally satisfied	3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4) Generally dissatisfied	5) Very dissatisfied	
1) Clarity of form	45	42	9	4	0	(16)
2) Time required to fill out form	45	39	13	3	0	(17)

5. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the inspection process? (Check one.)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	37	(18)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied	45	
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	
4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied	5	
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied	3	
	<u>100</u>	

(OVER)

<p>6. The time required to go through the inspection process can vary. Did the amount of time you spent entering or going through the inspection process cause any serious problems for you? <i>(Check one.)</i>      <b>RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">14</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(19)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 8.)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">86</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>7. Which, if any, of the following problems resulted from the time the inspection process took? <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>      <b>APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Missed connecting transportation</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">70</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Arrived late for appointment</td> <td style="text-align: right;">28</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(21)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1/ 9</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(22)</td> </tr> </table> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>8. In some instances, travelers entering the U.S. from Canada, the Bahamas, and Bermuda go through the U.S. federal inspection process before they board the plane. This procedure is called preclearance. Passengers who have been precleared do not have to go through an inspection process again in the U.S. The preclearance process requires that U.S. inspection staff be stationed in those foreign countries, resulting in additional cost to the government and airlines.</p> <p>Do you feel this procedure should be continued in these three countries? <i>(Check one.)</i>      <b>RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">42</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(23)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>9. Do you feel these procedures should be expanded to other countries, where possible? <i>(Check one.)</i>      <b>RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">34</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(24)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no</td> <td style="text-align: right;">14</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5) <input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>1</u>/Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could check more than one answer.</p>	1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	14		(19)	2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 8.)	86				100			1) <input type="checkbox"/> Missed connecting transportation	70		(20)	2) <input type="checkbox"/> Arrived late for appointment	28		(21)	3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.)	1/ 9		(22)	1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	42		(23)	2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes	9			3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	18			4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no	13			5) <input type="checkbox"/> No	18				100			1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	34		(24)	2) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes	10			3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	19			4) <input type="checkbox"/> Probably no	14			5) <input type="checkbox"/> No	23				100			<p>10. The preclearance procedures began in Canada in 1952 and have since been started in the Bahamas and Bermuda. Have you ever been through this preclearance process? <i>(Check one.)</i>      <b>RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">43</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(25)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Go to Question 12.)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">55</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain (Go to Question 12.)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>11. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the preclearance inspection process? <i>(Check one.)</i>      <b>APPLICABLE RESPONSE PERCENTAGES</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: right;">60</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">(26)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied</td> <td style="text-align: right;">29</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) <input type="checkbox"/> Generally dissatisfied</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>12. About how many times during the past two years have you gone through the U.S. inspection process as a result of travel by <u>sea</u> or <u>air</u>? <i>(Enter number.)</i></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"> <table style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> </tr> </table>         Number of times.      (27-29)     </p> <p>13. 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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

# Memorandum

SUBJECT: Response to GAO Draft Report "More Can Be Done to Speed the Entry of International Travelers"

DATE: August 16, 1979

TO: L. L. Free  
Acting Assistant Inspector General  
for Administration, Congressional  
Reporting and Liaison, OIG

*J 8-14-79*

We have reviewed the subject draft report and our comments are enclosed. We agree that delays in processing procedures for international travelers need to be reduced as far as possible to ease airport congestion and spare passengers excessive waiting without weakening enforcement of the various Customs, Immigration, and APHIS laws and regulations.



F. J. Mulhern  
Administrator

Enclosure

RESPONSE TO GAO DRAFT REPORT  
"MORE CAN BE DONE TO SPEED THE ENTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS"

Expediting the clearance process of international travelers without weakening law enforcement is indeed a challenge which requires considerable study, close scrutiny, and development of objectives which adequately satisfy the mandate of the 1978 Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act. The goals of the three Federal Agencies involved in the clearance process-- Customs, Immigration, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)--include the common goal of rapid and efficient clearance techniques as well as the individual Agencies' goals as set forth in the draft report. Attempting to minimize passenger delays while effectively enforcing Federal laws requires constant assessment of policies and procedures on the part of each of these Agencies to insure that neither speediness nor effectiveness is hampered or sacrificed. APHIS is firmly committed to this and we recognize the need for inter-agency cooperation, particularly in light of the ever-increasing numbers of international travelers. We agree that unnecessary delays exist, and they can and should be eliminated. However, any lessening of the degree of baggage inspection or incorporating new systems or methods without first evaluating their efficacy and validity could result in an introduction of a plant or animal pest or disease that we could neither contain nor eradicate and could cost the consumer billions of dollars.

