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Immigration

An Issue Analysis Of An Emerging Problem

Immigration: An Issue Analysis
of an Emerging Problem is the
second paper in a series of plan-
ning documents developed by PEMD.
This paper was prepared jointly
by LARO and PEMD.

PREFACE

Immigration: The Emerging Problem is a collaborative effort by GAO's Program Evaluation and Methodology Division (PEMD) and the Los Angeles Regional Office (LARO). It was developed jointly by staff from both units after LARO had identified the topic,

Eleanor Chelimsky (in PEMD) and George Grant (in LARO) had two objectives in conceiving this paper on immigration issues. The first objective was to think carefully about an emerging issue that could take on major proportions over the next **10 years**, one that **GAO** will surely be, indeed already has been, called upon to confront as an international, national, **and** intergovernmental problem. Their approach began with meetings with other **GAO staff** who have been working on immigration topics. Following these came a thorough literature review, interviews with immigration researchers and policymakers, and visits to important border crossings and other sites. A first-draft analysis identifying the major topics to which GAO could and could not contribute **was** circulated widely to all GAO units involved in the area. A meeting of immigration researchers and policymakers was convened at **GAO** in order to present and discuss a revised draft, and comments were obtained from the divisions, regions and offices. The published document identifies and analyzes the **key** issues and is intended to assist the divisions and regions of **GAO** by offering

- the results of a complete literature review through 1984,
- the combined wisdom of the several **GAO** units that work on immigration topics,
- suggestions and reactions from prominent researchers and federal, state, and local policymakers,
- guidelines on promising and feasible new areas or sub-topics of interest, and
- a source of ideas and projects that might be of interest to legislative and oversight committees involved with issues in immigration.

The second objective was to develop a flexible method for working in any topical area **across** the different units within **GAO**, particularly a way to merge the ideas, insights, and experiences of the regions and headquarters early in planning. We often have recognized the difficulties of doing this, We think we have made some progress using this method, enough to encourage other divisions and regional offices to try out such partnerships on important topics crosscutting **GAO** units.

Comments will be welcome and should be sent to Laurie Ekstrand of PEMD and Patrick Gormley of LARO.

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HIGHLIGHTS

A FRAMEWORK

This document presents a framework within which **GAO** leaders can review proposed **work and** generate studies on immigration. The framework was developed from reviews of prior **GAO work**, discussions with experts, visits to key agencies and locations, and input from **GAO's** divisions and regions, each one having had an opportunity to comment on previous drafts of this analysis and to discuss ideas with the study team from LARO and PEMD (pp. xx-xx). The document details the significant issues in immigration that face the nation and puts the various aspects of immigration into an overall context. It also presents jobs that **GAO** could develop, their importance to an understanding of immigration, and reasons for their appropriateness specifically for **GAO**.

THE ISSUES

Debates on the Simpson-Mazzoli bill in the Ninety-seventh and Ninety-eighth Congress centered national attention on immigration to the United States, the difficult problems presented by illegal immigration, and the still more difficult solutions. Our analysis of the domestic (pp. 12-14), foreign-policy (pp. 10-11), and crosscutting (pp. 15-28) dimensions of the immigration debate led to the classification of immigration issues into four major categories: (1) data quality, (2) costs and benefits, (3) services and management improvement, and (4) immigration control.

Data quality relates to counting the number of immigrants, developing estimates of subgroups of immigrants, and projecting trends in immigration. The second issue, costs and benefits, focuses on the financial effect of immigrants. It considers the monetary and fiscal intergovernmental consequences of immigration policy and its effects on labor, health, and education. The third area, services and management improvement, deals with questions such as how the flow of immigrants is managed and whether it could be managed more efficiently. Finally, under immigration control, a question of enforcement, we emphasize not only legal but also illegal immigration.

RECOMMENDED STUDIES

Some issues in immigration are so value laden that they cannot be resolved simply by finding new facts. In other areas, however, disputes are based more on information, and it is to these areas that **GAO** can notably contribute. Usefulness was one of our principal criteria in considering potential jobs.

Table 1 on the next page lists the four issues, outlines their importance, and links them to the proposed studies (pp. 35-41). Many of the projects are similar to the types of

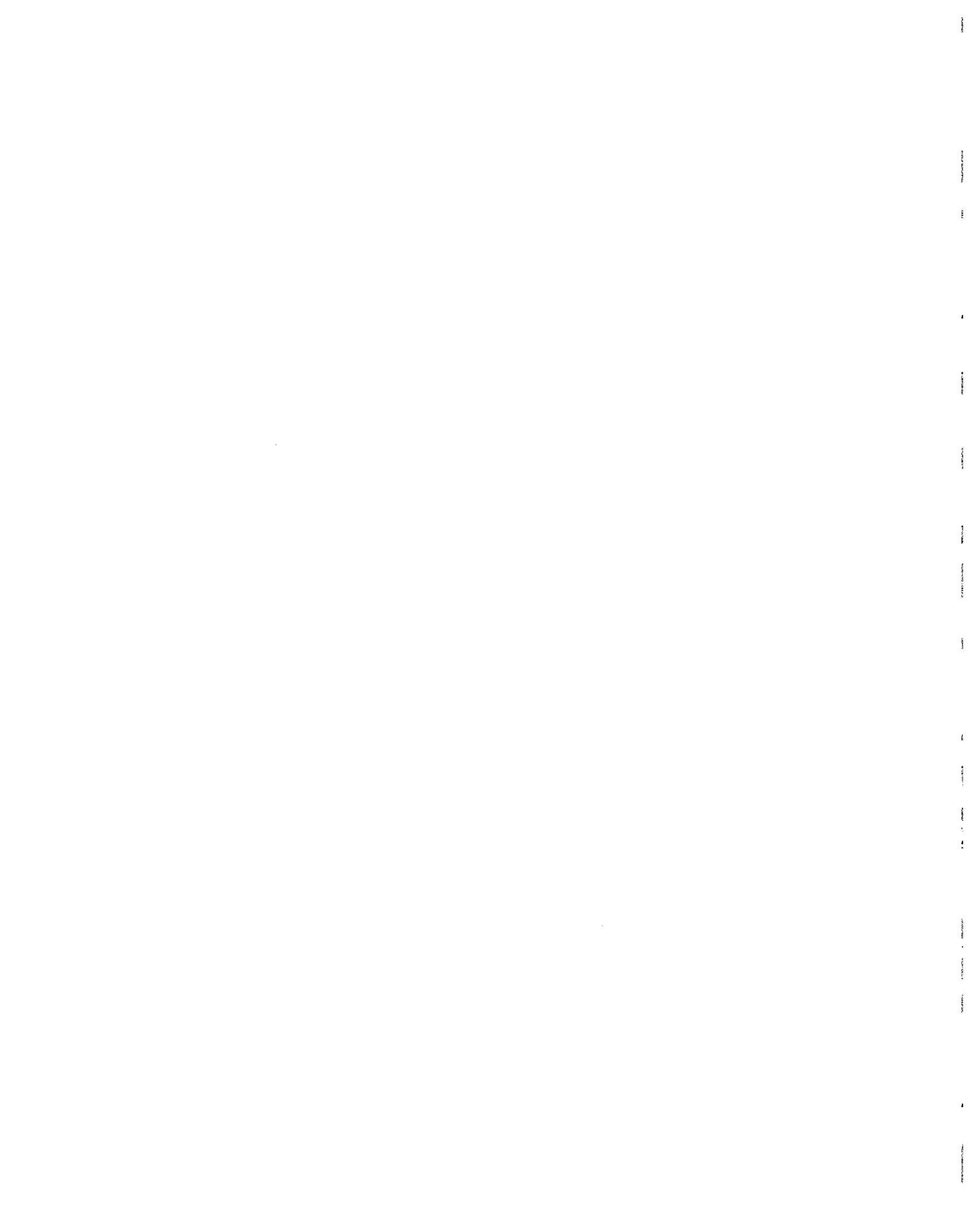
Table 1

Issues, Their Significance,
and Recommended Studies

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Importance</u>	<u>Recommendation for study</u>
1. Data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Help for information-based debate -Key to estimates of costs and consequences of current and proposed policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Report on size and distribution of legal immigrant population -Continue examination of the size of the illegal alien population, especially data-quality issues affecting ability to detect whether controls work -Develop state profiles of immigrant populations -Estimate flow and characteristics of legal immigrants in next 10 years
2. cost analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Realistic picture of what different types of immigrants cost federal, state, and local governments, particularly health services -Balanced analysis of the seriousness of problems, particularly the benefits different types of immigrants return to the community vs. labor displacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Estimate health care costs for illegal immigrants in geographical areas of high concentration -Analyze labor force effects of illegal immigrants, including benefits and direct and indirect costs
3. Service and management improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Essential for improving refugees' transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Comprehensive review of refugee resettlement program -Examine refugees' use of public assistance and reasons programs succeed or fail to help them become self-sufficient
4. Immigration control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Serious border control problems, low confidence in ability to control illegal aliens a major reform issue -Possible growth of population of visa violators -Visa application management and control of worsening problem -Lack of confidence in reforms that may impede highly controversial proposals for reestablishing control (amnesty, sanctions against employers, identity cards) with regard to costs, effectiveness, and possible consequences (e.g., discrimination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate the effectiveness of additional funds and new techniques for border control -Review INS data management and possibilities of improving links between INS, census, and Social Security data to identify violators and assess the magnitude of the problem -Examine the effectiveness of visa management and other immigration control measures in other countries (port-of-entry inspection, visa issuance, detention, etc.)

jobs GAO has done in the past, but some take the broader perspective of looking at the total problem. Compared to work under way or completed in **the** recent past, these studies continue prior work on enforcement and control, such **as** GAO's studies on port-of-entry inspections, **on** the management and administration of key agencies, and on **the** automation of the operations of the **U.S.** Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The difference with **regard** to these existing efforts is that we look at the issues in a broader context. For example, we believe **that** instead of considering only how refugees from a specific country have been treated in relocation camps, **GAO** should examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire refugee assistance program, including its effect on **state and** local governments.

We also recommend some new focuses, **including** an examination of the full **costs** and benefits of different types of immigrants, focusing initially on illegal aliens, and a consideration of state and local costs and effects. Another new area is a more comprehensive, systematic review of data quality. The major difference between prior and proposed work on these topics is the emphasis on the multiagency nature of many of the problems and on **the** effect of federal decisions on state and local governments.



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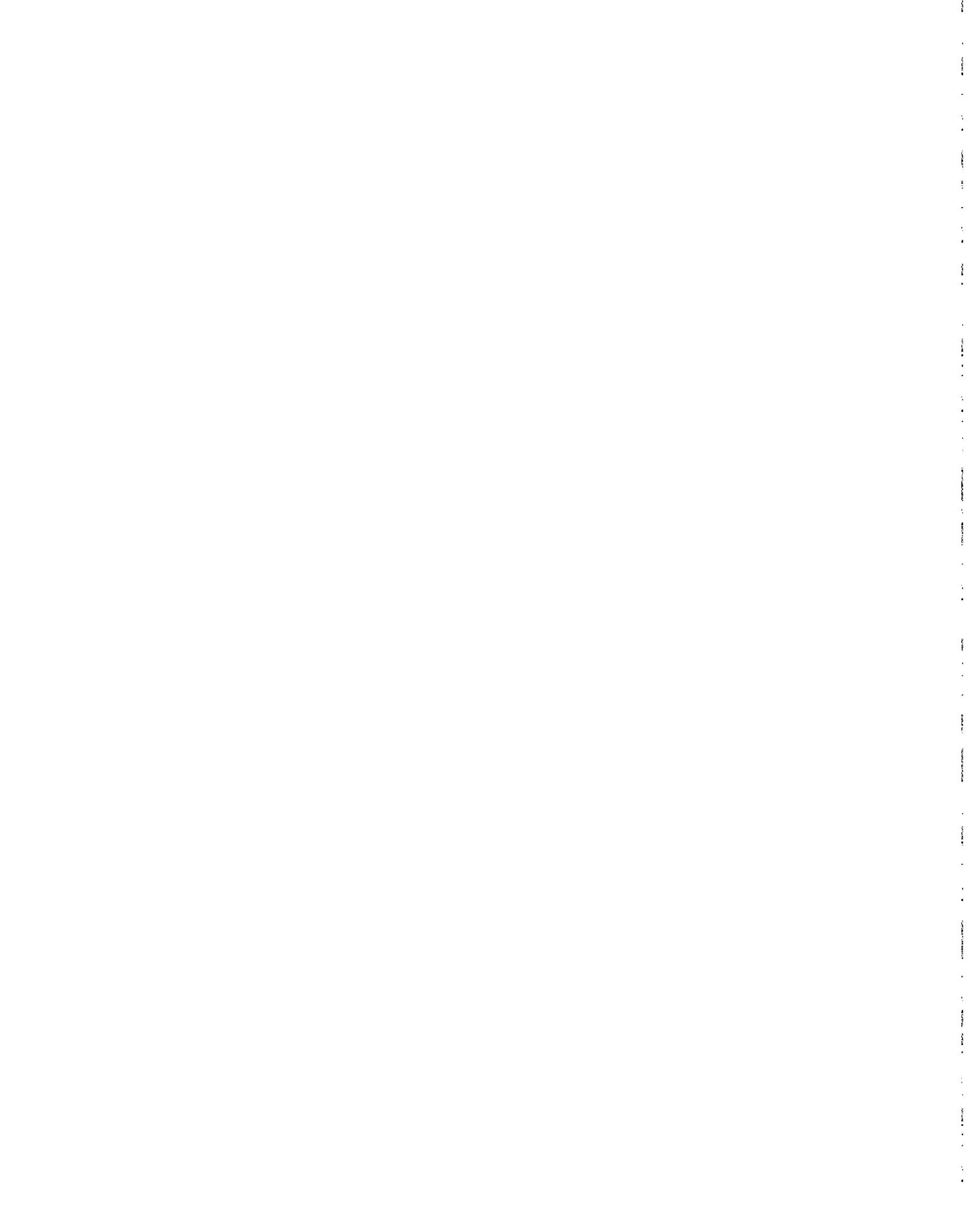
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ABBREVIATIONS

AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AID	Agency for International Development
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CEFNOEX	Centro de Estudios Fronterizos del Norte de Mexico
CENIET	Centro Nacional de Informacion y Estadisticas del Trabajo
DEA	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
GAO	U.S. General Accounting Office
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
INS	U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service
NAS	National Academy of Science
OPIS	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TDP	Trade and Development Program



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How many people should be allowed to immigrate to the United States? What criteria should guide their selection? What should be done for them once they are here? 'What can **be** done to prevent illegal immigration? These are questions of enduring federal and regional interest. They involve foreign policy (for example, U.S. readiness to provide asylum to political refugees), domestic policy (for example, the tension between the need for cheap labor that immigrants have historically met and the protection of employment and working standards for U.S. citizens), and intergovernmental relations (between, for example, the federal government, which sets policy on immigration, and the state and local governments, which largely bear its costs and consequences).

