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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 24, 2017

President Donald J. Trump Strengthens Security Standards For Traveling to America

“Our government's first duty is to its people, to our citizens -- to serve their needs, to ensure their safety, to preserve their rights, and to defend their values.” – President Donald J. Trump

NEW PROTECTIONS: President Donald J. Trump is taking key steps to protect the American people from those who would enter our country and do us harm.

- Earlier this year, the President signed Executive Order 13780, which asked the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a new minimum baseline for how much information sharing with foreign nations is required to determine whether their nationals seeking entry into the United States present security threats to our Nation.

AIILA Doc. No. 17092500. (Posted 9/25/17)

- The new baseline furthers the aims of the Executive Order by ensuring our border and immigration security is adequate to protect the safety and security of the American people.
- New requirements on issuing electronic passports, sharing criminal data, reporting lost and stolen passports, and sharing more information on travelers will help better verify the identities and national security risks of people trying to enter the United States.
- Additionally, foreign governments will have to work with the United States to identify serious criminals and known or suspected terrorists, as well as share identity-related information and exemplars of documents such as IDs and passports.
- When foreign governments share information about individuals coming to the United States, the dedicated men and women of our homeland security and intelligence agencies can work to identify and block threats from reaching America's shores.

PRESIDENT TRUMP HAS PUT OUR NATIONAL SECURITY FIRST: This action to protect our national security builds on Executive Order 13780, which President Trump signed in March.

- Executive Order 13780, which President Trump signed on March 6, 2017, suspended entry into the United States for foreign nationals of six countries of concern, giving the Federal Government time to review our procedures for screening and vetting people seeking to come to our country.
- The President signed Executive Order 13780 pursuant to his constitutional and statutory authorities, including section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which provides that the President may “suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens” whenever he “finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States.”
- Executive Order 13780 required the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a review of other nations' information-sharing practices regarding their nationals traveling to the United States, and to recommend improvements in a report to the President.
- The Department of Homeland Security has worked closely with other Federal departments and agencies to review current vetting and information-sharing practices.
- The Secretary of Homeland Security submitted the required report to the President this month, and the President is now acting in response to the Secretary's recommendations.

HIGHER STANDARDS FOR IMMIGRATION SECURITY: The Trump Administration worked in good faith with foreign governments to implement minimum security requirements.

- Despite best efforts of the United States, several countries remain currently inadequate in their identity-management protocols and information-sharing practices or present

sufficient risk factors that travel restrictions are required.

- As a result, certain travel limitations and restrictions will be placed on nationals from Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen, by President Trump's September 24 proclamation, until we are sure that we can conduct proper screening and vetting of those countries' nationals.
 - These travel limitations and restrictions are a vital tool for enforcing adequate information sharing requirements and necessary for the security and welfare of the United States.
- These limitations and restrictions are conditional, and these countries can, under this Executive action, improve their information-sharing practices and receive relief from the limitations and restrictions.
- The President has also determined that while Iraq should be subject to great screening security, entry restrictions are not warranted under the September 24 proclamation.
- The Trump Administration shared these new requirements with foreign governments in July, and countries that did not have adequate information-sharing practices in place were given 50 days to make necessary improvements.
- A number of nations that were not in compliance worked quickly and diligently to improve, such as increasing their information sharing with the United States or improving their reporting of lost and stolen passports.
 - Many of those countries are now in compliance.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SUPPORT INCREASED VETTING: A majority of Americans support President Trump's efforts to safeguard our Nation from those who would do us harm.

- A July 2017 Politico/Morning Consult poll found that "a clear majority of voters"—60 percent--support President Trump's Executive Order on travel restrictions.

AGREEMENT ON THE THREATS FACING AMERICA: Congress, the Obama Administration, and the courts have all recognized the need for enhanced security and vetting.

- Following the 2015 terror attacks in Paris, Congress passed, and President Obama signed, bipartisan legislation restricting access to the visa waiver program for foreign nationals who had previously traveled to Iraq, Syria, Iran, or Sudan.
- The Obama Administration began implementing these policies in 2016, and later expanded these provisions to include certain individuals who had visited Libya, Somalia, or Yemen.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: Trump Administration officials have repeatedly spoken about the importance of the travel Executive Order for our Nation’s safety, and enforcing our Nation’s ability to ensure its own security.

- White House Chief of Staff John Kelly: “We cannot risk the prospect of malevolent actors using our immigration system to take American lives.”
- National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster: “If you can’t screen people effectively to know who’s coming into your country, then you shouldn’t allow people from that country to travel.”
- Secretary of State Rex Tillerson: “It is the President’s solemn duty to protect the American people and with this order, President Trump is exercising his authority to keep our people safe.”

CHALLENGES FOR CUSTOMS AND CONSULAR OFFICERS: The United States welcomes millions of visitors each year, putting enormous investigatory burdens on our Homeland Security and State Department officers and caseworkers.

- More than one million immigrants from more than 150 countries are provided with permanent residency in the United States every year with a path to citizenship.
- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services has an asylum backlog of more than 270,000.
- Many of those immigrating and traveling to the United States come from areas with serious terrorism concerns, significant instability, substantial stresses on public systems, and other security and safety threats.

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