



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

November 27, 2023

Case No. FL-2016-11198

John Michael Miano
Immigration Reform Law Institute
25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Suite 335
Washington, D.C., 20001

Dear Mr. Miano:

As we noted in our letter dated October 27, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified an additional three responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined that all three records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, please contact Assistant United States Attorney Kartik Venguswamy at (202) 252-1790 or Kartik.Venguswamy@usdoj.gov. Please refer to the associated case number, FL-2016-11198, and the civil action number, 1:17-cv-00118, in all communications regarding this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diamonece Hickson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

(b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:

- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
- 1.4(b) Foreign government information
- 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
- 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
- 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
- 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction

(b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency

(b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:

ARMSEXP	Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c)
CIA PERS/ORG	Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
EXPORT CONTROL	Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c)
FS ACT	Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f)
IRAN	Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505

(b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information

(b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product

(b)(6) Personal privacy information

(b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:

- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
- (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
- (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (D) disclose confidential sources
- (E) disclose investigation techniques
- (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual

(b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions

(b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Acting A/S Bond's Meeting with CG Blome (Jerusalem)
Wednesday, June 24, 2015, 11:30 a.m., 30 minutes
HST, Room 6826

CONTEXT

(U) You will meet with Don Blome, CG to Jerusalem to discuss the consular aspects of his current role. FS-01 Consular Section Chief Aaron Hellman supervises two midlevel officers, seven ELOs, four EFMs, and 31 LE staff. The current wait time for visitor visa appointments is 11 days and for student visas is 10 days. CA/EX reports that the consular section is well managed.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- **(U) Express gratitude to CG Blome for Jerusalem's consular TDY support to Djibouti to assist with the evacuees from Yemen.** Jerusalem's consular section sent one LE staff and two officers to Embassy Djibouti to assist with Yemeni-American evacuees. Jerusalem was one of the first posts to respond to requests for TDY volunteers for the crisis, and the IV knowledge and Arabic skills of the TDYers has been invaluable in CA's ability to respond to this crisis.
- **(U) Inform the CG that CA assumes the full responsibility of funding consular agencies and analyzes multiple factors when evaluating proposals to open new agencies.** Consulate General Jerusalem's consular district includes the West Bank and Gaza. U.S. citizens of Palestinian or Arab descent residing or present in the West Bank require a permit from the Israeli government to visit the consular section in Jerusalem. Given the difficulties that U.S. citizens have reaching the consulate, post offers limited ACS services in Ramallah bi-weekly at the Canadian Representative's office. This arrangement generally works well, (b)(3)

- **(SBU) Israel and the Visa Waiver Program (VWP):** Israel remains interested in VWP membership (b)(3)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

(b)(5) though Israel has not made significant progress in meeting the program requirements. Israel's refusal rate, 8.2 percent in FY 2014, exceeds the three percent threshold, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

The Government of Israel nevertheless has sought legislative changes that would permit a waiver of certain eligibility requirements. On August 19, 2014, DHS hosted an Israel VWP working group with participants from the Israeli government and the Department of State. CA provided them with information on VWP legal requirements, and the Israeli government provided us with a better understanding of their progress on several VWP requirements such as e-passport production.

- ~~(SBU)~~ **Provide background and an overview of steps taken to address the perception that the United States does not welcome young Israeli "army leavers."** In 2014, several Congressional offices focused significant attention on this issue amid concerns that Embassy Tel Aviv has a blanket policy of denying visas to young "army leavers" traveling to the United States during their gap year. Congress focused on adjudications in Tel Aviv, rather than Jerusalem. The Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs sent a letter to Congress acknowledging the rise in the refusal rate and outlining steps Embassy Tel Aviv would take to facilitate legitimate travel to the United States, particularly for young Israelis. The steps included a review of existing adjudication procedures, calibration discussions focused on borderline cases, more robust outreach, and the formation of a DHS-led joint working group on Israel's progress in meeting VWP requirements. The Department viewed the steps outlined in the letter to Congress as a way to more accurately assess the demographic group in question and thereby boost efforts to facilitate legitimate travel. As a result of Tel Aviv's concerted efforts to review this group, refusals have dropped.
- ~~(SBU)~~ **Assure the Consul General that while the visa refusal issue involving "army leavers" has been primarily focused on Embassy Tel Aviv, the Visa Office will coordinate with Consulate General Jerusalem on any issues that might affect both posts.**
- ~~(SBU)~~ **Referral Policy/Visas Viper Program:** Discuss the mandatory worldwide referral policy and (b)(7)(E)