High rates of population growth **as** well as unemployment and low wages in developing countries are continuing problems that stimulate emigration to developed countries, which may then undergo domestic problems. While public opinion in the United States tends to support certain immigrant flows and individual cases, popular sentiment seems essentially opposed to more immigration. Many authorities believe that immigration to the United States will remain high throughout the rest of this century. Immigration experts believe also that immigration's implications for foreign and domestic policy will keep it a significant issue in the foreseeable future.

What is meant by "immigration" and "the immigration problem" depends, however, on the type of immigrant (whether legal or illegal or refugee), the country of origin, and the economic sector and geographical region of the United States that are affected by the distribution of immigration. The diversity of this distribution is shown in table 2, on the next page, and its effect is discussed in **later** sections of this paper. Although precise numbers are not available, it seems likely that the rate of illegal immigration **has** risen.

The immigrants and refugees coming into this country are changing its language and ethnic characteristics enough to raise questions such as whether and when election ballots should be printed in languages other than English, in order to protect the civil rights of citizens who do not speak English. The merits of changing policies are under debate and the U.S. capacity to implement potential changes, such as taking a tougher stance on preventing and detecting illegal immigration, is unclear. These questions, and others to be discussed later, **make** immigration a critical problem that is receiving considerable congressional attention.

Although the plight of individual immigrants and refugees arouses strong public sympathy, the United States has never had

Table 2

The Distribution of Immigration in the United States by Immigrant Type,
Economic Sector, Region of Destination, and Country of Origin^a

Region ^c	Legal			Illegal			Refugee		Temporary ^b
	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Services	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Services	Manufacturing	Services	Agriculture
Southwest ^d	Mexico	Mexico Asia	Mexico Asia	Mexico	Mexico Asia	Mexico Asia	Asia Caribbean Near East ^e	Asia Caribbean Near East	Mexico Caribbean
Pacific Northwest ^f	Mexico	Other ^g Asia	Other Asia	Mexico	Mexico Asia	Mexico Asia	Asia	Asia	Mexico
Central ^h	i	Mexico Asia Other	Mexico Asia Other	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Asia Caribbean East Europe	Asia Caribbean East Europe	i
Northeast ^j	i	Other	Other	Caribbean	Caribbean	Other	USSR, East Europe	USSR, East Europe	Caribbean
		Caribbean ^k Asia	Asia Caribbean		Other Asia	Asia	Asia Near East	Asia Near East	
Southeast ^l	Caribbean	Caribbean Other	Caribbean Other	Caribbean	Caribbean	Caribbean	Caribbean (Cuba) Asia	Caribbean (Cuba) Asia	Caribbean

SOURCE: Legal immigrants and refugees from INS annual statistical yearbooks; illegal and temporary immigrants estimated from field studies.

^aEthnic representation generally in rank order in each cell.

^bIncludes H-1 and H-2 categories.

^cIn the past 25 years, the principal destinations of legal immigrants, in rank order, were Calif., N.Y., Texas, Fla., Ill., N.J., Mass., Mich., Pa., Conn., Ohio, and Wash.

^dCalif., Texas, and Ariz. in rank order.

^eIncludes Middle Eastern Arabs, Palestinians, and Iranians.

^fWash. and Oreg. in rank order.

^gPrincipally Europeans and Canadians.

^hIll. and Ohio in rank order.

ⁱSubstantial numbers of immigrants not evident.

^jN.Y., N.J., Mass., Pa., and Conn. in rank order.

^kExcludes Mexico; includes Caribbean states and states in the Caribbean littoral and the upper rim of South America.

^lFla.

a full commitment to an "open door" policy. Public opinion polls **have** shown that U.S. citizens overwhelmingly **favor** stopping illegal immigration, favor deporting illegal aliens, and oppose increased legal immigration. The public may not know, however, or be willing to support the costs of effective enforcement strategies. The Congress must consider these tensions when trying to resolve immigration issues.

Like national security and defense, immigration is the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. The national debate continues. Does the United States have a national immigration policy and plan? Are current laws enforceable? Is it realistic to try to achieve an overall policy, considering our society's ambivalence about immigration and its complexities? It appears unlikely that the debate will be resolved soon. What is clear is that there is general agreement within the Congress and the administration that this country needs to deal continuously with immigration issues with the goal of developing an overall, long-term immigration policy and plan.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is twofold. First, we sketch out the issues on which present and foreseeable debate focus. Second, we consider the way in which **GAO** can make a notable contribution to a resolution of the debate. We observe that some issues are matters of values--for example, the importance given to English as a national language and to shared cultural values in contrast to tolerating, if not encouraging, linguistic and cultural diversity. To settle such issues, **GAO** can contribute little through information. On other questions, however, **GAO** has a contribution to make, a contribution that could be enhanced if the information were to come from the coordinated effort of the several divisions, each of which **holds** unique and important pieces of the **puzzle**,

GAO has an opportunity to contribute by taking a **broad** prospective look at immigration and identifying where it can provide critical information. There is little doubt, given past experience (see appendix I) and the increasing congressional interest in immigration, that **GAO** will continue to do **work** on immigration during the next **few** years. Thus, the questions are, What types of work will **GAO** **be** asked for? What types of work should it initiate? And in what sequence should it initiate them? Planned **work** should assist the Congress in anticipating problems and seizing opportunities before the United States **has** been overwhelmed by the social, economic, political, and demographic realities of projected immigration.

In the remainder of this document, we (1) describe **how** it was developed, (2) outline the past and emerging history of the immigration problem, (3) present the main issues to which **GAO** can contribute information, and (4) recommend the questions and

types of studies it might be most important for **GAO** to focus on. The document does not present study designs: the feasibility of some studies seems reasonably clear, but others would require more extensive analysis.

HOW THE DOCUMENT WAS DEVELOPED

This draft, presented jointly by the Los Angeles Regional Office and the Program Evaluation and Methodology Division, was developed in cooperation with the operating divisions and other regions. The issue analysis is based on **GAO's** prior **work**, the ideas and work in progress of several divisions within **GAO** (see appendix II), a review of the research and evaluation literature, visits to relevant sites and agencies, expert opinion, interviews with knowledgeable federal, state, and local officials, and discussions with congressional staff and staff of other congressional agencies knowledgeable about and interested in immigration issues. The highlights of our work were presented orally in October **1984** to senior **GAO** officials.

THE EMERGING PROBLEM

The population of Third World countries, including our Latin American neighbors, is expanding more rapidly than their economies. Many more people want to enter the United States **than** most of its citizens are willing to accept. The benefits offered, as well as problems created, by immigrants should **be** recognized, **as** should the pull of some networks of employers that may recruit illegal aliens. But even immigrants who enter legally are said to impose social, economic, and political costs that have not been fully counted or fairly distributed. Those who enter illegally are also said to impose such costs and, in addition, their entry represents a failure of control that is seen as threatening the future of other persons already in this country.

For example, during fiscal year **1983**, **the** number of apprehensions by the INS Border Patrol reached **1,106,683**, an increase of almost 35 percent over fiscal year **1982**.¹ It is estimated that this figure represents as little as one third of the illegal aliens entering the United States annually. Even with aiming recent increases in resources at border control, **INS** has not been **able** to slow the pace of illegal immigration. In addition, the number of visitors overstaying their visas--the second most common type of illegality--appears to be increasing.

The pressures that have led to an apparent rise in illegal immigration are believed to be increasing to a point at which the United States must act quickly and wisely. Determining

¹Since one person may be apprehended more than one time, the number of apprehensions is not equal to **the** number of persons apprehended in a given period.

what to **do** about the illegal immigrants already here **and** how to detect and **prevent** illegal entry have proven difficult, partly because of conflicting values and partly because of **a** lack of information on **key** issues. One instance of **the** need for information is that it is not **known** precisely who is **now** paying **how** much **for** what services to which immigrants. **This** issue is important because federal decisions on immigration **may** be imposing a burden on state **and** local governments **khat** might be **more** willing to participate in **new** approaches if **the** federal government **would** pay **a** greater **share** of the costs.

The next sections of **this** document detail the external pressures leading to increased immigration to **the** United States, the internal pressures that immigration creates, **and** **areas** where **better** information **may** **be** needed **as** the nation develops **new** solutions.

CHAPTER 2

THE FLOW OF IMMIGRATION

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY

Until late in the 1800's, immigrants in the United States were predominantly of northern and western European stock, and they were motivated to emigrate for a complex blend of religious, political, and economic reasons. In receiving them as immigrants, the United States satisfied the need for new citizens to participate in national economic, social, and political growth, and it fulfilled its humanitarian duty to provide a refuge for the oppressed. Throughout the 19th century, no numerical restrictions were placed on the number of immigrants allowed into the United States.

Table 3 shows that there have been certain peak decades of immigration. For example, immigration accounted for 41 percent

Table 3

Immigration to the United States by Decade 1821-1980

<u>Decade</u>	<u>No. of immigrants^a</u>	<u>U.S. population in decennial yr^b</u>	<u>Arrivals as % of total population</u>	<u>Foreign-born as % of total population in decennial yr^c</u>	<u>% of population growth attributable to immigration</u>
1821-1830	143,439	12,866,020	1.1	^d	4.4
1831-40	559,125	17,069,453	3.3	^d	13.3
1841-50	1,713,251	23,191,876	7.4	9.7 ^e	28.0
1851-60	2,598,214	31,443,321	8.3	13.0 ^e	31.5
1861-70	2,314,824	39,818,449	5.8	13.1)	27.6
1871-80	2,812,191	50,155,783	5.6	13.3	27.2
1881-90	5,246,613	62,947,714	8.3	14.7	41.0
1891-1900	3,687,564	75,994,575	4.8	13.6	28.3
1901-10	8,795,386	91,972,266	9.6	14.7	55.0
1911-20	5,735,811	105,710,620	5.4	13.2	41.7
1921-30	4,107,209	122,775,046	3.3	11.6	24.1
1931-40	528,431	131,669,275	0.4	8.8	5.9
1941-50	1,035,039	151,325,798	0.7	6.8	5.3
1951-60	2,515,479	179,323,175	1.4	5.4	8.9
1961-70	3,321,677	203,302,031	1.6	4.7	13.8
1971-80	4,493,314	226,545,805	1.9	6.2 ^f	19.3

^aData From INS, Statistical Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: 1981).

^bData from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1985 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984).

^cData on foreign-born population 1850-1970 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975).

^dData not available.

^eWhite foreign-born only.

^fData for 1980 from John G. Keane, U.S. Bureau of the Census, testimony, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Subcommittee on Census and Population, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., March 19, 1985.

of the total growth in population in the decade **1881-90**. Likewise, between **1901** and **1910**, it accounted for 55 percent of the total population growth. In other periods, however, population growth was affected less by immigration: between **1931** and **1950**, for example, immigration accounted for roughly 5 to 6 percent of the population growth.

Beginning late in the **1800's**, the ethnic composition of immigration began to change, with greater numbers of people **coming** from eastern and southern Europe. Concurrently, economic strains began to emerge in the United States, and so did domestic political opposition to unrestricted immigration. After **1921**, this opposition led to the adoption of "national origins" quotas. The economic depression of the **1930's**, in combination with the **new** restrictive legislation, greatly reduced the flow of immigrants. After **1921** and continuing until **1965**, immigration was restricted by the terms of the national quota system.

After World War II, the United States began to distinguish categorically between refugees and immigrants as a means of reconciling the traditional U.S. ideal of giving asylum with the enactment of restrictive immigration laws. Generally, "refugees" tend to arrive in large numbers at specific points in time, fleeing from political, ethnic, or religious persecution, whereas "immigrants" arrive voluntarily as individuals or in small groups more uniformly over time. Since **1940**, humanitarian and foreign policy concerns have dominated the rationale for receiving refugees. Domestic concerns have been paramount in the admission of immigrants.

PRESENT IMMIGRATION POLICY

The overriding goal of U.S. immigration policy today is family reunification. Secondary emphasis is placed on accommodating labor market needs and taking responsibility, morally and ethically, for a **share** of the world's refugees. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act of **1952**, as amended, up to 270,000 numerically restricted immigrants may **be** admitted each year according to the preference system. This system allots 80 percent of all visas to relatives for family reunification and 20 percent to professional and other workers. No more than 20,000 of these visas are issued to any one foreign state annually. Immigrants exempt from this numerical ceiling include immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, refugees, and some special immigrants. The Refugee Act of **1980** removed refugees from the preference system and established separate numerical limitations on them, the number to **be** admitted being determined annually **by** the president and the Congress.

