

BACKLOG GROWS ON ALIEN FILES

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Body

Bureaucratic problems have left the Immigration and Naturalization Service unable to keep track of 30 million forms **filed** by foreign visitors, and it may be 1983 before it is known who entered or left the country in the last two years.

Disclosure of the **backlog** was made in a study conducted for the agency and by immigration officials in interviews. The forms have not been processed so that they can be fed into the agency's computer system. Meanwhile, the millions of forms have simply been put on microfilm and left stacking up in cartons at agency facilities here. Immigration and Naturalization Service is reportedly unable to keep track of 30 million forms **filed** by **aliens** due to paperwork **backlog**

Only a year ago, immigration officials told Congress that the agency would upgrade its computer system so it could monitor the flow of **aliens** into the country, including 10 million visitors a year. The Reagan Administration has also submitted proposals to Congress calling for stricter controls on illegal immigration.

A Threat to Credibility

Robert Kane, the agency's Associate Commissioner for operations support, said the **backlog** in processing visitor forms "puts the whole credibility of the system into question - it puts the credibility of the I.N.S. into question."

He said that the computer that stores visitors' data was "outmoded." Irvin Klavan, the Associate Commissioner for information services, said the **backlog** of I-94 forms, which are **filed** when visitors enter and leave, totaled more than 30 million on Sept. 30, at the last official count. He said it was now probably 32 million.

He also said 664,000 visitors' applications for extensions of their temporary visas had not been put into the agency's computer because they could not be matched to the original arrival forms.

Long Wait Is Foreseen

Immigration officials say it will be at least January 1983 before the **files** are brought up to date. Price Waterhouse & Company, a private consulting firm that conducted a six-month, \$100,000 study of the control system, termed the **backlog** "very troublesome."

Agency officials blamed a private contractor, Milmark Services Inc. of Crofton, Md. They said Milmark failed to perform acceptably on a contract calling for it to enter the data into the computer system.

The task is complicated because the visitors' forms are often written in foreign languages.

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Company Official Responds

Thomas Ruger, Milmark's treasurer, said in Wilmington, Del., that his company was being unfairly portrayed as a "goat" and that the **backlog** was 10 million forms before the company got the contract.

Mr. Ruger said the agency postponed the start of work under the contract six times while Milmark's previous owners frantically built up and reduced their staff in anticipation of the work. He said the company finally got only a week's notice, and "you just don't put 100 people together in a week." Mr. Ruger said Milmark had been a successful Government contractor for 14 years and that the immigration episode threatened its future.

Graphic

Illustrations: photo of boxes of **alien** registration forms

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