Agricultural quarantine inspection at international ports of entry is the Nation's first line of defense against the entry of foreign plant and animal pests and diseases. If such a disease or pest were introduced, U.S. food (including animal) production could be threatened. Even one exotic animal disease outbreak of a serious nature could cost billions of dollars annually in production costs, eradication efforts, loss of export markets, or adjusting to live with the introduced disease.

The United States is very fortunate to be free of more than 120 potentially dangerous foreign pests and animal diseases. Our Veterinary Services (VS) and Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) programs are designed to prevent the entry, establishment, and spread of these diseases and pests. One of the most important ways they can enter the U.S. is by means of travelers' baggage. Over 80 percent of all contraband that can transport these unwanted pests and diseases is confiscated annually from travelers' baggage and more than half of this amount comes from air passengers. Air passenger baggage is an extremely high-risk avenue for introduction of a pest or disease, and hand-carried baggage has been shown to produce more than 65 percent of the contraband found.

The animal and plant products most often carried by air travelers are considered to be dangerous from the standpoint of the likelihood that they are infected with a plant or animal disease organism. These materials are often home-grown products and/or home-processed sausage, salami, or other meat products. These are more likely to carry pests and disease organisms than commercially grown, prepared, or processed products which enter the country under strict permit and inspection controls.

APHIS is eager to adopt whatever clearance procedures are best suited to accomplish the objectives of Customs, Immigration and Agriculture to speed the entry of air travelers. While a form of one-stop and Red/Green systems has been used successfully in airports of other countries, we have found that European countries which employ the Red/Green system of inspection do not have agricultural import requirements as stringent as, or more stringent than, the U.S., and many of the animal and plant diseases and pests exotic to the U.S. already exist in those countries. Many of the pests have natural parasites and predators which keep their numbers down and under control in the country of origin. The agricultural production of all the European countries combined, which have instituted the Red/Green system, does not equal the annual net worth of the agricultural production of the U.S. alone, estimated to be in excess of \$500 billion.

The Red/Green system is not used in New Zealand, Australia, or Japan, where the concern with the risk of plant pest and animal disease introduction equals that of the U.S. As for effectiveness of Canadian inspection procedures, Canada experienced an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in 1952, which origin was attributed to a farm worker entering Canada from Germany with meat products. In the Great Britain outbreak of 1967-68, indemnity costs alone were \$80 million. This outbreak resulted from the legal importation of lamb carcasses from an FMD country. France is presently experiencing an extensive outbreak of FMD. The U.S. has not had an outbreak of FMD since 1929, and it is estimated that FMD would have a \$12 billion impact in the first 15 years if the disease were introduced in this country today. African swine fever (ASF) is another animal disease which may enter the U.S. through pork products contained in passenger baggage. This virus disease spread into two European and three Western Hemisphere countries in 1978. There is no known treatment to combat this disease. The estimated economic impact in the U.S. in terms of higher consumer prices alone would be \$2.25 billion in the first 10 years in addition to losses of export markets.

It is not clear whether the one-tenth of one percent violation figures (incoming travelers found to be in violation of laws and regulations) refer to total Customs and agricultural violations or just Customs violations. Whatever the case may be, we must note that in fiscal year 1978, for meat or meat products alone, 54,684 individual lots comprised of 136,529 pounds of meat were confiscated from arriving air travelers. All of this meat was a potential source of animal disease introduction and was in violation of agricultural laws and/or regulations. Experience has shown that even though there is a Customs Declaration form with questions relative to plant and animal materials, many travelers do not consider small amounts of fruits, vegetables, or meats as applicable to import requirements. Therefore, in many cases, they do not declare them.

While we recognize some of the disadvantages of preclearance at foreign ports, we also believe this to be an important option for facilitating travelers which warrants further testing. Passengers usually arrive at departure airports well in advance of the scheduled departure time, and this time could be put to use in preclearance inspection. The pest risk would be removed at source, and the passenger would be free upon arrival in the U.S. to leave or make connecting flights as soon as his baggage was available for pickup.

Preclearance costs would be considerably less prohibitive if looked at in the context that three agricultural quarantine inspectors at a funnel gateway overseas such as Paris, Rome, or London, could do the job that 15 inspectors would do at the various U.S. airports of arrival at which those flights would enter. Military preclearance has worked as well in Europe and Department of Defense wishes to extend it to the Pacific area as an example that preclearance can work.

Some innovative approaches are presently underway or being considered, to assist APHIS in providing better protection while expediting international travelers. We are participating in the one-step inspection tests for baggage inspection with Customs and Immigration. This includes secondary inspection, identifying agricultural suspects for Customs, and incorporating the 100 percent hand-baggage inspection requirement into one-stop. We are participating in the citizen by-pass system, Phase II, as implemented at Dulles International Airport, Washington. Immigration inspectors do hand-baggage inspection of aliens, and APHIS furnishes an officer in the Immigration area in addition to the Customs area.