PROJECTED TRENDS

The number of legal immigrants, including refugees, has recently been holding steady at approximately **550,000** annually.

Table 4

Total Number of Legal Immigrants and Nonimmigrants Admitted
to the United States in Fiscal Years 1980-84^a

<u>Category</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Numerically restricted					
Family reunification	216,856	226,576	206,065	213,488	212,324
Workers and families	44,369	44,311	51,182	55,460	49,521
Refugees	<u>28,254</u>	<u>59,522</u>	<u>2,502</u>	<u>257</u>	<u>171</u>
Subtotal	<u>209,479</u>	<u>330,409</u>	<u>259,749</u>	<u>269,213</u>	<u>262,016</u>
Nonrestricted					
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	151,131	147,148	162,968	172,006	177,783
Refugees	75,835	107,244	156,601	102,685	92,127
Special immigrants	3,142	3,255	4,940	3,177	2,338
Other	<u>11,052</u>	<u>8,544</u>	<u>9,873</u>	<u>12,682</u>	<u>9,639</u>
Subtotal	<u>241,160</u>	<u>266,191</u>	<u>334,382</u>	<u>290,550</u>	<u>281,887</u>
Total	<u>530,639</u>	<u>595,600</u>	<u>594,131</u>	<u>559,763</u>	<u>543,903</u>
Nonimmigrants	b	11,756,903	11,779,359	9,849,403 ^c	9,200,213 ^d

^aNonimmigrants include foreign government officials, temporary business and pleasure visitors, students, international representatives, temporary workers, and others. Data for 1980 and 1981 from INS, Statistical Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: 1980-81); data for 1982-84 from INS, Statistical Analysis Branch, Washington, D.C.

^bData not available.

^cData are for calendar year.

^dData are preliminary, subject to change.

Economic and population trends in other countries may put pressure on the United States to accept legal immigrants at this rate or even higher rates in the future.

Table 4 shows the number of immigrants entering the United States in 1980 through 1984 by category, as reported by INS. The numbers of total admissions represent only immigrants who were legally admitted to the United States, some of whom may previously have been illegal. Some estimates indicate that the United States often receives more illegal than legal immigrants during a given year.

Although the primary objective of U.S. immigration policy is family reunification, most emigration is prompted by economic reasons, specifically the search for jobs. Analysis of data on the countries of origin of legal immigrants and refugees indicates that the nine leading "source nations" in 1980 were (from high to low) Mexico, Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, China and Taiwan, India, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. All are Third world countries, many with serious problems of economic and social development. Estimates of the illegal alien population that are based on the 1980 census indicate that almost 55 percent of all illegal immigrants residing in the United States in 1980 were from only one country--Mexico.

By 2050, the population of the entire Third World is projected to increase to 6.9 billion, almost double **what** it is today. Although the latest estimates for the nine leading source nations indicate a slight decline in annual rates of population growth, the projected rates are still extreme. For example, from **1970** to **1981**, the population growth rates of Mexico and the Philippines were among the highest in the world, at **3.1** percent and **2.7** percent, respectively. (For the United States, the comparable figure was **1.0** percent.) Projections indicate that by the year 2000, the population will increase by approximately 50 percent in five of these nations. In Mexico, this means that the **1982** population of **73** million could increase in 18 years to 109 million,

Although the economic outlook for the source nations in the Third World indicates that their conditions are improving slightly, the prognosis remains discouraging. These nations have experienced relatively low economic growth rates in recent years. For example, between **1970** and **1978**, the average annual real growth rate of Jamaica was **-1.4** percent, of Mexico only **1.3** percent. It seems that conditions in few of the source nations will **be** sufficient to bring needed improvements in their economies within the next 20 years.

The populations of many of these nations are increasing faster than economic and labor market opportunities. Thus, the ability of these nations to provide sufficient employment opportunities for their populations is not improving. Unemployment rates in 1982 in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, for example, were 26 percent and **24** percent, respectively. In **1982**, about **40** percent of Mexico's labor force was unemployed, underemployed, or working in the informal labor market. Given projected economic and population growth rates for the nine leading source nations, the pressure on the United States to take in immigrants in large numbers seems likely to continue. Within the United States, some employers **seem** to have **a** preference for alien workers, which may "pull" them into this country. What is perceived as a problem today is **not** likely to correct itself tomorrow. In deciding how to deal **with** this problem, the Congress will **have** to consider issues of both foreign and domestic policy. We turn next to these.

CHAPTER 3

FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES: AN OVERVIEW

Although immigration is often seen as only a domestic and regional issue, a recognition of its foreign-policy implications may be increasing. According to a recent Brookings Institution publication entitled Immigration: The Beleaguered Bureaucracy,

"Even though the Simpson-Mazzoli bill maintained an almost exclusively domestic focus, virtually all those who considered it acknowledged the broader global issues that remain to be addressed, and perceived the bill as one of several major efforts necessary to deal responsibly with current immigration issues."¹

U.S. immigration policy, by setting the principles that govern the flow of foreign-born persons into the United States, has substantial implications for foreign governments. Seen this way, U.S. immigration policy is part of its foreign policy and is important to the image of the United States abroad. Other countries may be ambivalent about what they would like U.S. immigration policy to be, but all foreign countries want to be treated fairly and appropriately. When they believe they are not being treated fairly, relations with them can be damaged.

The U.S. border control agencies, INS and the U.S. Customs Service, can in their day-to-day operations take actions of immediate consequence to U.S. relations with other nations. For example, after the kidnapping (and murder) of an agent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Mexico, INS and Customs agents increased their border searches of automobiles to prevent the smuggling of weapons (or the body of the murdered officer) into the United States. The increase in border security slowed traffic down, disrupting commerce and tourism between the two countries.

The U.S. Department of State and the three agencies of the U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency (AID, TDP, and OPIC), traditionally considered the foreign-policy agencies, attempt to influence economic and political conditions in other countries. The Department of State is directly involved in immigration policy as the administrator of policies and programs on refugees and visas. It is also indirectly involved, since it manages political, economic, and social relations with other nations. The activities of AID, TDP, and OPIC, which help Third World countries develop their human and economic resources, also may affect immigration. Successful efforts to improve the economic conditions of Third world nations in the long run could reduce the "push" to emigrate. (In the short term, it might

¹Milton D. Morris (Washington, D.C.: 1985), p. 48. Bibliographical data are spelled out in appendix III.

increase immigration for some groups if greater social differentiation were combined with an increase in resources with which to migrate.)

The Bureau of Consular Affairs in the Department of State is particularly important in foreign policy because it issues **visas** to aliens traveling to the United **States**. Foreign governments continue to express concern that the bureau treat their citizens fairly. **The** complexity of the process by which consular offices issue visas to immigrants and nonimmigrants (who are defined **as** visiting officials, tourists, and **the** like) has increased as the number of applications has grown. Greater numbers of applications make backlogs that leave less time for reviews. Thus, fraud and misrepresentation in visa applications are increasing problems that indicate the need not only for additional personnel to process applications but also for new and improved procedures and facilities.

Another federal agency concerned with foreign policy is the U.S. Department of Defense. Although the full range and extent of its concerns are of course much greater, one area of its special concern is the number of foreign students doing graduate work in scientific fields. Defense contracts with universities have been curtailed in certain **fields** where foreign students seem to **be** involved in research.

Overall, the concerns of **U.S.** foreign policy that are related to immigration are diverse. While **they** are most obviously linked to functions of the Department of State, their indirect links to the activities of INS should not be overlooked. The work proposed on border control and visas (discussed later in this document) focuses to some **degree** on issues of foreign policy that are related to immigration.

CHAPTER 4

DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES: AN OVERVIEW

Immigration is traditionally an issue in domestic affairs. It responds to domestic pressures. It is part of the domestic policy debate. It is often besieged by domestic interest groups. Among the key domestic stakeholders in the immigration policy debate are employers in the agricultural sector and nonagricultural employers, especially in labor-intensive service industries; members of organized labor; certain ethnic groups, which are a powerful force in favor of the liberalization of immigration policy; environmentalists and immigration control groups, whose perspectives vary but who nonetheless coalesce to argue in favor of restricted immigration; the American Bar Association and the American Civil Liberties Union; and special communities, such as the Hispanic community, that are beginning to play larger roles on the political scene. Many domestic policy issues hinge on the state and local distribution of different types of immigrants, who affect different economic sectors, provide different benefits, and require different services.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports that in **1980** the foreign-born population (aliens and naturalized citizens) in the United States was **14.1** million, or 6.2 percent of the total population. Between **1970** and **1980**, more than 70 percent of all legal immigrants, and the overwhelming majority of all refugees, came from Latin America and Asia. As indicated earlier, more than half of all illegal immigrants are believed to come from Mexico. Estimates of the **size** of the illegal immigrant population vary greatly. While recent work seems to cast extreme doubt on the highest of these estimates--about **12** million illegal residents--a precise estimate of this "hidden" population is elusive. CBO currently uses the figure **5.1** million for resident illegal immigrants. This figure is consonant with our view (see, for example, Problems and Options in Estimating the Size of the Illegal Alien Population, GAO/IPE-82-9, September 24, **1982**).

Immigrants are distributed unequally by regions. Data from the 1980 census indicate that more than one quarter of all legally resident aliens resided in one state--California. Further, more than two thirds resided in only six states--California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey (ordered from high immigrant population to low). These residence patterns are likely to be related to three factors: (1) labor market opportunities, (2) proximity to the point of entry into the country, and (3) the wish of persons newly arriving to settle near relatives, friends, or others of the same national origin.

No definitive information on where illegal aliens settle is available, but estimates based on the **1980** census data indicate that their settlement patterns are similar to those of legal

immigrants. **The same** reasons for where and **why** they settle are likely to apply. The regional variance in the immigrant population across the nation **means** that the effects of federal immigration policy are **felt** far more in some areas than in others. Immigration is, therefore, a very direct pressing concern to some regions and states rather than a concern equally of all regions and states. It is important to remember, however, that immigration may have an indirect effect on areas without high concentrations of immigrants. The fact that large numbers of immigrants fill industrial jobs in California, for example, could mean that unemployed workers in the Midwest may not be able to find work by moving to California and that midwestern industries may be attracted to the supply of low-cost labor and relocate there.

Immigrants have an effect on state **and** local economies as well as on the need for state and local services. Whether these effects are more often benefits or liabilities, and what the net effect may be, are often matters of considerable dispute. For example, it is argued that many immigrants, particularly illegal ones, are willing to work at jobs most U.S. citizens will not accept at current wages. They are said to provide the labor for hotels and restaurants (dishwashers, bussers, and maids), the farm industry (crop pickers), middle-income and upper-income households (child care, housecleaning), and the construction industry (house painters, yard cleaners). To the extent that their labor facilitates national productivity, these workers **are** economic assets. The net gain for state and local economies may be high, particularly if the illegal workers pay for benefits but do not receive them. **To** the extent, however, that they displace other workers, forcing those who are marginally **prepared** into unsuccessful competition for higher-paying jobs, they may represent a net **cost** to states and localities.

For another example, large immigrant populations might create expensive, **special** demands for human services, especially if amnesty or legalization for illegal aliens were to be legislated. Court-mandated education for the children of illegal aliens and national, state, and local policies on bilingual education **have** already created a significant financial burden for some public schools. Because illegal aliens are ineligible for federally funded health benefits, those who are unable to pay for emergency **medical** services must depend on publicly supported county and local hospitals' absorbing their emergency medical costs. The extent to which these are compensated for in the short term by taxes collected on the income of other illegal workers, or in the long term by an increase in economic growth, may affect **local** attitudes **toward** the consequences of federal immigration policy.

Because the demographic characteristics of a population are linked to the need for services, data on the immigrant population are essential for adequate program planning. State and local governments provide a variety of services to legal,

and some to illegal, immigrants. Such data are also of key concern to the state and local governments that apply for funding from federal sources. Many federal funding formulas take into account the size of the population in need, but if illegal immigrants go uncounted and legal immigrants go undercounted (because of language problems, among others), areas with high concentrations of immigrants may not receive adequate funding.

Legislation with provisions similar to those in Simpson-Mazzoli would make adequate demographic data on the immigrant population even **more** critical than it is now. Amnesty for illegal aliens would allow them to receive, after several years, an array of social services, for which they were previously ineligible. Housing assistance under the Section 8 low-income housing program is an example of these services. Projecting the effect of an amnesty program on social services requires a reasonably sound assessment of the size and characteristics of the illegal population. Although it is unlikely that all illegal aliens will apply for amnesty, and thus eventually become eligible for social programs, accurate forecasts of the potential demand for services cannot be made without an estimate of the baseline population. Another central provision of Simpson-Mazzoli, which could recur in new immigration legislation, called for direct reimbursement to the states for expenses they incur in providing services to immigrants. The adequacy of proposed estimates for reimbursements cannot be judged when sound estimates of the size of the immigrant population are lacking.

CHAPTER 5

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

Foreign and domestic policy often lead to differing and uneasily reconcilable conclusions about how many people should be admitted to the United States, who they should be, what services should be offered to them, who should pay for these services, and how to carry out these decisions. The tensions are felt between the foreign and domestic policies of the federal government and between policies favored by the federal government and those favored by state and local governments and the people they represent. Three particular points of tension result in part from conflicts between foreign and domestic needs: refugee policy, labor needs, and the financial responsibilities of the federal, state, and local governments.