(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

- ~~(SBU)~~ **Consular Districts: Remind CG Blome that Tel Aviv's and Jerusalem's consular sections operate independently.** Posts work closely on many matters, but only Tel Aviv can raise cases with the Government of Israel. That said, we encourage both posts to present a common, U.S. Government approach to the shared customer base enhanced by regular communications and exchanges between posts.
 - ~~(SBU)~~ **Palestinian-Americans: Alert him that cases involving Palestinian-Americans are complex.** The Government of Israel views all Palestinian-Americans as Palestinian citizens first and foremost. Palestinians are subject to very specific rules and regulations which do not apply to others.
 - ~~(SBU)~~ **Palestinian-Americans: Stress that we expect that they be treated equally.** We must continue to stress with the Government of Israel that all U.S. citizens be treated equally and fairly, regardless of other nationalities or ethnicities.
 - **(U) Abductions: Express appreciation for the services provided by the Consular section for abduction cases to the West Bank and Gaza.** In non-Hague cases, the Consular staff has been instrumental in providing welfare/whereabouts visits, in conjunction with the Regional Security Office. Oftentimes these visits are the only contact left behind parents have with their children. The consular section plays an important role in confirming the location of the applicant for incoming cases to the United States, which enables OCS/CI to determine whether the case can be accepted for processing under our Jerusalem acceptance policy.
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- ~~(SBU)~~ [REDACTED] (b)(5)
[REDACTED] (b)(5)
 - **(U) Adoptions:** Israel is party to the Hague Adoption Convention. Intercountry adoptions from Israel to the United States are rare because few children are available for intercountry adoption. The Hague Adoption Convention does not currently apply to the Palestinian territories, including the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Interfamilial and domestic adoptions are prioritized in Israel.

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- (U) All immigrant visas for adoptees from Israel and Jerusalem are processed by CG Jerusalem. There have been no intercountry adoption visas issued to Israeli children since 2005.


IF TIME PERMITS

- (b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

- (b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

- 5 -

(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)



PARTICIPANTS

Michele T. Bond, Acting Assistant Secretary

Don Blome, CG Jerusalem

Edward Ramotowski, Visa Deputy Assistant Secretary

Karen Christensen, OCS Deputy Assistant Secretary

Attachments:

Tab 1 – CA Country Fact Sheet

Tab 2 – Takeaway Paper

Tab 3 – Visa Statistics

Tab 4 – Bio

Drafted: CA/EX/PAS – Rachel Hilton, (b)(6)
 CA/VO/F/P: Cathy McFarland, (b)(6)
 CA/OCS/ACS/NESCA: KRichter, (b)(6) .
 CA/OCS/CI: Veronique Smith, (b)(6)

Cleared: CA/EX: ABaskette, Acting (ok)
 CA/EX: LBiedeback (ok)
 CA/EX: JMiles (ok)
 CA/EX: JRoemmel (ok)
 Jerusalem: AHellman (ok)
 CA/VO: KKing (ok)
 CA/VO/F: RPasini (ok)
 CA/VO/F/P: MRitchie (ok)
 NEA/IPA: CEilts (ok)
 Jerusalem: AHellman (ok)
 CA/OCS: HHand, Acting (ok)
 CA/OCS/ACS: VMLopatkiewicz (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: WWhitaker (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: MTedesco (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: BCooper (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: ADryer (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: JKLarsen, Acting (ok)
 CA/OCS/CI: SFShaffer, Acting (ok)
 CA/OCS/CCM: SHansucker (ok)
 CA: KSWallace, Acting (ok)
 CA: DTDonahue (ok)

CA Tracking Number: T1066-15

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Talking Points for Assistant Secretary Julia Frifield
Report to Congress on Visa Adjudication in Tel Aviv

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

(U) In April 2014, H Assistant Secretary Frifield sent a letter to Representative Nita Lowey in response to several congressional inquiries outlining steps the Department planned to take to review visa adjudication at Embassy Tel Aviv.

