

Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
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Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision: Secure Borders and Open Doors in the Information Age

Remarks by [Secretary Rice](#) | [Secretary Chertoff](#)

Following is a joint Department of State/Department of Homeland Security announcement on the Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision:

(Begin Text)

Since 9/11, the Bush Administration has set many changes in motion to improve border security while still welcoming visitors to the United States. There have been two great challenges: to harmonize all these changes for maximum effect while maintaining the right balance between stronger security and facilitating travel.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff have been working together to manage these challenges. The result is a three part vision to guide the current and future development of solutions that ensure the best use of new technologies and the most efficient processes—all of which will ensure that our joint facilitation and security objectives are met.

Part One: Renewing America's Welcome with Improved Technology and Efficiency

The United States is a welcoming country, encouraging citizens from all over the world to visit, study, and do business. While security remains paramount, we will ensure that the experience of travelers reflects this welcoming spirit – and shows that the United States is open to business travelers, tourists and students – while ensuring that our homeland is secure. Actions underway to renew America's welcome include:

Model Ports of Entry: Create a Transparent and Welcoming Entry Process for All Visitors. In partnership with the private sector and State and local governments, the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and State will introduce a pilot "model airport" program to ensure a more welcoming environment for foreign visitors. The pilot projects at Houston and Dulles will entail such features as customized video messages for the public with practical information about the entry process, improved screening and efficient movement of people through the border entry process, and assistance for foreign travelers once they have been admitted to the United States. We will create a better, more transparent process – from the time a visitor requests a visa through their arrival in the United States.

Improve Business and Temporary Worker Visa Processing. Recognizing the importance to the U.S. business community of facilitating the visa process for their foreign employees, partners and customers, DHS and State are already offering new procedures – such as enrolling companies for expedited visa processing – and will introduce additional measures to help businesses and other travelers enter the United States, including a new pilot program to complete applications and make appointments online.

To help implement this goal, State has established a **Business Visa Center** to facilitate visa application procedures for U.S. businesses with upcoming travel or events. The Center is already helping hundreds of U.S. companies every month, and, based on continued feedback from users, will be enhanced to better meet the needs of the business community.

To decrease the wait time for visa appointments for travelers, and building on best practices at several posts, all American embassies and consulates have now established procedures to expedite the processing of business visas and are working closely with local American Chambers of Commerce in over 100 countries to expedite the visa process for bona fide business travelers.

Pilot Use of Digital Videoconferencing Technology. In some countries, bottlenecks may arise from the need for applicants to go to the only, or one of the few, U.S. diplomatic posts in their country where they can be interviewed. Digital videoconferencing technology could help transform this model for visa processing. A pilot program in the United Kingdom and other countries will test the viability of such a new approach, while ensuring the security of the visa process.

An enhanced partnership with the private sector. The Departments of State and Homeland Security will utilize an advisory board to provide regular, institutional, outreach with the travel, business and academic communities to take their views into account, to identify "best practices" when

developing travel policies, and to enlist their support to encourage visits to the United States. This advisory board will be asked to provide feedback on specific initiatives and serve as a reliable sounding board for innovative travel facilitation and security-related programs.

Encourage Students and Academic Study in the United States. DHS and State will expand the length of time foreign students may be issued student visas and arrive in the United States before their academic study. Student visas will be issued up to 120 days (as compared to 90 days under current regulations) and allow entry 45 days (compared to 30 days currently) in advance of studies. In early January, Secretary Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings co-hosted the U.S. University Presidents' Summit on International Education at which President Bush spoke. During the Summit, the Secretaries engaged leaders of U.S. higher education in a renewed partnership to strengthen international education, emphasizing its importance to the national interest.

Part Two: Travel Documents for the 21st Century

In the past, fraudulent travel documents have been used as a tool to cross borders and violate immigration laws without detection. Working closely with international partners, DHS and State have sought global compliance with standards that will establish more secure travel documents, by incorporating the latest technological advances to protect personal identity and expedite safe and secure travel across international borders. This part of the joint vision combines innovation in three parallel areas:

Ø **E-Passports.** The increased use of Machine Readable Passports with digitized photographs has heightened security and added protection against identity theft without adding to traveler waiting times at ports. The next generation of international travel documents – e-passports that contain a contactless chip to which biometric and biographic information is written – will further strengthen international border security by ensuring that both the document is authentic and that the person carrying an e-passport is the person to whom the document was issued, while ensuring the person's privacy. The U.S., like many other governments, is in the early stages of issuing such documents, in accordance with international standards, and will complete its transition to exclusive production of e-passports by the end of 2006.