REFUGEES: A SPECIAL CLASS OF IMMIGRANTS

Refugees constitute a highly visible subpopulation of the immigrants who receive special treatment. Although the United States has admitted more than 500,000 refugees since 1980 (mostly Southeast Asians), the U.S. refugee and resettlement policy emphasizes resettlement to the United States only as a last resort. Priority is given to the safe and voluntary return of refugees to their homelands and, if this is not possible, to their resettlement in other countries within their native regions. Only after these options have been explored and found unacceptable is resettlement in the United States considered.

Applicants for admission into the United States as refugees must meet specific criteria. However, meeting the criteria for admission does not create an entitlement for admittance. Instead, the admissions program is a legal mechanism for admitting refugees who it is judged need to be resettled, for whom the United States has a special concern, and who are eligible under one of six priorities applicable to individual situations (shown in table 5 on the next page).

This system of priorities sets administrative guidelines and insures an organized processing of refugees who seek admission into the United States within established annual regional ceilings set annually by the Congress. The system is designed administratively to identify groups of refugees who have significant ties to the United States or whose circumstances warrant the compelling concern of the U.S. government when the regional ceiling is not high enough to admit all otherwise eligible applicants. The assignment to a particular priority does not make a person more or **less** a refugee; instead, it may reflect an assessment of the urgency of need for resettlement.

The first priority, compelling concern and interest, was established in order to meet exceptional cases only--that is, to

Table 5

Refugee Priority System

1. Compelling concern and interest: Exceptional cases of (a) refugees in immediate danger of loss of life for whom there appears to be no alternative to resettlement in the United States or (b) refugees of compelling concern to the United States such as former or present political prisoners and dissidents.
2. Former U.S. government employee: Refugees employed by the government for at least 1 year prior to the claim for refugee status. This category also includes persons who were not official government employees but who for at least 1 year were so integrated into U.S. government offices as to have been, in effect and in appearance, government employees.
3. Family reunification: Refugees who are spouses, sons, daughters, parents, grandparents, unmarried siblings, or unmarried minor grandchildren of persons in the United States. The "anchor" relative in the United States must be a U.S. citizen, a lawful permanent resident alien, or a refugee who has been given asylum.
4. Other ties to the United States: Refugees (a) employed by U.S. foundations, U.S. voluntary agencies, or U.S. business firms for at least 1 year prior to the claim for refugee status or (b) trained in the United States or abroad under U.S. government auspices.
5. Additional family reunification: Refugees who are married siblings, unmarried grandchildren who have reached the age of majority, or married grandchildren of persons in the United States; also more distantly related individuals who are part of the family group and dependent on the family for support. The "anchor" relative in the United States must be a U.S. citizen, a lawful permanent resident alien, or a refugee who has been given asylum.
6. Otherwise of national interest: Other refugees in specified regional groups whose admission is in the interest of the United States.

SOURCE: Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs; Bureau for Refugee Programs, Department of State; Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services; and Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice, Report to the Congress: Proposed United States Refugee Admissions and Allocations for Fiscal Year 1985 (Washington, D.C.: August 1984),

respond to the need of an eligible refugee who is in an urgent, life-threatening situation. The purpose of the priority is not to benefit any particular community of refugees but to give the U.S. government the flexibility to meet specific emergencies. Almost all refugees in the United States are admitted under the other priorities.

Although resettlement in the United States is the last option the government will consider, it has been the primary method of relocating refugees from Southeast Asia because of their ethnic, religious, and economic situation. In the past few years, the admission of refugees to the United States has changed significantly. During the late 1970's and early 1980's, most of the refugees were admitted for compelling concern and interest, had formerly been U.S. government employees, or had other ties to the United States. Since 1983, the vast majority of refugees have entered primarily under the "family reunification" and

"additional family reunification" priorities. For example, more than 75 percent of the 40,000 Southeast Asian refugees were admitted in these two categories in fiscal year **1984**. This implies an endless stream of refugees seeking admission into the United States as successive waves of relatives become eligible for entrance.

The special benefits refugees receive

Refugees resettled in the United States receive significant federal benefits not provided to other immigrants. An important goal of resettlement is to assist refugees in achieving self-sufficiency as rapidly as possible. This goal is sought in the following ways:

1. English is taught as a second language at refugee camps before refugees reach the United States.
2. Upon the arrival of refugees, voluntary agencies provide housing, food, and clothing, introduce the refugees to health care services, provide them with sponsors, and counsel them on employment, vocational training, and language skills.
3. Federal resettlement assistance is provided to refugees primarily through state-administered resettlement programs that include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Aged, blind, and disabled refugees may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
4. Needy refugees who do not qualify for cash assistance under AFDC or SSI may receive cash assistance from the Refugee Cash Assistance program during their first **18** months in the United States.
5. Refugees may also **be** given medical assistance, and **some** are eligible for Medicaid.

Refugees may also be qualified for some general assistance programs of the state and local governments.

The direct costs of refugees and who pays them

For their first 90 days in the United States, refugees **are** eligible for assistance from the Department of State, through its reception and placement program, whose purpose is to help refugees become self-sufficient. Although this program **may** help refugees become independent, we found recently (in an evaluation still under way) that most refugees remain in need of public assistance beyond the 90 days.

Refugees **are** eligible for various programs and services in such areas as education, health, and welfare. The costs of

federal public assistance such as AFDC are generally shared by the states and the federal government, but 100 percent of the public-assistance costs for refugees are paid by the federal government during their initial 36 months in the United States. After that, welfare costs for refugees are shared, just **as** they are for other recipients of aid. Many states and counties are finding that refugees continue to receive public assistance beyond **36** months, creating a financial burden to these governments.

In California, for example, a great many refugees remain dependent on welfare longer than their first **3** years in the United States at significant **cost** to the state and local governments as well as the federal government. The same is true in other states with large refugee populations. Officials in California, which has approximately 330,000 refugees, have estimated that in **1985** more than 70 percent of the state's refugees receiving public assistance will have been in the United States longer than **36** months and that there will have been an 8.6-percent net increase in the number of refugees given **aid** between **1984** and **1985**. Approximately 217,600 refugees in California will receive some form of cash assistance in **1985**, 87 percent through AFDC. **As** a result, refugees will make up **11** percent of the state's total AFDC caseload, although they make up only 1 percent of its population.

Frammented responsibilities

Nowhere is the lack of an overall immigration policy or plan more apparent than with refugees. A framework does exist for coordinating federal, state, and local governments and agencies, but the federal agencies tend to operate independently, with only limited awareness of the activities of other agencies, whether federal, state, or local. **As** a result, the general approach has conflicting goals and is given limited direction. For example, the program of the Department of State that encourages refugees to become self-sufficient may conflict with various other assistance programs that make it easy for them (and may even give them an incentive) to apply for public assistance.

The lack of coordination and cooperation between agencies means that programs **do** not complement one another and are less focused than they could be on the problems they address. The various federal agencies concerned with refugees include not only the Department of State but also the Department of Justice, including **INS**, and the Department of Health and Human Services, including its Office of Refugee Resettlement. Each has an important mission but they appear to have no integrated approach. The State Department runs the reception and placement program we discussed above, but it provides benefits for only the first 90 days a refugee is in the United States. The Office of Refugee Resettlement administers most other refugee programs but has little coordination with the State Department or **INS** or

with state and local agencies. **Most** public assistance programs for refugees are administered by states or counties or by other federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration. Their lack of coordination sends mixed signals to local agencies administering programs as well as to refugees receiving assistance. The Congress has expressed its concern.

Significant numbers of refugees remain in camps for Southeast Asians, and the number is expected to grow: the flow of refugees into the United States is likely to continue well into the next decade. Many experts have asked whether these refugees are really economic migrants rather than refugees with valid fears of persecution. Citing surveys and spot checks of recent arrivals in Thailand camps, the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy reported that increasing numbers of them are economic migrants rather than refugees. In any case, given current U.S. policies, it appears that the United States will continue to accept refugees in significant numbers throughout the next decade and beyond. Arguably, the Refugee Act of **1980**, enacted as a solution to a short-term, temporary problem, does not provide the legislative framework to deal with what has become a continuous long-term problem.

LABOR NEEDS

U.S. immigration policy has always assumed that legal immigrants become an integral part of U.S. economic life, holding jobs and creating jobs for others. Some groups are allowed to enter the country as nonimmigrants for a short term to fill jobs that employers demonstrate cannot be filled by workers in the domestic labor force. These workers (entering with H-1, H-2, and L visas) are granted visas for temporary employment in agriculture and other sectors. The selection of temporary workers has not recently been a major issue.

However, recent experience with "guest workers" in some European countries and problems coming from the acceleration of automation have raised concerns about the ability to predict the consequences of accepting legal immigrants in order to meet labor needs. For example, after World War II, nations such as West Germany, whose human resources had been depleted, opened their doors to workers, mostly men, from Greece, Italy, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. These workers, who initially sent most of their pay back to their families, eventually brought them into West Germany and the other European countries where they worked. The governments had failed to realize that an effort to stabilize the guest-worker population would naturally result in the relocation and reunification of their families. The influx of spouses and children has created a significant demand on these governments that is particularly acute in health, housing, and education. The U.S. temporary-workers program is small, but some experts predict similar problems here if the United States were to adopt a guest-worker-like program or give amnesty to **all** illegal aliens currently in this country.

Many of the concerns we discuss below **about** the economic and labor market effects of immigrants do not pertain to legal immigrants, who in most cases are assumed to have a positive effect on the economy. Rather, the concerns are **related** to illegal immigrants, a population that may match or exceed the population of those who enter legally. It is thought that individuals in the illegal population enter the country largely to work toward improving their economic **status**. The central question **up** to now has been, What effect does this have on U.S. citizens in the **job** market?

Two things can be said with certainty: **the** effect of illegal aliens on the U.S. economy and labor market is extremely complex, and generalizations are inappropriate. A sizable body of recent research has **made** these two points very clear. This is *to* say not that information relevant to policy is not available **but** that the answers to policy questions are complex. Some of the areas of primary controversy on this issue are listed in the **next** seven paragraphs.

1. Job displacement. Some argue that illegal aliens displace U.S. workers, in many cases those least employable, and contend that a pattern of hiring illegal workers over a period of time results in the systematic exclusion of citizens and immigrants legally entitled to work. Others contend that the jobs being taken **by** the illegal immigrants **are** so unattractive that without them these **jobs** would go unfilled. They point out further that illegal workers are concentrated primarily in boom areas, where the supply of legal workers **does** not fill the demand.

2. Labor exploitation. It is contended that because undocumented aliens have no legal rights in the **job** market, employers exploit them and, further, that this depresses working conditions for all **workers**, since the undocumented aliens are a ready substitute **for** U.S. workers who **are** not satisfied with their working conditions. And, since illegal aliens may be willing to work for lower wages, they may also depress the wage scale **for** all workers.

3. Business viability. Illegal immigrant labor is **said** by some to be essential to the viability of labor-intensive small businesses, which exert a need for an inexpensive and a reliable and plentiful supply **of** labor. Were it not available, **some** of these businesses would fail or relocate in foreign countries. Others contend that legal workers can fill the **same** labor needs.

4. Inflation control. Some say that the availability of inexpensive illegal immigrant labor keeps the costs of **goods** low, thus helping the overall economy. **Others** assert that if this is true, it is at the expense of the workers. Still others contend that **some** illegal immigrant workers are being exploited by employers who provide subminimum wages **and** substandard working conditions **and** that the **cost** reductions are not passed

on to consumers **but** are, in **some** areas, retained as additional profit.

5. National economy. Both taxes and social security are withheld from the wages of many illegal immigration laborers. Since they are unlikely to file for tax refunds, they may be overpaying in relation to their incomes. Further, since they are prohibited from applying for many benefits, they are assisting the economy without necessarily drawing from it,

6. Local economy. Some contend that illegal immigrant workers spend **some** of their income in local economies, thus providing a market for local landlords, merchants, and vendors of services. Others contend that **some** money flows into the local economies but that much of the earnings of illegal aliens flows back to their countries of origin. Further, it is argued, the demand from illegal aliens for local **services** drains more from the economy than they contribute.

7. Legal and ethical issues. **Some** argue that there is an inherent problem in maintaining an illegal work force that is primarily outside the control and protection of government. Others argue that the nation has a moral obligation to help those who are willing to help themselves and, since illegal immigrants are willing to **work** hard to improve their circumstances, much as legal immigrants are, they should not **be** denied the opportunity.

The variety, complexity, and relationships of the issues result in **a** situation in which no single research effort is likely to yield definitive statements on the full range of issues. Coupled with the fact that the population of interest is a hidden population unwilling to participate in any effort likely to jeopardize its status, this makes obtaining sound and useful information highly difficult.

Despite these obstacles, research on the effects of illegal aliens on the economy and the labor market **has** increased in recent years and **seems** to be providing some answers to policy questions. It has also brought about the recognition that **a** search for simple answers is likely to **be** unsuccessful.

Not many years ago, the stereotype of the illegal **worker** **was** a young, single, unskilled Mexican man working in the agricultural fields of southern California and enduring poor working conditions for low wages. Research seems to be showing that the single largest group of illegal workers is probably Mexican, still in agriculture and receiving low wages for work in substandard conditions, but it is becoming more and more evident that there is great variety among illegal **workers**. Substantial numbers of illegal workers **perform** nonagricultural work (one estimate is two thirds) in semi-skilled, skilled, and professional jobs in regions of the country not typically associated with illegal workers, and they are not coming only

from **Mexico**. Large numbers of **these** workers are neither young nor men, and many are here with their families.

The implications of these findings for the policy issues discussed above are numerous, but the overriding inference is that generalizations about the effect of this population on the economy and the labor market are inappropriate. The question of the displacement of U.S. workers, for example, cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and depends on the subgroup of illegal immigrant workers being considered. Even where it may appear that illegal workers are in fact filling jobs that would otherwise be filled by **U.S.** citizens, the notion of one-to-one displacement is simplistic, because illegal workers 'alsomay create jobs in the local community and in the economy in general. Similarly, the contribution to or drain on the local economy by illegal immigrants must be assessed in relation to specific subgroups and specific localities, not the illegal population as **a** whole.