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(b)(5)

TALKING POINTS

Policies and Procedures Review

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(b)(5)

Review Results and Next Steps

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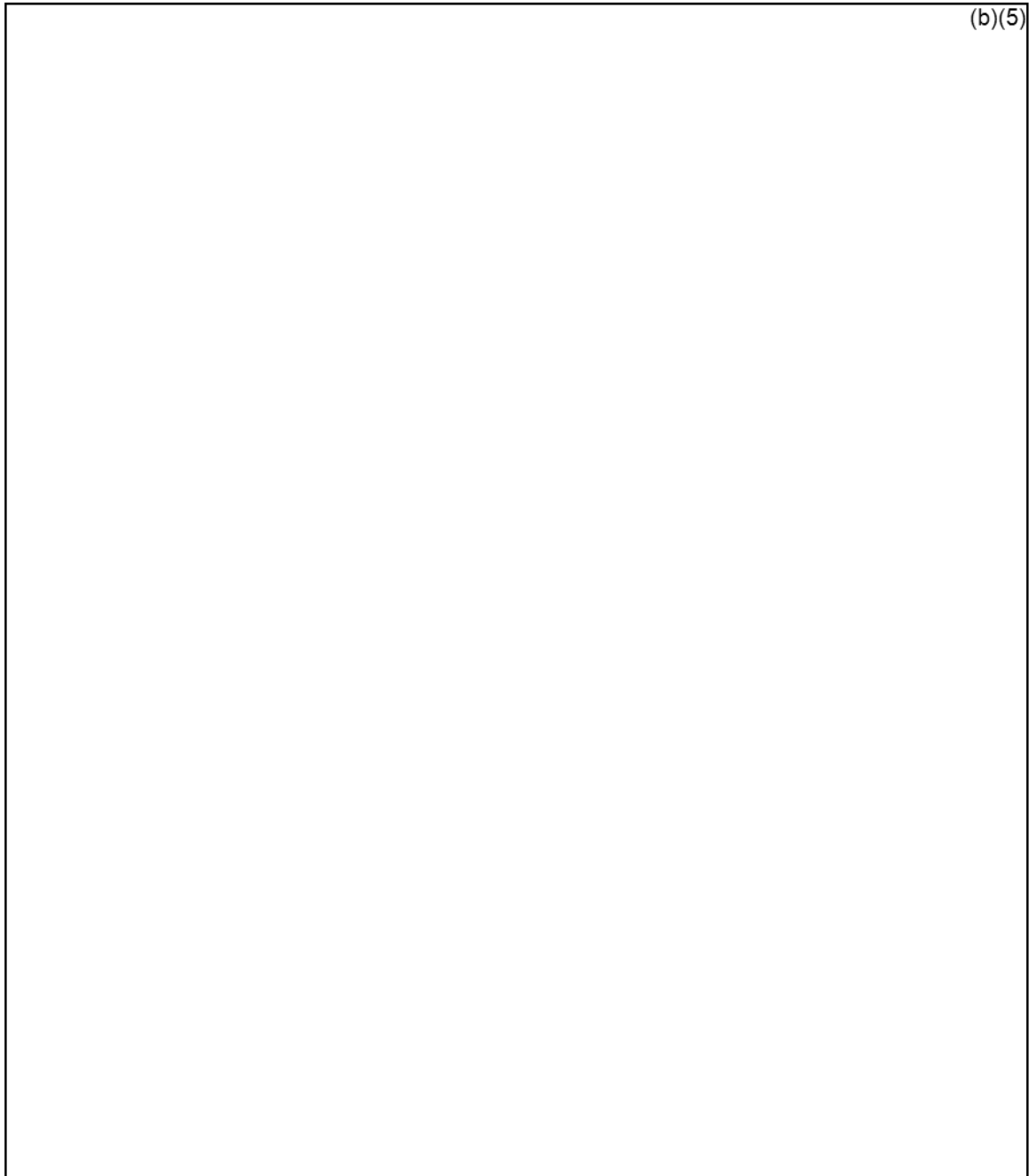
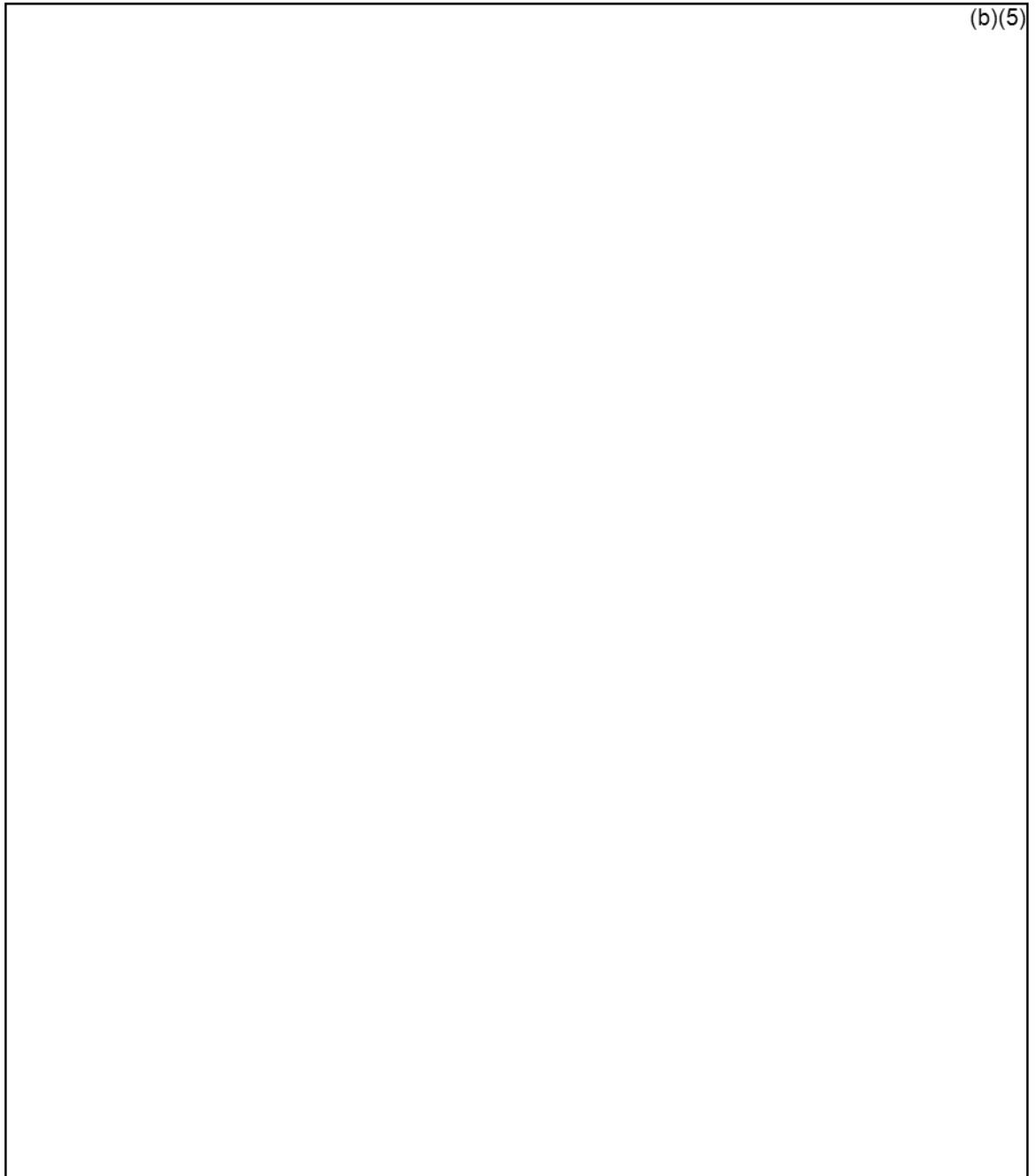
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Outreach – Visa Process