Tests at Houston and San Antonio airports are underway to develop a system of fines for attempts to smuggle small lots of agricultural commodities confiscated from baggage.

In addition, the use of detector dogs to sniff out meat and fruit products in parcels is underway at the U.S. Customs Detector Dog Training Academy in Front Royal, Virginia.

Preliminary discussions have been concluded, cooperative agreements have been signed, and money has been committed for first-year feasibility studies to determine the presence in baggage, cargo, etc., of live pests or prohibited plant and animal material through the use of chemical sniffer probes, X-ray techniques, and microwave.

APHIS has been given the responsibility by the Congress to maintain a tight barrier against introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases through passage of laws and overall endorsement of our efforts through continually approving appropriation increases. We are aware that the increasing numbers of international air travelers demand a streamlining of the processing procedures, and we are continually striving to meet that demand with the protection of our Nation's agriculture in mind, through constant reevaluation of our operations and constant search for new and improved processing procedures.



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

Address Reply to the  
Division Indicated  
and Refer to Initials and Number

AUG 14 1979

Mr. Allen R. Voss  
Director  
General Government Division  
United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Voss:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the draft report entitled "More Can Be Done To Speed The Entry Of International Travelers."

The Department of Justice (DOJ) agrees with the General Accounting Office's (GAO) assessment that much needs to be done to facilitate the entry of international travelers into the United States. Extensive efforts have been, and continue to be made to accomplish this goal. Contrary to the assertions in the report, great strides have been made in improving cooperation between Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), United States Customs Service (USCS), and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). There are now 20 major gateway air terminals wherein the United States citizen bypass has been implemented. In addition, four more will be added prior to September 15, 1979. These and many other changes are the direct result of cooperative efforts.

The one-stop inspection concept is now operational in Philadelphia and is scheduled for implementation at San Antonio on August 13, 1979. Los Angeles will open an interim one-stop inspection facility during November; it was scheduled for July but was delayed due to construction problems. INS plans to implement one-stop inspection for the first time at a preclearance station in Edmonton, Alberta on October 8, 1979. The expansion of one-stop inspection at other locations is dependent upon the construction or renovation of facilities that will accommodate the concept.



-2-

The increase in air passenger arrivals has grown at a staggering rate in recent years. Most major airports in the United States have been unable to improve facilities commensurate with the increase in arrivals. Consequently, the Federal inspection agencies are in the unenviable position of being criticized by the traveling public for circumstances over which they have no control. Deregulation will compound the problem because air routes are being granted without regard to staffing requirements of the Federal inspection agencies.

Operationally, DOJ has no objection to the primary inspection taking place before travelers claim their checked baggage. However, USCS and APHIS may object from an enforcement point of view. The adoption of this procedure would, however, not alleviate the overcrowded conditions at most major United States airports. Without adequate facilities for inspections, the Federal inspection services cannot function efficiently, regardless of staffing availability.

Although concededly expensive, preclearance of passengers prior to departure from a foreign country is considered to be the ultimate in passenger facilitation and is cost-effective for several reasons. As an example, Montreal, Quebec is a preclearance station. Federal inspection officers in Montreal inspect flights that are destined for New York City, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and Miami on a scheduled basis, thereby reducing the pressure on these airports' inspection facilities. Additionally, passengers leaving Montreal for destinations where no inspection facilities are available are often precleared. Without preclearance, staffing would have to be provided on an as needed basis at these locations. In these instances, preclearance is not excessively expensive.

When flights destined for the United States are precleared:

1. Exclusion and deportation expenses are avoided if the traveler is found inadmissible to the United States. The expense of return air fare is saved but more importantly, the embarrassment of being denied admittance and returned to the country of origin is avoided.
2. They arrive in the United States as domestic flights with no formalities upon arrival.



-3-

3. Pressure on overcrowded Federal inspection facilities is alleviated.
4. The "peaking" problem which is so prevalent at Federal inspection facilities is reduced.

INS's experience has shown that international air travelers prefer preclearance because they are free to leave the airport on arrival in the United States, or they can make immediate transfers to domestic flights without the delays that are usually encountered for Federal inspection.

Also, as stated above, given the same number of passengers, preclearance reduces Federal inspection agencies' manpower needs because a lesser number of inspection officers are required at a preclearance station than are required at United States airports of entry.

If preclearance of passengers were extended to Mexico City, for example, staffing needs would be reduced at 14 United States airports of entry. USCS and the Drug Enforcement Administration are generally opposed to preclearance because these agencies lack the authority to prosecute violators who are uncovered in foreign countries. However, host country authorities often mete out more serious sentences than United States authorities. In addition, DOJ believes that the enforcement capability is not lost in a preclearance atmosphere. DOJ also believes it is preferable to deny the traveler's entry at the departure point rather than having the possible deportation or other problems after arriving in the United States.