A number of projects over the years have assessed the effects of illegal aliens on the economy and the labor market, but research in this area has surged in the past 5 years. A variety of different data-collection methods have been used in this research, but it all falls loosely under the category of case studies (of various sizes) and focuses on specific parts of the issues. Numerous methods have been employed in trying to identify illegal populations for analysis, and all are problematic, because these are hidden populations, Rut combining the findings from a variety of approaches using independent data sources seems to offer insights that no single approach could produce under the circumstances. Studies have also expanded in scope recently, exploring labor market effects on groups of wider ethnic diversity in a greater variety of regions of the country than before.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FINANCE: GAINERS AND LOSERS

A vitally important component of the immigration issue is who should bear the financial burden for the government services that immigrants use. Because **the** federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over immigration, the state and local governments have no direct control over where immigrants locate. Yet local governments carry much of the financial burden created by refugees and other immigrants. **As** a result, federal decisions on immigration (on refugees and on legal and illegal immigrants) affect state and local governments. Some claim that if the federal government bore all the costs of immigration, federal policies would be very different.

Immigrants may require or receive government services, **but** they also contribute to the system. Immigrants not only pay taxes but also contribute to the social, cultural, and economic growth of the nation. Determining the costs and benefits of

Table 6

The Eligibility of Immigrants for Program Benefits

<u>Program</u>	<u>Naturalized citizen</u>	<u>Permanent resident alien</u>	<u>Refugee</u>	<u>Illegal alien</u>
National				
Social Security				
OASDI	yes	yes	yes	yes
Card issuance	yes	yes	yes	no
Pays FICA	yes	yes	yes	yes
Supplemental security				
Income				
Income	yes	yes ^a	yes	no
Medicare A ^b	yes	yes	yes	yes
Medicare B	yes	yes ^c	no	no
Earned income tax credit	yes	yes	yes	yes
Federal				
AFDC	yes	yes ^a	yes	no
Refugee cash assistance	no	no ^d	yes	no
Food stamps	yes	yes	yes	no
Medicaid	yes	yes ^e	yes	no
Unemployment insurance	yes	yes	yes	no
State				
Workers' compensation	yes	yes	yes	yes ^f
General Assistance	yes	yes	yes	varies
Temporary disability insurance	yes	yes	yes	yes ^g

SOURCE: David S. North and Jennifer R. Wagner, Immigration and Income Transfer Policies in the United States: An Analysis of a Non-Relationship (Washington, D.C.: New TransCentury Foundation, December 1982).

^aAfter 3 years.

^bCorresponds to Medicare under OASDI.

^cAfter 5 years.

^dIf also a refugee, then yes.

^eFor a newly arrived immigrant, Medicaid may be denied for lack of SSI or AFDC eligibility.

^fExcept in Vermont.

^gExcept in New Jersey.

immigration is a formidable task; however, identifying some of the known costs and benefits can contribute information that could assist the Congress in making relevant legislative decisions.

There are three types of programs within our inter-governmental system: in table 6, we call them national, federal, and state programs. The national programs (for example, Social Security) are directed and administered by the federal government. The rules, regulations, and benefits are consistent throughout the United States. In contrast, federal programs (such as AFDC) are funded either partly or wholly by the federal government but are administered by individual state and local

governments. Rules, regulations, **and** benefits may differ from the minimum standards set by the Congress. State programs (such as General Assistance) involve no federal role or oversight and vary significantly by state and, in many cases, by locality.

The availability of public assistance to immigrants by status (refugee or legal or illegal alien) depends on the program, but in every program at least one immigrant class is eligible for benefits. Immigrants are entitled to a significant number of program benefits, although it has not been determined how they use them. Government costs are not limited to income-transfer programs. Agencies incur direct costs from immigration.

Some state and local governments have argued that they are not responsible for the cost of providing care to indigent illegal immigrants. The states can pass legislation that transfers the responsibility to counties and private medical centers. Counties, in turn, have argued that illegal aliens are not legal residents and, therefore, the counties do not have to reimburse private institutions or accept financial responsibility for indigent illegal aliens beyond that established for state medical programs. This has resulted in suits against counties in which the plaintiffs have argued that residence has to do with the establishment of a domicile and the intention to stay, **not** with immigration status. Such cases have been tried in two counties, but the rulings on the legality of the counties' positions were contradictory.¹

The health care needs of immigrants

No one would argue that good health for all is a desirable goal, but its cost often prohibits its attainment. The tension between the goal of good health and its costs increases when health care for immigrants, particularly illegal immigrants, is the question. Recent research seems to indicate that the health of immigrants is poorer than that of other inhabitants of the country. A national study of the health of Hispanics and several case studies of Indochinese and Mexican immigrants have presented this conclusion.

Specifically, these studies indicate that the variety of health care needs of legal and illegal immigrants ranges in severity from care for infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis **and** venereal disease, to less critical but serious problems like intestinal parasites, anemia, muscle strain, and headache. Although many immigrants bring these health problems with them, some problems are manifested only after they have arrived and

¹See Sequoia Community Health Foundation v. Board of Supervisors of Fresno County, No. 269458-6 (Cal. App. 3rd Supp., September 26, 1984), and Bay General Community Hospital et al. v. County of San Diego et al., No. 451877 (Cal. App. 3rd Supp., May 14, 1984).

are commonly the result of poor living conditions and poor nutrition. Further, **refugees** and illegal **immigrants** often experience psychological stress and need various types of mental health care.

The health care needs of immigrants often go unmet. Those **who** are illegal, especially, do not **use** health care services **to** the extent that they need them. This may **be** particularly true for mental health needs, since symptoms of stress and psychological disorder are often exhibited in noncritical, non-life-threatening problems such **as** backache, headache, and depression. Immigrants use health services less than they might for at least three reasons:

1. cost. Many legal, and most illegal, immigrants have no health insurance. Many legal immigrants are in the category of **the** working poor--their incomes leave them ineligible for Medicaid but still unable to afford health care. Consequently, they have to make medical payments for nonemergencies with personal funds, which are generally too low to give them access to private physicians and hospitals. Only emergency treatment is available for illegal immigrants without charge.
2. legal barriers. Illegal immigrants are barred from Medicaid, regardless of their financial status. Further, screening and admittance procedures often discourage immigrants, especially those who are illegal, from seeking care.
3. sociocultural barriers. Factors such **as** inadequate knowledge of and mistaken beliefs about the causes and treatment of illness, **as** well as language barriers, impede some immigrants from seeking health care.

The barriers to health care for immigrants undermine national priorities for public health and disease control. When access to **care** is reduced, its use is lowered and, consequently, many health problems go undetected **and** untreated. With some diseases, this affects only an individual's health, but with others, such **as** infectious diseases, the public at large may be affected. Given that immigrants are frequently employed in service industries (such as restaurants), the exposure to and spread of infectious disease could be great. Recently, there has been some evidence of the spread of tuberculosis among school children in areas with large immigrant populations.

Education: A cost of integration

Education has been **a** major instrument for the integration of immigrants during much of our nation's history. Since public education is funded by local governments with state support, and somewhat less support from the federal government, the cost of educating immigrants in all categories is largely a state **and**

local cost. The various patterns of settlement mean that the expense falls on some areas more than on others.

Clearly, legal immigrants and their children are as entitled to free public education **as** the children of citizens who were born here. What had been relatively less clear until **1982** was whether the children of illegal aliens are entitled to public education. In that **year**, the Supreme Court ruled that states must provide free public education for all children, regardless of the legality of their residence (**see** Plyer v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (**1982**)).

The costs of public education for immigrant children can be large. In California, it is estimated that the cost borne by school districts for refugee children alone was more than \$100 million for the **1983-84** school year. In the Santa Ana, California, school district, it is estimated that 22 percent of the total school enrollment consists of illegal aliens.

A large immigrant school-age population means the need for bilingual education, teaching English **as** a second language, or other language development programs. These programs are required by both federal and state mandates when the enrollment of non-English-speaking students reaches specified levels. In some school districts, this could mean instituting programs of education in **a** single language beyond English; in others with greater ethnic diversity, multiple programs could be required. **As** many as **117** different languages and dialects are represented among the children in some school districts in California. California is an extreme case, but other areas of the country run education programs in many languages.

Other social services

We discussed some social services above. The discussion of the status of refugees outlines the special provisions that allow **them** to receive a variety of social services. The section on health describes the provision of services to various immigrant groups that need them. Other social services have not been discussed, including some federally funded programs such as AFDC and low-income housing assistance and programs funded by state and local governments such as General Assistance and emergency food and shelter programs.

All the social service programs that are available to U.S. citizens are also available to legal immigrants (although for their first **3** years, legal immigrants must specify the income of their sponsors when applying for public assistance). Legal immigrants must meet, of course, the same participation requirements as citizens (some requirements are relaxed for refugees, **as** we discussed earlier). These requirements usually include criteria for income and family composition or demographic characteristics. To qualify for AFDC, for instance, an applicant must have income below fixed standards, a dependent

(usually a child) must **be** part of the household, and **only** one able-bodied parent can be **part** of the household (both parents may be **part** of the household under AFDC-Unemployed Parent). To qualify for free transportation programs, the elderly must meet **age** requirements. Because the legal status within a household can be mixed (for example, some children in a household may **have** been born in the United **States** and others who are foreign-born may have entered illegally), eligibility for services may also be mixed within the same household,

With some exceptions, benefits from social service programs are not intended for illegal aliens. Applications for participation usually require the specification of civil status (whether one is a citizen or a legal resident, for example), and if illegal status is detected, benefits are denied. **Some** programs, such as AFDC and Medicaid as administered by California, require applicants to document their legality. Applicants who claim status as permanent resident aliens are advised that this information will be verified by **INS**. In fact, however, not all applications are matched with INS data because of resource constraints. Only those that seem most questionable are checked.

No statistics **measure** the extent to which illegal aliens participate in social service programs they are not eligible for. There is no doubt, however, that they do participate to some extent. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Services, 35,153 applicants in Los Angeles were identified and denied services in a 12-month period of 1981-82 (July 1 to June 30) because they were not legal residents. This figure--the most recent available--represents a 30-percent increase above the same measure taken there 2 years earlier.

The sizable number of applicants **whose** ineligibility is **detected**, and the fact that applications are checked for only a subset of immigrants claiming legal status, raises the question of how many illegal immigrants receive AFDC and Medicaid benefits in Los Angeles County. Since the program to detect illegal aliens who apply for social services in California is the most stringent in the nation, greater proportions of applications from illegal aliens may be being approved in other states.

Other significant costs borne primarily by local communities include those of emergency assistance and law enforcement. Indications are that the communities with the larger immigrant populations incur significantly greater costs in these areas. For example, Santa Ana, California, **has a** substantial number of refugees and immigrants (legal and illegal). The city indicates that general services as well as specific services such as those of the police department have required additional **resources** because of the size and diverse ethnicity of the population it must serve and protect. Where services are provided by government, immigrants use them, at **the** expense of public resources.

Determining the costs

This review of costs should not be construed **as** an attack on immigrants. Although many experts believe immigrants create a financial burden, others believe that immigrants contribute more fiscal resources **than** they receive from the government. Since most illegal immigrants no longer work in agriculture but are employed instead in light industry and service-related industries, federal income tax as well **as** Social Security taxes are withheld from their pay. Yet most undocumented aliens do not file for Social Security benefits (and are not legally entitled to a Social Security number) and many do not file income-tax returns (even when **a** refund is owed). Hence, they provide the federal treasury with money the government would not otherwise collect. Immigrants also pay sales taxes and property taxes, either directly as property owners or indirectly as tenants.

Determining how much immigrants of all classes **pay** in taxes **is** difficult. However, many experts believe that the amount is substantial. There is not only no information to determine if immigrants pay more than they receive but also no precise information about which of the federal, state, and local governments gain or lose financially from immigration, especially illegal immigration. That the federal government receives substantial income from immigrants' withholding and Social Security taxes is clear. The local governments, however, provide most of the public services--education, health, public safety, social welfare, and so on--and believe that they **spend** much more than they gain in revenues generated by the immigrants. Given these assumptions, many policy analysts believe that the federal government gains significantly from immigration while state and local governments, which have no control over immigration policy, share a substantial financial **burden**.

CHAPTER 6

IMMIGRATION CONTROL:

AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT

BUT NOT A COMPLETE SOLUTION

Up to this point, we have considered various questions about immigration policy. We turn now to issues of implementing policy. These issues include that of attracting needed workers as legal immigrants and also that of keeping out illegal immigrants.

PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

While most would agree that immigration control involves more than curtailing illegal entry, **few** would argue that this is not the primary problem in immigration control. Border enforcement has increased, **but** large numbers of aliens enter the country illegally each day, most of them in search of employment. Some problems could probably be solved by adding resources to the immigration agencies. Others may require changes in policy.

Sanctions against employers who hire illegal aliens **have** been recommended **by** a number of immigration experts and various task forces examining the immigration problems of the United States. Unlike most other nations, the United States does not prohibit the employment of illegal aliens. However, **11** states and one city have employer-sanction laws, although they are minimally enforced. While sanctions against employers may not prevent illegal aliens from coming into the United States to **work**, many believe sanctions are a tool that would make it more difficult for employers to hire illegal aliens, **and** they would like to **see** federal penalties legislated for employers who knowingly hire them. On March 26, **1985**, we testified on how other nations administer sanctions for employers who hire illegal aliens. **The** immigration legislation proposed during **the** Ninety-seventh, Ninety-eighth, and Ninety-ninth Congress has included sanctions against employers as the cornerstone of U.S. control activities. They are hotly **debated**, however, on such grounds as high cost, poor feasibility, little effectiveness, and the overextension of federal power.

