



Press Statement (Revised)

Richard Boucher
Washington, DC
February 19, 2005

Departments of State and Homeland Security Announce Improved Visa Processing for International Travelers

The following is a joint announcement by U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs and Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security on improved visa processing for international visitors:

The United States continues to be a nation that welcomes international students, businesspersons and other visitors. The Departments of State and Homeland Security have worked closely over the past two years to develop visa and port of entry policies and programs that not only maintain a high degree of security for America, but also facilitate travel to the United States. We welcome travelers wishing to work, study or enjoy the diversity of our people and our land.

Today, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report citing specific improvements that have resulted in a significant reduction in visa processing times for those wishing to study or work in certain sensitive scientific or technical fields in the United States. The Departments of State and Homeland Security have made steady progress in improving the clearance process known as Visas Mantis throughout the past year. The GAO has validated these efforts, noting that the addition of staff, investments in systems, additional guidance to officers and interagency cooperation have resulted in significant declines in processing times. Visas Mantis processing today averages less than 14 days. In addition, not only have we reduced the processing times for Visas Mantis, but we also recently extended the validity of Visas Mantis clearances, reducing the number of times a visa applicant is subject to a Washington, D.C., interagency clearance. More information may be found at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/42212.htm>.

The Departments of State and Homeland Security continue to work together to find additional means to invest in resources and refine policies to reduce visa and port of entry processing times without compromising the security of our country. It is our joint commitment to ensure that the United States has both secure borders and open doors.

2005/219

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.