-  (b)(5)
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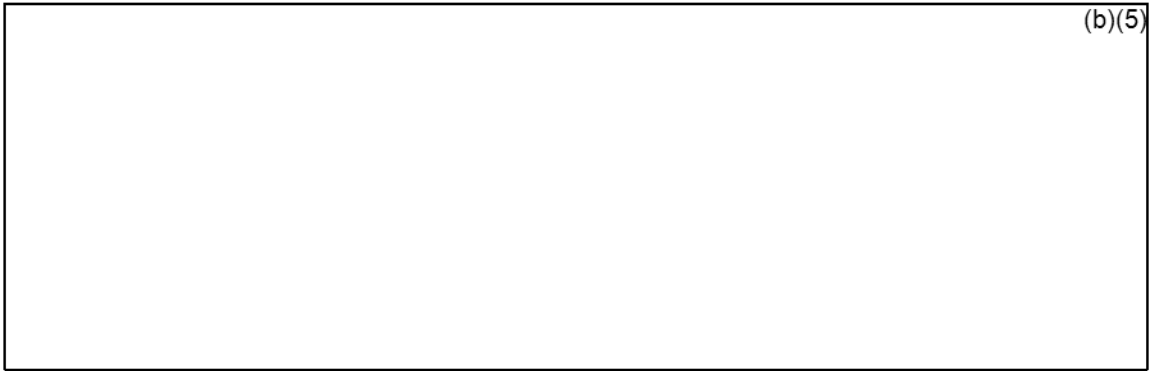
(b)(5)