The Simpson-Mazzoli bill, introduced originally in the Ninety-seventh Congress, was based on bipartisan congressional concerns about illegal immigration dating back to the early 1970's. It was the result of

"months of extensive hearings by the two immigration subcommittees on all aspects of immigration and refugee policy, with a special focus on the Reagan Administration's proposals and the recommendations of **the** Select Commission

on Immigration and Refugee Policy." (Congressional Research Service, Issue **Brief** 83087, p. 5)

Although amended versions of **the** bill passed both houses, the conference failed to resolve differences between the versions, and the bill **did** not pass.

Illegal immigration remains the principal focus of concern in immigration debates. However, the Simpson-Mazzoli bill attempted to address not only illegal immigration but also other topics such as legal immigration, amnesty, and asylum. Asylum became critical with the 1980 Mariel boat lift, which brought well over 100,000 aliens here who were seeking asylum. **As a result**, the related issues of backlogged asylum adjudications and the control of the annual number of legal immigrants retain high congressional interest. The major components of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill were intended to address these and other issues of **great** concern.

The Simpson-Mazzoli bill and the conference discussion revolved around these provisions:

1. On the control of illegal immigration by imposing sanctions on employers and the related issue of identifying workers,
 - a. establish criminal and civil penalties for employers who **knowingly** hire illegal aliens and
 - b. require employers of four or more persons to examine specified documents for everyone they hire.
2. On the number of legal alien temporary workers,
 - a. ease provisions to allow more temporary **workers**, legalize the status of certain illegal aliens already in the United States, and increase the figure for intergovernmental costs that the federal government will assume,
 - b. grant legal status to certain aliens residing illegally in the United States, and
 - c. provide impact-aid grants to the states.
3. On the procedures for granting asylum and adjudicating other legal immigration,
 - a. expedite the removal of undocumented aliens from the United States unless they claim asylum,
 - b. place time limits on the presence of aliens who file for asylum and are defendants in exclusion or deportation proceedings instituted against them, and

- c. limit aliens to one application for, asylum unless their circumstances clearly change.
4. On the number and composition of groups of legal immigrants,
 - a. increase the ceiling on the numerical restriction of immigrants to 425,000 annually and
 - b. allot **the** majority of slots for family reunification.

While Simpson-Mazzoli did not pass either Congress, modified legislation was introduced in the Ninety-ninth Congress by the Honorable Peter Rodino in the House. The Honorable Alan Simpson of **the** Senate introduced similar immigration legislation in **the** Ninety-ninth Congress.

Notwithstanding current legislative initiatives, problems in the administration and implementation of immigration policies and laws continue. For example,

- the statistical systems of INS are not **able** to provide basic, congressionally requested data, despite recent attempts to upgrade them,
- the allocation of resources for **INS** staff may not be optimal for the agency's control activities,
- INS** is unable to determine quickly and **accurately** the status of aliens in the united States or to **retard** the proliferation of fraudulent documents,
- INS** and the Department of State have **cumbersome** procedures for handling asylum, exclusion, and deportation **cases**, and
- the Department of Labor and **INS's** **labor** certification process and programs for temporary foreign workers present management problems, among **others** that should **be** addressed.

ASYLUM: A SPECIAL PROBLEM

The Congress is also moving forward to address the **question** of asylum, A person who has been granted asylum **has** proven to the satisfaction of **INS** and the Department of **State** that persecution awaits a return to the country of origin. During the past **few** years, requests for asylum have skyrocketed; numbering approximately 3,700 in **1978**, they **exceeded 160,000** in 1984. Most requests were **from** citizens of Cuba, El Salvador, and Haiti and **other** impoverished nations in the Western Hemisphere. The administration **has** indicated that current asylum and exclusion procedures cannot accommodate the large

numbers of asylum **cases**. While the backlog of requests for asylum is diminishing, the caseload of the administrative judges who handle asylum cases remains heavy.

The problems of asylum are extremely complex and sometimes demonstrate the conflicts between competing beliefs. For example, the United States supports El Salvador in its struggle to remain a nation free of Marxist control, yet many Salvadorans have fled their country, stating that they fear for their lives. This creates a paradox in which the United States is in the difficult position of supporting a government whose citizens are asking for asylum on humanitarian grounds.

To date, the United States has granted asylum to very few Salvadorans (or to citizens of other nations friendly to the United States) and has claimed that they are economic immigrants, not victims of persecution. Many religious groups have taken up their cause, providing them sanctuary until the conflict in El Salvador ends. The U.S. sanctuary movement has gained increasing support in the past few years. As a result, legislation has been introduced in the Congress that would examine the situation in El Salvador while granting voluntary "extended departure" to Salvadorans already here.

The proposed legislation, **H.R. 822** and S. 377, introduced by the Honorable Joe Moakley in the House and the Honorable Dennis DeConcini in the Senate, provides for a temporary stay of detention and deportation for certain Salvadorans, during which **GAO** would investigate and report to the Congress on the conditions of displaced Salvadorans. If the bills were enacted, GAO would investigate the conditions of displaced Salvadorans within and outside the United States. This would involve, at the minimum, the work of NSIAD and GGD and would require of them a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Many experts have stated that a key attribute of a nation's sovereignty is the ability to decide who shall enter the country. With the recently large increases in illegal immigration, however, INS is recognized as having been unable to control U.S. borders. The problem is especially difficult since controversial actions believed necessary by some to decrease pressure on the borders--controlling the borders, adopting sanctions against employers, and issuing identification cards to workers--have not yet been taken. The increasing levels of recent immigration, both legal and illegal, have affected federal organizations and local criminal justice agencies.

THE ACTIVITIES AND COSTS OF INS

The Immigration and Naturalization Service, part of the U.S. Department of Justice, is responsible for administering laws on the admission, exclusion, deportation, and

naturalization of aliens. It inspects aliens at **the border** to determine their admissibility into the United States and guards against their illegal entry. At the border and elsewhere, **INS** investigates, apprehends, and removes aliens who are in this country in violation of the laws. It also has some nonborder-control functions; it adjudicates the requests of aliens for benefits and examines applications for citizenship. Thus, the activities of **INS** can be divided into four--enforcement, citizenship and benefits, immigration support, and program direction.

In fiscal year 1984, \$512 million was spent on these four activities. Most of these funds, **\$308** million, were spent on enforcement activities related to preventing illegal entry. **The** projected budget for enforcement in 1985 was a 22-percent increase over the previous year's actual budget, in recognition of concern about the number of illegal aliens coming across the border. During 1984, more than 600,000 inadmissible aliens were intercepted while **INS** was in the process of inspecting applicants for admission, **and** almost twice this many were apprehended by the Border Patrol.

When illegal aliens are apprehended, they must be detained until they are returned to the country of their citizenship; this is an expensive undertaking, given their numbers. Mexicans are immediately returned to the border or are kept overnight, and aliens from countries other than Mexico must be detained until they are transported back home. U.S. citizens and illegal aliens who may have witnessed crimes (often relating to the smuggling of aliens or the apprehension of bandits who **prey** on aliens) must be detained as court witnesses. Some are detained for the several months it may take a trial to begin. The current pressure on detention facilities **has** created a need for more. **INS** is beginning to contract with private firms for needed facilities.

Criticism of **INS** has recently increased in severity. The criticism focuses on its enforcement and service capabilities and on its recordkeeping operations. The gross inability of the Border Patrol to adequately cover the 2,000-mile border with Mexico, long lines for information services at **INS** offices, and the lack of a functioning computerized recordkeeping system are cited as severe problems.

All seem to agree that at least some of **INS**'s problems stem from insufficient funds. There is far **less** agreement on **how** its problems are related to funding. Those who think that funding is a secondary issue cite inappropriate management as the primary source of problems. Disagreement in the Congress over funding as the root of the problems at **INS** resulted in no substantial funding increases until **1984**. Even then, most considered the increase insufficient to meet the need.

Both the National Academy of Sciences (**NAS**) and the Brookings Institution have recently completed assessments of the

operations at INS. The book published by Brookings calls for a review and clarification of agency goals, an assessment of operations in relation to these goals, and adequate funding to accomplish the goals. Release of the NAS report in late June precluded GAO's extensive review of it before the publication of this document.

THE ACTIVITIES OF STATE AND LOCAL
JUSTICE AGENCIES

State and local enforcement agencies have assisted INS in locating and apprehending illegal aliens in the past, but they now leave the control of aliens up to INS, mostly for reasons of community relations.

The incidence of crime among immigrants, both legal and illegal, has been little studied. There do seem to be some indications, however, that crime rates are very high in border areas, that criminals prey on illegal immigrants, in addition to committing other crimes, and that ethnic gangs are on the rise.

CHAPTER 7

GAO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE

ON IMMIGRATION QUESTIONS

We have sought here to outline the major questions in the debate on immigration policy, and we have mentioned some areas in which it seems to us that GAO could contribute information it may be particularly well positioned to obtain. **This** effort would be in addition to our continuing responsiveness to congressional needs for specific investigations of **waste, fraud, and abuse**, as well as our examination of conditions in specific localities and specific groups, such as our report on detention policies affecting Haitian nationals (GAO/GGD-83-68).

We propose further work in four major areas: (1) the quality of data on immigrant populations, (2) the costs, including health care costs, of immigration at state and local levels, (3) service and management improvement, particularly with regard to services for refugees, and (4) immigration control. We also suggest a "target of opportunity" study.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING IMMIGRATION STUDIES

As the four major issues were being analyzed for this **paper**, many potential studies were identified. The analyses identified information **gaps** ranging from uncertainties about the **size and distribution** of specific types of immigrant groups (such as visa violators) through questions about the cost and effectiveness of services (such as refugee resettlement **programs**) to concerns such as the basis for and consequences of **INS** raids aimed at detecting and deporting illegal aliens. Obviously not all gaps could be filled.

We applied eight criteria in selecting the immigration studies we believe should **be** given priority **in GAO**:

1. The question should be important to the Congress.
2. It should be a long-standing or an emerging question that seems likely to endure.
3. It must be feasible to collect and analyze the data that will answer the question.
4. The question must be objectively stated.
5. The question should be of national interest,
6. The question should be policy-oriented, related to major policy debates rather than information for **its**

own **sake**, and preference should **be** given to topics on efficiency **and** effectiveness.

7. The question should **be** appropriate to GAO's role and mission.
8. **The** question should originate or continue inquiry, not duplicate prior, ongoing, or planned investigations.

Applying these criteria to much longer lists of studies derived from analyses of the four major issues led to our selecting the projects described in the next section. We believe all these projects are appropriate for **GAO** and should have high priority, but **we** have not ranked them for priority, since our purpose is to provide a framework within which GAO's divisions can locate studies consistent with their work or originate additional studies.

DATA QUALITY

Work needs to be done on the quality of the data that are used in immigration policymaking--a natural area for **GAO**. Table 7 summarizes information on the sources of data already available for providing estimates of the size and other demographic characteristics of immigrant populations. The major source of information on legal aliens is the Bureau of the Census. Since **1850**, the bureau has included in **the** census a question on place of birth--the key to tracking historical changes in immigrant stock.

Combining the demographic **and** socioeconomic data collected in the census **and** reported in the bureau's Current Population Surveys, one can obtain **a** fairly detailed national snapshot of the legal immigrant population. Its credibility depends on the **degree** to which immigrants are both willing to respond to requests for census data and able to understand the bureau's queries sufficiently to provide accurate responses. Both are serious concerns with an immigrant population, but the bureau's estimates are generally viewed **as** fairly accurate. Census data **are** also the source of estimates of regional immigrant populations.

Estimates of the **size** and composition of the population of illegal aliens are more problematic. In **a 1982** report, Problems and Options in Estimating the **Size** of the Illegal Alien Population (GAO/IPE-82-9), we **discussed** the difficulties of making **these** estimates. The problems stem, of course, from the fact that the population of interest is trying to avoid detection.

Recent work in estimating the size of the population of illegal aliens seems to have relied on **the** comparison of estimates from **a** variety of different sources and the use of multiple methods, as proposed in Problems **and** Options. **These**

Table 7

Sources of Immigration Data and Their Characteristics

<u>source</u>	<u>Sample type</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Collection frequency</u>	<u>nata of interest</u>	<u>Immigrant status</u>	<u>Problems</u>
INS Illegal-alien arrests	Universe	All illegal aliens arrested	Continuous	Date and time of arrest, country of origin, name, age, sex	Illegal	Questionable reliability, lack of systematic storage
Legal admissions	Universe	All legal entrants	Continuous	Date of entry, demographics	Legal	Questionable reliability, lack of systematic storage, delays in availability
Census Decennial census	Universe, with some random samples	U.S. population	Every 10 years	National origin, demographics, location	Legal, some illegal	Infrequent collection, undercounting
Current Population survey	Random sample of 45,000 households	U.S. population	Monthly	Ethnicity, labor market data	Legal, some illegal	Undercounting of illegals, sporadic collection of ethnicity data, regional or subregional estimates may be inappropriate
social Security Administration	Universe	Holders of social security numbers	Continuous	Benefit and employment history, wages	Legal, some illegal	Cannot identify populations of interest
National Center for Health statistics	Universe	All births, marriages, divorces, and deaths in vital statistics files	Continuous	Birth , death, marriage, divorce, country of origin or some	Legal, illegal	Most nations coded "other" but Mexico coded separately, limited demographic information, cannot separate legal from illegal
CENIET	universe	All Mexican residents in census	Periodic	Demographic data on periods of U.S. residence	Legal , illegal	Unknown reliability, sporadic collection
Case studies	various, non-random	Various	sporadic	Relative	Legal , illegal	Not generalizable

include census data, INS arrest data, and vital statistics data from the National Center for Health Statistics (which designates immigrants from Mexico), The **NAS** report issued in June **1985** sets the population of illegal aliens in the United States between two million and four million.