The one-stop inspection and the United States bypass have helped to facilitate the entry of international travelers into the United States. The DOJ believes that until the airlines can improve the baggage delivery system, neither concept compares favorably with preclearance.

The DOJ will continue to cooperate with USCS and the APHIS in efforts to further improve the inspection process and promote facilitation to international travelers wishing to enter or reenter the United States.

-4-

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft report. Should you desire any additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

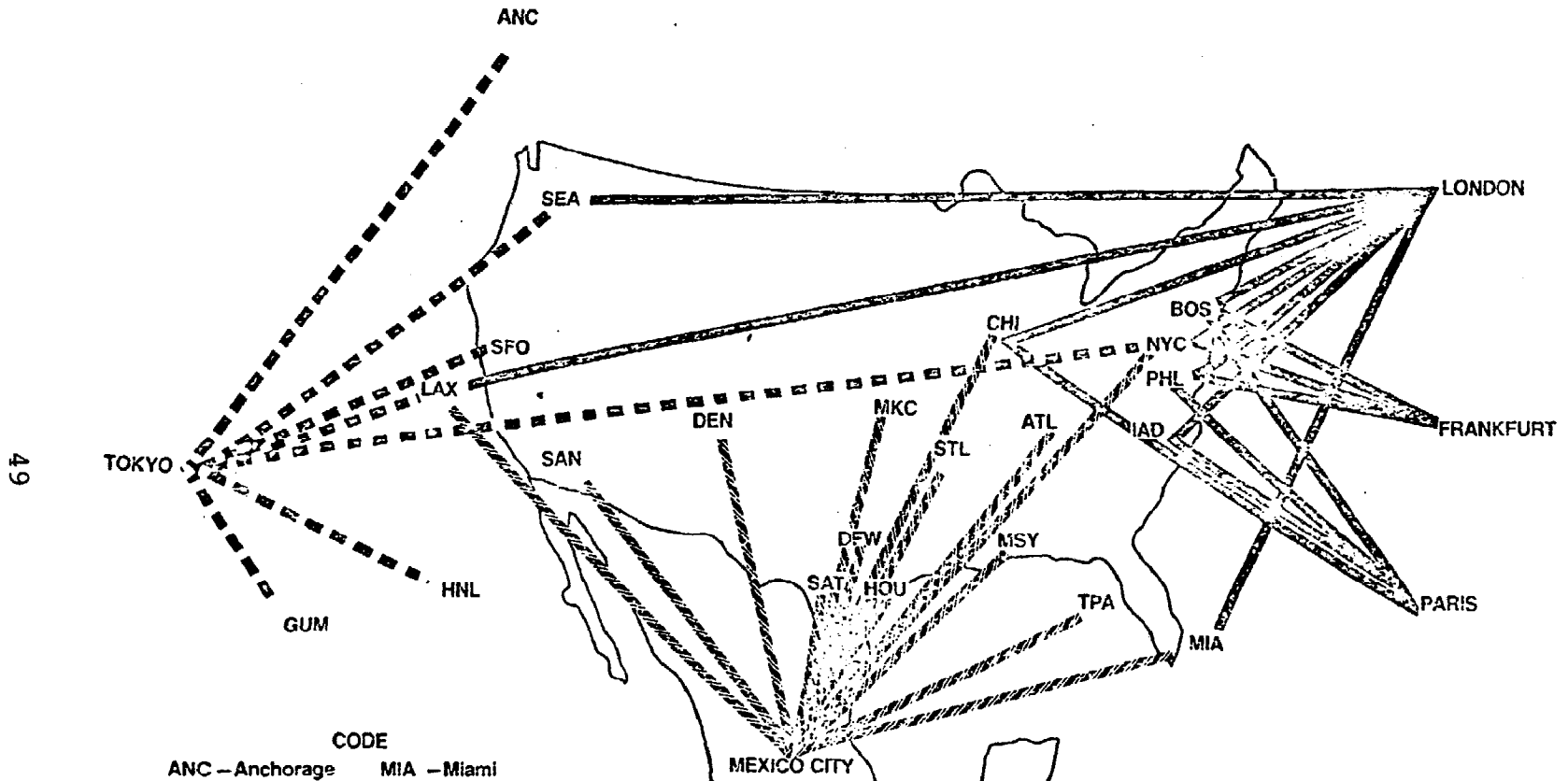
  
Kevin D. Rooney  
Assistant Attorney General  
for Administration

Enclosure

### PROPOSED PRECLEARANCE LOCATIONS

Applicable Routes to U. S. Points

Enclosure



49

**CODE**

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| ANC - Anchorage   | MIA - Miami         |
| ATL - Atlanta     | MKC - Kansas City   |
| BOS - Boston      | MSY - New Orleans   |
| CHI - Chicago     | NYC - New York City |
| DEN - Denver      | PHL - Philadelphia  |
| DFW - Dallas      | SAN - San Diego     |
| GUM - Guam        | SAT - San Antonio   |
| HNL - Honolulu    | SEA - Seattle       |
| HOU - Houston     | SFO - San Francisco |
| IAD - Washington  | STL - St. Louis     |
| LAX - Los Angeles | TPA - Tampa         |

