



Media Note  
Office of the Spokesman  
Washington, DC  
January 24, 2007

## Progress Made On the Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision: Joint Vision: Secure Borders and Open Doors in the Information Age

A year ago, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff announced the "Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision: Secure Borders, Open Doors in the Information Age." The goals of the joint vision were to better protect the United States while at the same time welcoming legitimate visitors to our shores. In the year since the joint announcement was made, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security have made significant progress towards achieving the vision described by Secretaries Rice and Chertoff. Significant accomplishments are highlighted below:

### Pillar One: Renewing America's Welcome with Improved Technology and Efficiency

- **Model Ports of Entry:** Plans are in effect to create model airports at Houston and Dulles. Together, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security are identifying best practices at ports of entry, including improved screening and more efficient movement of people through the entry process, and customized video messages with practical information about the entry process.
- **Facilitate Visas for Business and Students:** In FY 2006, the State Department issued a record 591,000 student visas, a 14 percent increase over the previous year and 6 percent more than in the year leading up to the 2001 attacks. New Department of State rules allow students to apply 120 days before classes begin, up from 90 days. Business visa issuances were up 12 percent from the previous year. The Business Visa Center, which facilitates visa applications for upcoming travel or events, handled 2,786 calls (representing an estimated 139,113 international travelers).
- **Offsite Processing:** In FY 2006, the Department of State tested several methods to remotely collect fingerprints and capture data for the non-immigrant application form from applicants with special needs. This capability may soon make it possible for select groups of applicants to be processed without having to visit an embassy facility.
- **Enhanced Partnership with the Private Sector:** The first meeting of the Rice-Chertoff Secure Borders, Open Doors Advisory Committee (SBODAC) was held on December 6, 2006. The Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from academia, business, travel and tourism, and industry, will provide a formal venue for feedback and support on a wide-range of travel security and facilitation initiatives.
- **One Stop Redress for Travelers:** The Department of Homeland Security, with cooperation from the Department of State, will soon inaugurate the Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP). TRIP will be a streamlined redress center for travelers who have concerns about their treatment in the screening process.

### Pillar Two: Travel Documents for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- **E-Passports:** In August 2006, the Department of State began issuing e-passports to business and tourist travelers. The e-passport is the most secure U.S. passport ever issued. By spring 2007, all 17 passport issuance agencies will be converted to full e-Passport production.
- **PASSport Card:** As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), the Department of State issued a notice of proposed rule-making to inform the public, and solicit comments on the proposed PASSport card. A credit card size document, the PASSport card will offer a secure, less expensive alternative to the passport book for border community residents. In addition, the Border Crossing Card that the United States issues to Mexican citizens residing along the southern border will be updated to incorporate the same technology that is used in the PASSport Card.
- **Global Enrollment Network:** The Department of Homeland Security has established the Consolidated Trusted Traveler Program (CTTP) as a single trusted traveler program strategy that integrates all existing and proposed Trusted Traveler programs for international air, land, and sea travel. The Global Enrollment System (GES) is the core information system and central database supporting both the enrollment of travelers in CTTP program elements and the validation of their identity upon arrival into the United States.

### Pillar Three: Smarter Screening

- **Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI):** As of January 23, 2007, all travelers entering the United States by air, including American citizens, are required to submit a passport or other secure document. This significantly enhances border security because the passport adjudication process is highly secure. It also facilitates travel by limiting the number of documents with which border inspectors must be familiar.
- **Mandatory use of an Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF):** As of November 2006, all applicants for a non-immigrant visa must use the electronic visa application form (EVAF). This allows the Department of State to conserve resources which can be re-directed to higher priority tasks. An on-line application form, which will permit greater screening in advance of the visa interview, should be available by the end of FY 2007.
- **Pilot Use of Digital Videoconferencing Technology:** In 2006, the Department of State tested the use of digital video conferencing to conduct interviews. While initial results were positive, we are continuing to work through the numerous outstanding technical issues to determine whether this approach is viable over the long term and, if so, how soon it can be implemented.
- **Information Sharing:** The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security continue to cooperate on ensuring that access to all information necessary to adjudicate visas and entry to the United States is available to all screeners in real time. The Department of State has initiated conversations with 28 countries in accordance with HSPD-6 to determine the degree to which they may be interested in sharing terrorist lookout information.
- **Facial Recognition:** The Department of State continues to expand its use of facial recognition as a means to identify mala fide visa applicants. We expect to soon begin using this technology to assist in adjudicating passport applications.

We have made great strides in achieving the right balance between securing our country and welcoming those who want to visit, work, and study in the United States. We will continue to work together with our partners in government, the private sector, and overseas to use all of our resources in the 21st century ingenuity to meet the critical challenge -- to make this a country that is safe and secure for those who live and visit, but also one that continues to welcome the next generation of visitors.

2007/050

Released on January 24, 2007