An estimate of the size of the population of illegal aliens is of critical importance. Without it, estimates of direct and indirect costs are difficult to ascertain, and federal funding may not be properly allocated. Strong national estimates of the illegal alien population are a crucial first step; they will not, however, illuminate the issue of state costs and benefits. Because of the uneven distribution of the immigrant population by state, and the concomitant differences in funding and needs, state profiles should be developed for the three different types of immigrants (legal, refugee, and illegal). This would allow the estimation of the direct and indirect effects of immigration. With this knowledge, decisionmakers could **better** determine the acceptable levels of immigration and how to fund their costs. The profiles might **be** developed by combining state data from the national census and other national sources with data from the several state and local case studies that have been conducted in recent years.

Given the **U.S.** policy of admitting the immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, new immigrants who become citizens can request the admission of family members remaining in their homelands, This "network" can mean in the future an ever increasing flow of legal immigrants, Examining the records of petitions for the admission of relatives, and their historical patterns, could provide an estimate of **the** flow of legal immigrants in the years to come.

COST ANALYSES

GAO has an opportunity to contribute work that will identify the costs associated with immigration at the **federal**, state, and local levels. Although we **do** not anticipate developing the total cost picture, an estimate can be developed of minimum fiscal and budgetary effects at federal, state, and local levels. Even recognizing an unavoidable degree of uncertainty, minimum estimates would allow the projection of the budgetary effects of immigration on the federal government within different scenarios of the responsibilities of federal, state, and local authorities.

We also propose to undertake case studies to examine specific cost factors, This information would give the Congress a more realistic picture than it has of the actual fiscal costs of immigration and might identify the costs associated with immigration and provide indicators of future trends that are not apparent in the budget process. In appendix 11, we describe work that **GAO's** divisions have under way, including **AFMD's** work on the long-term budgetary implications of immigration.

GAO may be able to illuminate one of the **key** issues in the debate on the cost of health care for immigrants. Using available sources of data, GAO may be able to estimate the cost of providing health care to illegal immigrants highly concentrated in specific geographical areas. The cost estimates could not be generalized to other areas, but they would at least indicate magnitude. Thus, these estimates would be a starting point in identifying the expenses that the states and localities with the largest influx of illegal aliens would incur in providing care for illegal immigrants. The estimates would **add** information on the **debate** on federal responsibility for reimbursing nonfederal governments for costs related to immigration.

With regard to labor displacement, no comprehensive synthesis of the research has yet been undertaken. This is an area in which GAO can make a contribution. A comprehensive assessment of what is known could be **very** useful to policymakers, because the process of critically reviewing the available information might offer insights **that are** not otherwise evident from an examination of the studies individually. This is a timely endeavor, since the volume of research has expanded recently.

In addition to providing an organized assessment of what is known about the economic and labor market effects of illegal aliens, an information synthesis would identify gaps and inaccuracies in the existing information, evaluate the methodologies that the research has used, and identify the methods that would best fill the gaps and correct the inaccuracies.

SERVICE AND MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT

GAO is in a unique position to assist the Congress with crosscutting work leading to improvements in **refugee** resettlement programs. From recent work by NSIAD and previous work by HRD (each with certain responsibilities for programs for refugees), GAO has developed some of the knowledge that is needed for a comprehensive examination of **how** best to provide humanitarian assistance and resettlement for refugees. Given the significant interest **expressed** by the Congress, GAO could examine the total refugee program, the effect of refugees on state **and** local governments, and the **state** and local programs that have been designed to aid refugees. One such program in California is investigating ways of developing and implementing a statewide demonstration project in which the cash-assistance program for refugees would **become** the point of first resort for all refugees in the state. **The** program is designed to offer employment training and placement and to reduce **the** time refugees must depend on public assistance. Other GAO work **might** include an analysis of the use refugees **make** of **public** assistance programs and other programs intended to assist them in becoming self-sufficient.

Opportunities exist to **improve** and coordinate **federal** efforts for refugees. Coordinated work between NSIAD and HRD might develop a comprehensive assessment of the refugee situation that would be useful to the Congress in grappling with the immigration issue.

IMMIGRATION CONTROL

GAO could undertake several studies on immigration control. One unanswered question is how well INS is managing its human and fiscal resources at the borders and in the interior, in its efforts to stop illegal entries. The problems include the long U.S. borders, the small number of border patrol officers and other enforcement officers INS can keep on duty at any one time, and the large population pressing for entry into the United States. Notwithstanding these difficult problems, INS should be expected to use its limited resources as efficiently as possible. The enforcement budget for the prevention of illegal entries has increased rapidly in recent years, but it is not clear how effectively the funds are being used. **GAO** could determine what enforcement results were obtained with additional funds the Congress has provided.

Another unanswered question is how well the United States is administering visas and port-of-entry inspections for the control and management of immigration. **GAO** could identify ways of streamlining the procedures for issuing visas and making border inspections, improving the detection of fraudulent and misrepresented visa applications, and reviewing the computer verification of visas. Indications are that immigrant and non-immigrant visas have become increasingly difficult to issue because of a great increase in demand for visas and because of fixed staff levels at the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. Little time is spent in examining applications, even though fraud and misrepresentation in applications are a problem, especially from certain countries. Additionally, holders of visas must be inspected at U.S. ports of entry, and the decision to grant or deny admission must be made quickly. **The** inspection process is severely strained by increasing numbers of admissions and limited numbers of personnel.

All immigration control efforts depend on INS's ability to provide adequate statistics and manage data. The **NAS** study makes recommendations to the Congress, the attorney general, the INS commissioner, the directors of OMB and the Bureau of the Census, and other executive agencies on upgrading the data capabilities of INS. **GAO** could assess and track the implementation of the recommendations and other efforts of INS to modernize its handling of these complicated tasks.

GAO could look at the immigration control efforts of other developed countries. A 1982 GGD report on the enforcement of laws on the employment of aliens in selected countries has proved very useful to the Congress. The next step might be to

look at how other developed countries manage port-of-entry inspection, visa issuance, refugee resettlement and assistance, detention, payment of social benefits, identification of aliens, information management, and the solution of medical **problems**. Some aspects of U.S. immigration problems are shared by other industrialized countries, and taking a look at their solutions could help the Congress in assessing the relative merits of different strategies.

An effective program for temporary foreign **workers** and a labor-certification program might help reduce the flow of illegal immigrants. The small temporary-worker program administered by DOL's Office of Labor Certification requires the finding that **no** local workers are qualified, willing, and available to take the job an applicant **plans** to take **before** the secretary of the Department of Labor **will** grant labor certification and a visa is issued. **GAO** could look at the operations of this program with a forecasting perspective, focusing on the premise that enacting legislation providing for sanctions against employers might require an effectively administered program for temporary foreign workers.

INS has reduced its emphasis on apprehending and expelling deportable aliens who are already in this country. The high *cost* and labor-intensive nature of INS investigative activities, and legal issues concerning the civil rights of individuals who are subject to INS enforcement procedures, may have contributed to making the administrative activities associated with the expulsion of aliens marginally cost-effective. **GAO** could look at ways of streamlining the apprehension and deportation process.

TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY

GAO's efforts in providing the Congress with information on why Salvadorans are **being** displaced and **what** their circumstances are could play a significant role in the Ninety-ninth Congress. Rather than waiting for congressionally mandated work, however, GAO could develop topics in this area, on a limited scale, that would prepare it to give the Congress needed information as soon **as** it is called for.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS PROPOSAL TO EARLIER AND CURRENT GAO STUDIES

In the past 10 years, **GAO** has issued several reports and testified on many issues of immigration policy (see appendix I). The majority of these reports have **been** on enforcement and control issues. They have covered, among other things, the detention of refugees, control over foreign students, the employment of illegal aliens, port-of-entry inspections, the number of undocumented aliens, the smuggling of aliens, illicit documents, border **fences**, and **the** removal of aliens. Another group of reports has examined refugee issues, covering medical

problems, resettlement, evacuation, and employment, **as well as** the need for **a** national coordinator of refugee affairs. Finally, other studies have dealt with the automation of INS operations and the implications of immigration for the Social Security program.

Our proposals for future work would build on GAO's previous **work** on immigration. The proposals would extend, and in some cases update, prior and current **GAO** work, but the proposals are also new in that they would not duplicate or overlap other work. The immigration situation, **as** our paper indicates, has changed over the last **15** years, so that many studies done **5** or **10** years ago would not necessarily yield the same results **if** they were being done today.

Where we have identified potential work, we have attempted to suggest multiprogram or crosscutting **jobs, jobs** that would exhibit the wide-ranging effects that immigrants have on the United States and the difficulties of implementing current policies. For example, previous **GAO** work has looked at refugees from specific countries, **but** our proposal is to examine the entire refugee program and its effect on state and local government. Beyond looking at costs specific to any particular agency or program, these studies would attempt to identify a variety of costs and benefits associated with immigration. In addition, we recommend that GAO examine both the issuance of visas and port-of-entry inspections **as** means of controlling the flow of immigration.

Some of the work we are proposing is entirely new. Neither previous nor ongoing work at **GAO** has looked broadly at the cost of immigration on state and local governments. One proposal is to look at future budget implications and the costs to local communities of providing health care, education, and other social services. Another new proposal is to **look** at the economic and labor market effects of immigration.

A detailed comparison between jobs we suggest in this paper and other **GAO** work on immigration would certainly be contingent on **the** development of the designs of these new jobs. In developing new jobs, **GAO** should make every attempt to detail the multiagency nature of immigration problems and their multiple effect on our governmental system.

REPORTS, TESTIMONY, AND DECISIONS
ON IMMIGRATION TOPICS

APPENDIX I

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<u>PRIMARY AUDIENCE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
Subcommittee on Census and Population, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives	Enforcing employer sanctions in selected countries	Statement, William Anderson, GGD, Mar. 26, 1985
Hon. Peter W. Rodino, Jr., Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	Nonimmigrant visas for aliens admitted to work in the United States at the request of prospective employers	<u>Information on Aliens Admitted into the United States as Nonimmigrants</u> , GGD-85-27, Dec. 26, 1984
Hon. Don Edwards, House of Representatives	Investigating alleged unlawful recision of funds for refugee resettlement	<u>Request for Investigation of Alleged Unlawful Recision of Funds by HHS</u> , B-214633, Oct. 4, 1984
INS, Dept. of Justice	policies and assistance for refugees from Central America	<u>Central American Refusees: Regional Conditions and Prospects and Potential Impacts on the United States</u> , NSIAD-84-106, July 20, 1984
Attorney General , Dept. of justice	Increasing INS collections to \$10 million	<u>Opportunities for the Immigration and Naturalization Service to Improve Cost Recovery and Debt Collection Practices</u> , GGD-84-86, July 13, 1984

APPENDIX I

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

TOPIC

ITEM

Hon. Peter W. Rodino, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on the
Judiciary, House of
Representatives

Centralizing and clarifying
refugee policy and
administration

Analysis of Selected
Operations of the Office of
the U.S. Coordinator for
Refugee Affairs, NSIAD-83-
45, Aug, 26, 1983

Margaret M. Heckler, Secretary,
HHS

Grant monitoring in the
Office of Refugee
Resettlement

Practices and Procedures
the Office of Refugee
Resettlement Followed in
Administering Grants Need
Improvement, HRD-85-57,
Aug. 12, 1983

Hon. William Whitehurst, House of
Representatives

Citizenship for Filipinos
in U.S. armed forces

Entitlement of Filipino
Veterans to U.S. Citizen-
ship, B-211530, July 19,
1983

Subcommittee on Immigration,
Refugees, and International Law,
Committee on the Judiciary, House
of Representatives

U.S. coordinator for
refugee affairs

Statement, Samuel Bowlin,
NSIAD, June 22, 1983

Hon. Walter Fauntroy, House of
Representatives

Detaining Haitian
immigrants

Detention Policies Affect-
ing Haitian Nationals, GGD-
83-68, June 16, 1983

Committee on the Judiciary, U.S.
Senate

Immigration reform and
control

Apr. 21, 1983

Hon. William Whitehurst, House of
Representatives

Inconsistency between
Social Security Act and
Immigration and National-
ity Act

Issues Concerning Social
Security Benefits Paid to
Aliens, HRD-83-32, Mar. 24,
1983

Orrin Hatch, Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources, U.S. Senate

INS control over foreign students

Controls over Foreign Students in U.S. Post-Secondary Institutions Are Still Ineffective, HRD-83-27, Mar. 10, 1983

Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives

Quick self-sufficiency for refugees

Greater Emphasis on Early Employment and Better Monitoring Needed in Indo-Chinese Refugee Resettlement Program, HRD-83-15, Mar. 1, 1983

Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Foreign Relations, Committee on the Judiciary, and Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate; Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on the Judiciary, and Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

African refugees

International Assistance to Refugees in Africa Can Be Improved, ID-83-2, Dec. 29, 1982

Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate

The size of the illegal alien population

Problems and Options in Estimating the Size of the Illegal Alien Population, IPE-82-9, Sept. 24, 1982

Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate

Resettlement and medical problems of Indochinese refugees

Statement, Robert Peterson, HRD, Sept. 13, 1982

Hon. Alan Simpson, Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate

Foreign laws prohibiting the hiring of illegal aliens

Information on the Enforcement of Laws Regarding Employment of Aliens in Selected Countries, GGD-82-86, Aug. 31, 1982