CHART



ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

AUG 10 1979

Dear Mr. Voss:

I appreciated the opportunity to comment on the GAO draft report More Can be Done to Speed the Entry of International Travelers. As international travel has grown, the Department's concern and efforts in resolving the congestive situation at major U.S. international arrival ports have increased. The Department and the U.S. Customs Service, in conjunction with Immigration and Agriculture, are receptive to suggestions which would help improve the situation.

We agree with GAO that today the main challenge confronting the federal inspection services is the maintaining of a balance between minimizing passenger inconvenience, and at the same time, effectively maintaining the enforcement of U.S. laws. Treasury, however, cannot allow the "changing of enforcement priorities" to become the abandonment of Customs' responsibilities to enforce laws protecting the public against smuggling and potentially dangerous goods. Concurrently, we recognize that the inspectional services, working together can expedite the entry of international travelers without significantly weakening the law enforcement efforts. However, Treasury and Customs believe the citizen-by-pass and the one-stop systems, that the services are now initiating, can better achieve this goal than GAO's recommendations.

As Customs points out in the enclosed detailed comments, ten years ago, the federal inspection agencies did use the suggested GAO system, Accelerated Inspection System (AIS), but the agencies found AIS neither expedited passenger entry nor adequately safeguarded enforcement requirements. As a result, the program was terminated.

In addition, we believe GAO does not adequately evaluate many of the factors contributing to the delays and other passenger inconveniences that are beyond the inspection services' control. These factors include: inadequate and poorly located facilities, baggage delivery delays, airline schedules, and the rapid growth of the airline industry.

We agree with GAO that greater selectivity is key to decreasing passenger delays and believe one-stop, citizen-by-pass, and the Customs Compliance Measurement System will

help the agencies in that selectivity. If the GAO team had had the opportunity to visit the one-stop testing facility at Philadelphia, we believe they would be as enthusiastic as we are about one-stop. By the end of FY 81, less than 20 percent of all arriving air passengers will experience the conventional two-stop system with the initiation of one-stop and citizen-by-pass. Moreover, we will continue to explore the possibility of modifying the facilities requirements for implementation of one-stop inspection so that we can extend the benefits of this system to international travelers on a more expedited basis.

As indicated earlier, I have enclosed Customs specific comments on the draft report. I believe they will assist you in providing a complete analysis of the U. S. international travelers entry system.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to review the draft report. If you have any additional questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Davis  
Assistant Secretary  
(Enforcement and Operations)

Mr. Allen R. Voss  
Director  
General Government Division  
U. S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Enclosure

cc: U.S. Customs Service  
Department of Agriculture  
Immigration and Naturalization

SUBJECT: Comments on GAO Draft Report Entitled "More Can Be Done to Speed the Entry of International Travelers"

As requested, the following are our comments on the attached subject GAO draft report concerning Federal inspection of international passengers.

Chapter 1 of the draft report accurately describes the dual challenge facing Customs of facilitating the steadily increasing number of international air passengers while executing enforcement responsibilities that are growing in number and complexity. Including precleared passengers, approximately 25 million passengers arrived by air in FY 78; on page 1 of the draft it is reported that 21 million arrived in FY 78. The number of FY 78 passenger arrivals represents an increase of 513 percent when compared with the number of air passengers who arrived in FY 60. The number of Customs inspectors employed to process air passengers increased by only 103 percent during this time span. Our challenges have been made more difficult as almost all carriers desire to arrive during a few "choice" hours at airports with inspection facilities that are incapable of handling the enormous present day passenger volumes. Of the three airports surveyed by GAO, Miami and Los Angeles Airports have obsolete facilities which are the most inadequate of any in the U.S. Both, however, will have either new or completely renovated facilities by the end of FY 80.

Chapter 2 of the draft report addresses methods of expediting the clearance process. Customs has developed many such methods in just the last few years. We have been continually refining the primary screening and selectivity processes. Our "philosophy" of primary inspection has changed from one of concentrating on baggage examination to one of placing major importance on the passenger interview. Through analysis of previous seizures, various "profiles" of potential smugglers and

GAO note: Page references have been changed to conform to the page numbers in this report.

other offenders have been developed. Extensive training and the continual programming of enforcement information into TECS (Treasury Enforcement Communications System) enables the inspector to make an intelligent decision, after a very brief inspection, as to whether a person warrants a closer look.