J-1 programs

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Visa Waiver Program

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Attachment:

A/S Frifield Letter to Rep. Nita Lowey
Statistical Addendum

Approved: CA: MTBond, Acting (ok)

Drafted: CA/VO/F/P: Ladislav Beranek (b)(6)

Cleared: CA: DTDonahue, Acting (ok)
CA: OWoods, Acting (ok)
CA/VO: ERamotowski (ok)
CA/VO: KKing (ok)
CA/VO/F: SCooper (ok)
CA/VO/F/P: CKelly (ok)
CA/VO/F/P: NMcCarthy (ok)
CA/P: TMazin (ok)
NEA/IPA: CFilts (ok)
NEA/IPA: SButler (ok)
H: MAvery (ok)
ECA: NDeaner (ok)
EMB Tel Aviv: TCypher (ok)
EMB Tel Aviv: DSchwartz (ok)
EMB Tel Aviv: WGrant (ok)
EMB Tel Aviv: DShapiro (ok)

CA Tracking: T1949-14



Released in Part

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U.S. EMBASSY TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

UNCLASSIFIED/FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**BRIEFING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: May 7, 2014
TO: THE AMBASSADOR
THROUGH: DCM – William K. Grant
FROM: DHS – Richard A. Jolles
CG – Lawrence J. Mire

SUBJECT: Overview of Visa Waiver Program Working Group

CONTEXT:

In a March 2014 meeting with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) Elkin, DHS Deputy Secretary Mayorkas and Assistant Secretary (A/S) for International Affairs and Chief Diplomatic Officer Bersin suggested that Israel and the United States establish a Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Working Group that would include the appropriate subject matter experts on both sides. DFM Elkin immediately agreed to this proposal. Elkin has been selected by the Foreign Minister to head the Working Group for Israel. Officials from Israel's Consular Affairs and U.S.-Israel Political Relations Divisions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a representative from the Ministry of Interior will also participate. The U.S. side will be headed A/S Bersin with the assistance of the Visa Waiver Program Office (VWPO). Deputy Secretary Mayorkas will interact with Elkin as needed.

OVERVIEW:

The U.S.-Israel VWP Working Group will be managed on the U.S. side by DHS Headquarters. Deputy Secretary Mayorkas has asked A/S Bersin to monitor the U.S.-Israel Working Group and to participate in meetings as necessary. Two representatives from the VWPO will participate in the Working Group as well and manage the day-to-day engagement on VWP matters with Israeli counterparts. Much of the VWP effort occurs through this day-to-day engagement. As

necessary, representatives from DHS Components, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv, and the Departments of State and Justice will be involved in Working Group meetings and other engagements associated with Israel VWP.

(b)(5)

The first Working Group meeting will outline the statutory and policy requirements for VWP designation to ensure there is a common understanding between our governments. More importantly, this meeting will be an opportunity for Israel to brief the U.S.-side on how it intends to meet the various program requirements. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Follow-up from the first Working Group meeting will be managed by the VWPO. The VWPO will work with the Israeli Embassy in Washington, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv, the Department of State, and other DHS and USG offices and agencies as necessary to address follow-up questions and information exchanges from or to the Government of Israel. Subsequent, in-person Working Group meetings will be scheduled as necessary. (b)(5)

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Attachments:

Letter from DFM Elkin

Response letter from DHS Deputy Secretary Mayorkas
VWP Designation Requirements

Approved:

Drafted: DHS, RJOLLES

Cleared: CONS, LMIRE