

U.S. Meets Quota For 20,000 Visas In Cuban Accord

The Washington Post

August 22, 1995, Tuesday, Final Edition

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Section: A SECTION; Pg. A09

Length: 217 words

Dateline: HAVANA, Aug. 21

Body

The **U.S.** government said today it had fulfilled its part of a bilateral immigration agreement with Cuba by granting more than **20,000** entry **visas** to **Cuban** migrants in the first year of the **accord**.

"I am very pleased to announce that as of Aug. 15 we have fulfilled our first-year commitment agreed to in the Migration **Accord** signed in New York on Sept. 9, 1994," said Joseph Sullivan, head of the **U.S.** Interests Section in Havana.

At a brief ceremony in which he presented **U.S.** travel documents to three **Cuban** families, Sullivan said the **United States** had complied "24 days early" with the terms of the **accord**, which required it to issue a minimum of **20,000 visas** each year.

Besides the **20,000**, Washington had issued 6,244 **visas** since Sept. 9 to Cubans who were immediate relatives of **U.S.** citizens or who had been on a worldwide waiting list to migrate.

The immigration agreement, under which both sides pledged to guarantee safe, orderly and legal migration, ended last summer's "**Cuban** rafters' crisis" in which more than 30,000 Cubans fled Cuba in flimsy rafts and boats.

U.S. officials say that of the **20,000** Cubans to be granted entry in the year beginning next month, 5,000 will be **Cuban** refugees who had been held at the **U.S.** Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay in eastern Cuba.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: PASSPORTS & **VISAS** (92%); IMMIGRATION (90%); AGREEMENTS (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); IMMIGRATION LAW (78%); REFUGEES (73%); NAVIES (66%); US NAVY (65%)

Company: guantanamo bay

Organization: guantanamo bay

Industry: NAVIES (66%); US NAVY (65%)

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Geographic: HAVANA, CUBA (73%); NEW YORK, USA (79%); **UNITED STATES** (96%); CUBA (95%)

Load-Date: August 22, 1995

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