While inspection techniques and procedures have been improved to expedite passenger flow, Customs has also made major modifications to the overall processing systems at airports. We have developed CAPIS (Customs Accelerated Passenger Inspection System) so that the traffic flow of the majority of passengers is unimpeded by the few who are given more extensive examinations.

As stated on page 6 of the draft report, the Federal Inspection Services have undertaken major cooperative efforts to incorporate CAPIS into a "one stop" inspection system so that cross-trained and cross-designated Federal inspectors can perform all of the primary Federal inspection functions at one location. "One stop" inspection, which is similar to that which is in effect at the land borders, utilizes available manpower more efficiently as many of the duplicative aspects of the conventional "two stop" system are eliminated.

Because extensive queuing space is required for the "one stop" system, it is to be implemented at those airports which currently have sufficient facility space and at airports undergoing new facility construction or renovation. "One stop" inspection is in effect at Philadelphia Airport only, but will be implemented at San Antonio Airport and at a new terminal at Los Angeles Airport by the end of this calendar year. "One stop" is also scheduled for Houston Airport in March 1980 and for Orlando Airport in January 1981.

As a true "one stop" system is not feasible for most existing airports due to insufficient primary queuing space, the Federal Inspection Services have been cooperatively implementing "citizens bypass" systems at most major airports. This system, which is basically a first phase of "one stop" implementation, allows U.S. citizens with valid passports and military personnel traveling under official orders to bypass the Immigration area and proceed directly to the Customs inspection area after picking up their baggage. "Citizens bypass" is a "one stop" system for these travelers as the Customs inspectors perform all Federal inspection functions in the Customs area.

GAO includes passenger deplaning and baggage delivery delays in its total processing times on page 2 of the draft report, although these are delays that cannot be controlled by Customs. Prompt baggage delivery is

important for expeditious processing under any inspection system, but it is essential for "citizens bypass." If baggage is not timely delivered at a "citizens bypass" facility, foreign passengers are soon commingled with U.S. passengers at the baggage delivery area and the facilitative benefits are negated.

On page 9 of the draft report it is stated that because foreign travelers are put at the "back of the line" under "citizens bypass," an unfavorable impression is created. Time samples taken before and after "citizens bypass" implementation at Chicago's O'Hare, Honolulu, New York's JFK (IAB Terminal), and Miami (National Terminal) Airports showed that while citizens bypass accelerated U.S. citizen processing by an average of 16 percent, total passenger processing was also accelerated by an average of 15 percent. At Miami Airport's National Terminal, where National Airlines has designed a U.S. citizens' baggage segregation system, the respective gains were 51 percent and 35 percent as U.S. citizens were able to obtain their baggage first and be processed before the foreign travelers had left the Immigration area. While U.S. citizens do appear to benefit more than others, all passengers appear to share the benefits. Eventual "one stop" implementation should alleviate unfavorable perceptions.

On page 9 of the report it is stated that the Canadian officials' goal is to process flights within 30 minutes and that observed flight processing time was between 15 and 20 minutes. Because of the lack of data concerning the particular situations as well as the enforcement results of such processing, we can only comment that such goals and processing times are totally unrealistic for peak processing at the major U.S. airports. Based on time samplings at three of our busiest airports, Customs has established an initial goal of processing 70 percent of all arriving passengers within one hour of aircraft block time during peak periods.

On page 8 of the draft report, GAO states that Customs currently has "citizens bypass" at 14 airports, that Customs will have "one stop" at 3 airports by 1981, and that 65 percent of arriving international air travelers will continue to be processed under the traditional "two stop" system. In fact, "citizens bypass" is currently in effect at 23 terminals at 17 different airports. By the end of FY 81, "one stop" will have been implemented at 5 airports and, including "citizens bypass" airports, less than 20 percent of all arriving passengers will be processed under the conventional "two stop" system.

While we have had to overcome the usual reservations and opinion differences between some personnel of the Federal Inspection Services, enforcement efforts have not suffered because of "citizens bypass" and



"one stop" implementation. In fact, enforcement results at many of the airports have shown that improved enforcement is not incompatible with improved passenger facilitation. At Philadelphia Airport's "one stop" facility, narcotic seizures have increased 90 percent and Immigration referrals have increased 35 percent since implementation, despite initial pessimistic forecasts by many field personnel of both agencies.

