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United States Department of State

The Inspector General

Washington, D.C. 20520-6817

March 2, 1995

The Honorable Richard P. Conaboy
Chairman
United States Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, NE
Suite 2-500
South Lobby
Washington, DC 20002-8002

Re: Notice of Proposed Amendments to Sentencing Guidelines, 60 FR
2430 (January 9, 1995)

Dear Mr. Chairman:

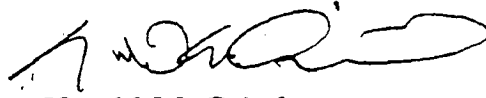
I am writing to express my strong support for Proposed Amendment 23(B) to the federal sentencing guidelines which would increase the base offense levels for passport and visa offenses.

We were pleased that Section 130009 of the Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322) contained significant increases in the maximum penalties for violations of passport and visa statutes (Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1541-1547). We understand that to make sure that the actual sentences imposed by judges for these offenses are also increased, the federal sentencing guidelines must be amended. Therefore, we urge you to adopt the proposed amendment, published for comment, which consolidates guideline sections 2L2.1 and 2L2.2 concerning passport and visa offenses, and provides additional enhancements if the offense was committed to facilitate certain unlawful conduct.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts investigations of passport and visa fraud under the authority of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. app. 3). The OIG's focus is on internal employee corruption cases, some of which involve bribery and extortion. Passport and visa fraud cases currently comprise approximately 20% of our caseload. Increasingly, these cases involve identification documents which are being used by international criminal organizations in the pursuit of criminal activities, such as narcotics trafficking, terrorism, prostitution and alien smuggling. Such cases clearly warrant stiffer penalties. In addition, we believe that increased penalties for the more conventional visa and passport offense cases are also necessary to ensure the integrity of the passport and visa issuance process, to vigorously enforce existing passport and visa fraud statutes, and ultimately to provide a stronger deterrence to passport and visa fraud.

Thank you for considering our comments on the proposed amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Harold W. Geisel
Acting Inspector General