Ø **Secure, Less Expensive Passport Card for the U.S. Land Border.** State and DHS will produce an inexpensive, secure, biometric passport card as an alternative to a traditional passport book for use by U.S. citizens in border communities who frequently cross our land borders. The card, which will be issued starting in late 2006, will meet the land border crossing requirements of the statutory Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The initiative requires that anyone applying for admission to the U.S., including U.S. citizens, present secure travel documents that denote citizenship and serve as proof of identity. As we develop the passport card, we are consulting closely with Canada and Mexico. DHS and State will ultimately offer a platform so that travelers can benefit from expedited or trusted traveler programs at all U.S. ports of entry. Members of existing trusted traveler programs such as FAST, NEXUS and SENTRI will continue to receive these program benefits.

Ø **Global Enrollment Network.** DHS and State will align travel document application processes by creating a Global Enrollment Network so data need only be captured once from an applicant, whether the person is encountered first by DHS or State. This data could then be viewed by both DHS and State officers, as appropriate, to verify a traveler's identity, citizenship, and other information that will help facilitate the admission process at the border.

Part Three: Smarter Screening

We rely on a screening process that allows government officials to leverage technology whether they encounter travelers at an embassy or consulate abroad or at a port-of-entry in the United States. Again, Secretaries Rice and Chertoff are working together to achieve synergy and balance from a set of linked advances, including:

Entry-Exit System with US-VISIT. Through US-VISIT, DHS officers can screen foreign passengers entering the U.S. against integrated databases which contain information on individuals with criminal, immigration violation, or terrorism-related history. Between January 2004 and December 2005, DHS has processed 45 million people under this new system, intercepting more than 970 persons with prior or suspected criminal or immigration violations based on biometrics alone. DHS has done this without making travelers wait any longer at air and sea ports of entry and have significantly reduced processing times at many land ports of entry through automation of old paper-based processes.

Develop and Use "Travel Intelligence" Before Travelers Arrive. One of the lessons learned from 9/11 is the power of using intelligence about the way suspected terrorists travel, since this is a critical vulnerability in their ability to carry out international operations. To assimilate and use this intelligence: **The Terrorist Screening Center** is a center that coordinates terrorist watchlist information across all

agencies of the U.S. government. DHS, State, and the Department of Justice as well as other agencies are co-located and work closely together to screen terrorists. Intelligence has repeatedly confirmed that such innovations have shaken the confidence of terrorists that they can readily enter the United States. **The Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center** also converts intelligence to law-enforcement action, canvassing a large body of information about human smugglers, traffickers and terrorist travel facilitators. The Center has also become a focal point for cooperation on these problems with foreign governments.

To help these innovations work in the field, the two departments are **Improving Operational Training for Terrorist Screeners**. DHS and State will provide continuous training for detecting indicators of terrorist manipulation of travel documents.

Real-time DHS-State Information Sharing. A critical obstacle to cooperation across the Federal government is to integrate data created by different agencies for different systems and different purposes. State and DHS are knocking down this technical barrier. State Department officers now have access to information that may help detect ineligible aliens, find fraud, and improve the efficiency and security of visa cases. Similarly, near real-time data on every visa issued is sent directly to Customs and Border Protection officers at ports of entry so that they can compare electronic files of every traveler entering the United States. All such sharing is done in a manner consistent with privacy rights and civil liberties.

These improvements open the way for **"Paperless" Visa Processing**. Electronic collection of visa information will further strengthen screening systems. State will pilot a fully electronic visa application by December 2006, to expand the collection and use of information. Going even further, State and DHS will conduct a joint pilot project to test a "paperless" visa system in which DHS officers will have electronic access to visas, passports, and biometric information.

Once able to share data, the two agencies must then coordinate what they will do with it. Part of the joint vision is to **Harmonize Screening Information**. DHS and State, working with other key agencies, will standardize screening criteria by the end of 2006 for consistency at every screening location and create a virtual clearinghouse by the end of 2007 to unify data that screeners now get from many different systems.

"One Stop" Redress for Travelers. Sometimes mistakes are made. Travelers need simpler ways to fix them. Therefore, DHS and State will accelerate efforts to establish a government-wide traveler screening redress process to resolve questions if travelers are incorrectly selected for additional screening.

Pool data with like-minded foreign governments. As the United States' systems and data improve, State and DHS must make these initiatives global. We will continue diplomatic efforts for the comprehensive exchange of watchlists, biometrics, and lost and stolen passport information with other governments as well as building capacity to effectively use this information. A central topic in this diplomacy is development of a common approach to protecting the privacy of the data, both in the way it is collected and the way it is shared.

(End Text)

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