On pages 6 and 14 of the draft report it is stated that "one stop" was previously attempted and then abandoned because of agency differences and lack of cooperation. In truth, it was not a true "one stop" which was implemented in 1968 at U.S. airports; rather, it was the Accelerated Inspection System (AIS) that was implemented and which was identical to the procedures recommended on page 16 of the draft report. A "one stop" system was in effect at the Nassau preclearance site. A conversion to "two stop" was made at that airport, however, because a consistently high Immigration referral rate combined with the absence of any Immigration secondary area resulted in much passenger congestion in the inspection area. The Federal Inspection Services converted to "two stop" for the same reason we are converting to "one stop" at only those airports which have adequate facilities. (See GAO note.)

AIS, which is described in the report as the Canadian system in which passengers are screened by Customs and Immigration before they claim their baggage, was implemented to expedite passenger processing. Because narcotic interdiction began to receive increased emphasis, the system was terminated. It was not terminated, however, because of lack of cooperation between the Federal Inspection Services.

The capability of an inspector to observe the amount and type of bags accompanying a traveler is an essential part of the profile and selectivity process. On page 11 of the draft, it is reported that 37 of the 49 inspectors (75 percent) responsible for major seizures stated that it was not necessary for them to have observed the baggage. However, it is important to keep in mind that these inspectors were assured that the "high risk" passengers, when identified as such, had all their own baggage readily available for inspection. Under AIS, smugglers can detect if they are to be selected for a secondary examination and can then make a baggage "switch" or leave their baggage unclaimed before they reach the secondary area. Thus, the "high risk" identification by the primary inspector is negated at secondary.

In addition to the negative enforcement aspects of "pre-baggage claim" inspection, it was found that such a system generally failed to achieve its goal of passenger facilitation. The system works well in theory and it works during hours of slow or moderate passenger traffic, i.e., it works during times when there are no delay problems and when we

GAO note: Customs is referring to the fact that there was a stop at the exit from the baggage area to turn in the coded card obtained during the primary inspection.

don't need it. For the first few flights of a peak period AIS works. As passengers trickle out of the Immigration area, their baggage is simultaneously being delivered. However, as the peak builds, the queue in the Immigration area also builds to the point that timely baggage availability is no longer a factor in facilitation. The GAO report paints a picture of a smooth exit after baggage claim under AIS. Our experience was one of mass confusion at the baggage claim area and at the secondary checkpoint area, resulting in loss of enforcement with no gain in facilitation. Furthermore, the statement on page 9 of the draft that going back to this system "would require only minor modification" is an oversimplification. To install this system with present day air passenger traffic, the current INS areas at the major airports would actually require more facility modification than our planned "one stop" system after baggage claim.

Throughout the GAO draft report, the European "red-green" system is mentioned as a viable method of expediting passengers. While passengers would obviously be facilitated under such a system; Customs, as it sees its statutory and regulatory obligations, cannot consider "red-green" as a viable alternative.

Like all U.S. statutes, the many laws concerning the Federal Inspection Services require voluntary compliance by the public. These laws, however, must also be enforced to be effective. Customs seizure and arrest statistics alone do not give an accurate justification for our current inspection system. A very large portion of passengers sent to a secondary area are not referred because of possible smuggling, but are referred because they either must pay duty, complete a fish and wildlife or currency declaration, obtain a Public Health release for imported pets or a temporary importation bond for articles which will be exported at a later date, have a determination made as to the authenticity of a work of art or an antique, etc. In many of these instances, the passengers are not aware of the myriad Customs and other agency requirements and may very well walk out the "green door" under such a system.

Customs does not keep statistics on merchandise voluntarily abandoned, forfeited, or exported because of various restrictions; neither do we record the number of pets found to need a rabies vaccination, the number of monetary declarations in excess of \$5,000, the number of plants, fruit, or salamis intercepted, etc. None of the applicable laws were enacted frivolously nor are they enforced frivolously. Periodic surveys are conducted to develop a subjective picture concerning the effectiveness of our various enforcement efforts for other agencies. A survey at JFK Airport during January 1979, showed that 11,604 passengers, or 3 percent of the total arrivals, were referred for secondary Agriculture inspection. The result of these referrals was 6,757 plant seizures and 1,411 animal product seizures.

The Department of Agriculture remains adamant in its policy of requiring 100 percent examination of "carry-on" baggage. Realizing the difficulty of detecting smuggled heroin, cocaine, jewelry, etc., one can easily imagine the Department of Agriculture's concern over microbes and insects being carried via soil, plants, fruit or animals and their byproducts. It is of such concern that the question regarding the possibility of a passenger's recent visit to a foreign country farm has recently been included in the baggage declaration. Most travelers, even when aware of the various prohibitions concerning plant and animal matter, do not realize the potential problems which could result as a consequence of a seemingly minor infraction. In 1971, the Agriculture Department spent over \$50 million to eradicate an outbreak of Newcastle disease brought into the U.S. by smuggled birds. The potential economic loss to the farming industry by this disease or from the introduction of anthrax, swine fever, various insect larvae, etc., could be immeasurable. Examination of "carry-on" luggage ensures compliance with the various Agriculture requirements and restrictions. Because of the diversity of areas from which air passengers arrive, airports are also considered higher "risk" than the land borders with regard to Agriculture requirements.