<u>PRIMARY AUDIENCE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
Hon. Romano Mazzoli, Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	Medical problems of Indo-Chinese refugees	<u>Improved Overseas Medical Examinations Can Reduce Diseases in Indo-Chinese Refugees Entering the United States</u> , HRD-82-65, Aug. 5, 1982
Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate	Immigration reform and control	June 30, 1982
Hon. Sam Gibbons, Chairman, Committee on Trade, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives	Testing new federal inspections	<u>One-Stop Inspection System Speeds the Entry of Inter- national Travelers</u> , GGD-82- 62, Mar. 22, 1982
4 6 Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	Medical screening and treatment of Indo-Chinese refugees	Statement, Edward Densmore , HRD, Sept. 23, 1981
The Congress	Undocumented resident aliens	<u>Number of Undocumented Aliens Residing in the U.S. Unknown</u> , GGD-81-56, Apr. 6, 1981
The Congress	Employment of illegal aliens	<u>Administrative Chancres Needed to Reduce Employ- ment of Illegal Aliens</u> , HRD-81-15, Jan. 30, 1981
The Congress	Reducing the influx of illegal aliens	<u>Prospects Dim for Effect- ively Enforcing Immigra- tion Laws</u> , GGD-81-4, Nov. 5, 1980

Hon. Elizabeth Holtzman, Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	INS accountability for nonimmigrant aliens	<u>Controls over Nonimmigrant Aliens Remain Ineffective</u> , GGD-80-87, Sept, 71, 1980
The Congress	Indo-Chinese refugees	<u>Indo-Chinese Refugees: Protection, Care, and Processing Can Be Improved</u> , ID-80-46, Aug. 19, 1980
Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives	Automating INS operations	statement, Walter Anderson, - FGMS, May 20, 1980
Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	Legislation to waive nonimmigrant visas for certain countries	Statement, Robert Peterson, GGD, Apr. 28, 1980
INS, Dept. of Justice	Illegal aliens in the united States	<u>Illegal Aliens: Estimating Their Impact on the United States</u> , PAD-80-22, Mar. 14, 1980
Undersecretary, HEW	Refugee assistance program, fiscal year 1980	Decision €3 -19763, Feb. 25, 1980
Hon. Jim Sasser, Chairman, Legislative Subcommittee, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate	Government loans for foreign students	<u>Citizenship and Residence Requirements for Government Student Loans</u> , FGMS-80-25, Dec. 20, 1979
Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	Documenting and identifying aliens by telecommunications	<u>New Alien Identification System Little Help in Stopping Illegal Aliens</u> , GGD-79-44, May 30, 1979

<u>PRIMARY AUDIENCE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives	Assistance programs for Indo-Chinese refugees	Statement, J. Kenneth Pasick, ID, Apr. 25, 1979
HEW, Dept. of Justice, and Dept. of State	Indo-Chinese refugees	<u>The Indo-Chinese Exodus: A Humanitarian Dilemma,</u> ID-79-20, Apr. 24, 1979
Hon. James Scheuer, Chairman, Select Committee on Population, House of Representatives	International immigration policies	<u>Information on Immigration in 17 Countries,</u> GGD-79-15, Jan. 12, 1979
Select Committee on Small Business, House of Representatives	Effect of aliens on federal programs	Statement, GGD, Apr. 6, 1978
Hon. Charles Percy , Committee on Government Affairs, U.S. Senate	Supplemental Security Income for aliens	<u>Number of Newly Arrived Aliens Who Receive SSI Needs to Be Reduced,</u> HRD-78-50, Feb. 22, 1978
Hon. Adam Benjamin, Jr., House of Representatives	Alien doctors in the United States	<u>Interpretation of Public Law 94-484 as It Applies to Medical Doctors Who Are Aliens Living and Working in the United States at the Time the Law Was Enacted,</u> B-189451, Dec. 15, 1977
Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives	INS investigation of alleged Nazi war criminals residing in the United States	Statement, victor Lowe, GGD, Aug. 3, 1977
The Congress	Assistance for Soviet refugees	<u>U.S. Assistance for Resettling Soviet Refugees,</u> ID-76-85, June 20, 1977

Hon. Jack Brooks, Chairman, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives	Legislation to establish a Visa and Naturalization Administration	<u>Proposed Legislation to Establish the Visa and Naturalization Administration</u> , B-125051, June 13, 1977
The Congress	Resettling Indo-Chinese refugees	<u>Domestic Resettlement of Indo-Chinese Refugees: Struggling for Self-Reliance</u> , HRD-77-35, May 10, 1977
The Congress	Government problems with immigration laws	<u>Immigration: Need to Re-assess U.S. Policy</u> , GGD-76-101, Oct. 19, 1976
The Congress	Organized evasion of immigration laws	<u>Smugglers, Illicit Documents, and Schemes Are Undermining U.S. Controls over Immigration</u> , GGD-76-83, Aug. 30, 1976
Leonard Chapman, Jr., Commissioner, INS, Dept. of Justice	INS alien removal program	<u>Review of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Alien Removal Program</u> , June 17, 1976
The Congress	Evacuation and temporary care of Indo-Chinese refugees	<u>Evacuation and Temporary Care Afforded Indo-Chinese Refugees: Operation New Life</u> , ID-76-63, June 6, 1976
Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Dept. of Justice	Repairing and maintaining international boundary fences	Decision B-184595, Mar. 10, 1976
John Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Administration, Dept. of State	Employing refugees from South Vietnam	Decision B-133001, Dec. 2, 1975

<u>PRIMARY AUDIENCE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
The Congress	Expenditures for newly arrived immigrants	<u>Need to Reduce Public Expenditures for Newly Arrived Immigrants and Correct Inequity in Current Immigration Law</u> , GGD-75-107, July 15, 1975
Leonard Chapman, Jr., Commissioner, INS, Dept. of Justice	Improving INS program for naturalizing permanent resident aliens	<u>Review of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Program for Naturalizing Permanent Resident Aliens</u> , Feb. 28, 1975
The Congress	Controlling foreign students	<u>Better Controls Needed to Prevent Foreign Students from Violating the Conditions of Their Entry</u> , GGD-75-9, Feb. 4, 1975
Hon. Elizabeth Holtzman, House of Representatives	Activities of INS New York office	<u>Certain Activities of the New York District Office of the INS Department of Justice and the Department of State</u> , B-125051, Sept. 10, 1974
Hon. William Randall, Chairman, Subcommittee on Legal and Monetary Affairs, Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives	Improving INS procedures	<u>Need for Improvements in Management Activities of the INS</u> , Aug. 14, 1973
The Congress	Agency to manage port-of-entry inspections	<u>Single Agency Needed to Manage Port-of-Entry Inspections - Particularly at U.S. Airports</u> , B-114898, May 30, 1973

CURRENT AND PLANNED GAOEFFORTS ON IMMIGRATION

NSIAD is completing an evaluation of how the Department of State manages **per** capita grants to refugees. The job reviews and evaluates the department's Bureau for Refugee Programs and its management of grants to private voluntary agencies for initial reception, placement, and resettlement of refugees. The job reviews the agencies' use of the federal grants and the contributions they make to the self-sufficiency of refugees. NSIAD's results indicate little connection between receiving core services and attaining self-sufficiency. Most refugees are unemployed and dependent on welfare at the end of 90 days, the duration of the grant program. Many of California's refugees, for example, still depend on welfare after residing **3** years or more in the United States.

NSIAD is also reviewing the efforts of the Department of State and INS to assist, process, and accept for resettlement in the United States the Vietnamese encamped at Dong Rek, Cambodia, who fled their country and sought asylum in Thailand.

In April 1985, the Honorable Arlen Specter requested a **GAO** study on the practices of the Department of Justice and the State Department in adjudicating asylum claims. Aliens in the United States who are unable or unwilling to return to their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution can apply for asylum. The Senator **is** interested in an explanation of the wide variability of approval rates by country as well as the uniformity with which criteria are applied in judging claims for asylum. For example, many more people from Poland than from El Salvador who apply are granted asylum. Further, the criteria for making judgments about fears of persecution may differ, since three distinct organizations and various parts of the country, with a wide variety of orientations and experiences, participate in making such judgments.

The study is in the survey phase, and preliminary indications are that its implementation, which is to begin in fall 1985, will have two stages. First, information on applicants for asylum, as well as information on general administrative characteristics, will be collected from INS files. A sample of applicants from 7 to 12 countries will be drawn from Department of State files on advisory opinions. Second, a mail questionnaire will query the approximately **175** decisionmakers in the asylum process about **how** regulations are applied and how claims are processed.

GGD plans to look at the implementation of the Immigration Reform and Control **Act**, if it is enacted, and is reviewing the preparations of INS for assuming the responsibilities that may result from the law's immigration reform. GGD's intention is to study

- how effective INS is in identifying and applying sanctions against employers who engage in the prohibited recruiting, hiring, and paid referral of illegal aliens,
- how well INS is organized and staffed for the effective implementation of the amnesty provisions,
- the effect the act will have on INS's expanded investigative, border patrol, and enforcement operations and its success in limiting the entry of illegal aliens, and
- the effectiveness of INS in apprehending and prosecuting aliens who enter the United States illegally or who violate the terms of their immigration status.

From **the** results of these reviews, GGD might recommend management activities to the Department of Justice and other agencies and alternative approaches for reducing costs and increasing the efficiency of **INS** operations.

IMTEC is beginning a job on the automated data processing equipment and application systems at INS, which it has been redesigning and upgrading, acquiring new computer and telecommunications technology with a budget that has more than doubled in the last 5 years. The job is a survey of automated data processing at INS, especially at its Dallas data center.

AFMD is looking at the potentially **major** effects of immigration on the federal budget, in response to **a** request from the House Committee on the Budget. Budget debates rarely focus on long-term aspects of any issue, so AFMD's job is a pilot for developing a method of determining the long-term effects of emerging issues on the federal budget, using immigration as an example. Specifically, the project team will estimate minimum federal expenditures and revenues attributable to immigration **for** fiscal year **1984** and associated expenditures and revenues for selected states and localities. The job will provide several alternative estimates of federal immigration-related expenditures and revenues for **1990** and **1995** **under** specific assumptions about the future economic, social, and political environment.

HRD recently received **a** request from the Joint Committee on Taxation to look at the nonimmigrant aliens (students and tourists, for example) who have been issued Social Security numbers for identification. Although nonimmigrant aliens are not permitted to work, there is evidence that some of them have earnings. The job will look for the existence of abuse by matching the records of INS and the Social Security Administration. The project began in March **1985**.

PEMD is examining how the employment of illegal aliens displaces other workers and affects wages and working conditions.

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STUDY QUESTIONS PROPOSEDBY THE ADVISORY PANEL

During a May 22, 1985, meeting and in written comments, our advisory panel made numerous suggestions for questions GAO might investigate. The members of the advisory panel were Leonel Castillo, Lorenza Calvillo Craig, Harry Hufford, Douglas S. Massey, Richard Mines, David S. North, Demetrios Papademetriou, and Lydio F. Tomasi. The lists of questions that follow summarize their suggestions.

DATA QUALITY

1. At what rate are aliens repeatedly apprehended at the border by the INS Border Patrol?
2. What can be learned, retrospectively, about the **size** of the population of illegal aliens, once they have been apprehended in specific places in the United States?
3. Are immigrants disproportionately represented **among** prison populations?
4. What can be learned about the large population from Latin America in urban areas of the United States?
5. Can the data files of the Social Security Administration be **used** to identify and help apprehend illegal aliens?
6. What can be learned about the process of adjustment immigrants go through?
7. How valid and reliable are the **INS** data on apprehension, detention, and deportation?
8. How can improvements in management data systems lead to better sources of data for identifying and understanding the flow and stock of immigrants?

COST ANALYSIS

1. What are the current and projected costs of assistance programs for refugees?
2. Would it be feasible to create a special social trust fund to be supported, for example, by a small departure tax to pay for immigrants' health care and other needs?
3. How would amnesty affect local, state, and federal budgets?
4. What can be learned about solving the problems of legal and illegal immigrants by examining state and local statutes, policies, and practices related to employment, education,

welfare, health care, justice systems, recreation, and other government services?

5. What types of industries **employ** illegal alien workers and what are their **cost** structures, management **styles**, and technological and market options?

SERVICE AND MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT

1. To what extent can, and should, the admission of persons from Southeast Asia be converted from a refugee program to an immigration program?
2. Should the federal government provide the same level of assistance to immigrants that it provides to refugees?
3. How does the federal government use voluntary agencies in dealing with immigrants and refugees?
4. How are privately owned bridges along the southern **border** of the United States **managed** and controlled?
5. **How does** the naturalization program operate?
6. How do the temporary-worker programs operate?
7. What are the resource needs of **INS** in relation to administering legal immigration, given the petitions for admission that are outstanding?
8. What contingency **plans** are there to deal with major natural or social upheaval in countries bordering **the** United States, and how adequate are these plans?

IMMIGRATION CONTROL

1. What can a review of the work of researchers in **other** countries and in international organizations tell us about the global factors of international migration?
2. What are the legal implications of proposed sanctions against hiring illegal aliens?
3. What enforcement strategies does **INS use** for interior operations?
4. How can computerized data systems be used to prevent visa fraud?
5. Can an appropriate use of Social Security records detect illegal workers and help curtail their employment?
6. What methods **can** be effective in preventing illegal aliens from receiving welfare benefits they are not entitled to?

7. What are the detention policies of XNS?
8. What is the latest technology for detecting illegal aliens at the U.S. borders?

OTHER ISSUES

1. What is the federal policy with regard to dual nationality?
2. What are the research issues important to an understanding of linguistically appropriate instruction?
3. Is there evidence among immigrants and their children of the kinds of attitudes and behavior that can lead to separatist movements?