The deterrent effect of Customs and of law enforcement in general is one which cannot be measured, but it is one which is nevertheless real. Considering the efforts and ingenuity presently employed by narcotics traffickers, one can imagine how this narcotics flow would increase should Customs curtail its efforts. It is interesting to note that British Customs officers, working under a union "work-to-rule" action, discovered \$2 million worth of heroin at London's Heathrow Airport on August 4, 1979, because of stepped up secondary inspections. Under normal "red-green" procedures, this heroin would have probably gone undetected. By maintaining our current level of primary and secondary inspectional intensity at most airports, by modifying the intensity level at those airports where it is found to be inordinately high or low, and by continuing our progression toward CAPIS, "citizens bypass," and "one stop," we are continuing to execute our various enforcement responsibilities while also accelerating the overall inspectional process.

On page 13 of the draft report, GAO states that Customs has basically established a "red-green" inspection system at the Miami seaport for passengers arriving on cruises of seven days or less, but that the conventional system is used for cruises which have been outside U.S. Customs territory for more than seven days. This is not the practice in the Miami Region. Regardless of length of time outside the U.S., all vessel passengers are processed uniformly.

Miami had been using a system where passengers are interviewed aboard the vessel while the baggage is unloaded. Because of large baggage delays associated with all cruise vessels, this system proved to expedite passenger processing in some cases. Because "peaking" is also

found at the large seaports such as Miami, however, this "pre-baggage claim" inspection would not result in facilitative gains when many ships would arrive at one time. In this instance, the system failure parallels that of the previously mentioned AIS during peak hours at airports.

To meet the peaking crisis at Miami seaport, a further modification of the inspection system was made. This modification resulted in a vessel passenger system similar to the "red-green." It should be noted that this system was developed and implemented only because it has been found that vessel passengers have historically and uniformly proven to be very "low risk." The draft report states on page 14 that "The enforcement agencies should be no less committed to expediting the inspection of sea travelers than those arriving by air." Customs is no less committed; however, air passengers have a much higher risk factor than do sea passengers. While only 9 percent of all international passengers arrived by air in FY 78, over 93 percent of significant heroin and cocaine seizures were made at airports.

In Chapter 3, pages 22-23 of the draft report, GAO makes an excellent point about the cost of preclearance. For the past several years the Air Transport Association has requested Congress to increase Customs appropriations in order to pay for the excess cost of preclearance operations, i.e. housing, education, allowances, etc. Should this cost be assumed by the Federal Government, it would amount to a subsidy of those U.S. and foreign airlines using preclearance.

It should be further noted that the Federal Government is already estimated to be incurring an increased expense as a result of staffing preclearance locations. A Customs inspector is trained to not only clear passengers but also to clear imported cargo. Because of the legal and operational obstacles, it is impossible to preclear cargo; consequently, whenever an inspector at a preclearance site is not processing passengers, he is not efficiently utilized as there is no cargo that can be processed. When inspectors are not clearing passengers at domestic locations, they are often moved to cargo locations to process imported cargo for the remainder of the workday.

In looking at the costs incurred by the Customs Service at preclearance locations, it is necessary to clarify some statistical data that appears on page 23 of the draft report. On page 23 it states that "Customs incurred costs of about \$7.6 million but was reimbursed by airlines for \$2.2 million for the added costs." It appears that the net cost to Customs is \$5.4 million; however, an additional \$2.3 million was reimbursed to Customs for overtime costs. The net cost to Customs was about \$3.1 million.

In summation, GAO makes some good points about risk. We will shortly be implementing the Customs Compliance Measurement System (CCMP) to determine the narcotics risk of air passengers as a generic group. When the results become available next year, we will also know what our effectiveness is and if we should be doing more or less intensive inspections. It would seem premature to switch gears amid stream and suddenly embark on a system recommended by GAO that was dropped almost ten years ago and that would require at least as much facility modification as would the "one stop" system we have been developing with INS and APHIS at considerable cost in research and development. Furthermore, switching to this recommended system would certainly stretch our credibility with the air industry and give us and our sister Federal inspection agencies a reputation of having little stability in our planning. Moreover, the air industry has frequently stated that our "one stop" system is the first time that they have really been spurred on to improve baggage delivery techniques. The GAO recommended system will allow the airlines to once again ignore this basic aspect of passenger delay problems.

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