



EMAIL BULLETIN

MORE U.S. CONSULATES CAPTURE BIOMETRICS UPON VISA APPLICATION

03 December 2003

The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has recently begun capturing biometric data from nonimmigrant visa applicants. The new measures include the inkless, digital fingerprinting of each visa applicant. The fingerprinting requirement applies to applicants of all nationalities who are between the ages of 14 and 79 and coincides with efforts by the Department of Homeland Security to implement the U.S. VISIT program, the Congressionally-mandated, comprehensive entry-exit tracking system to be implemented in phases beginning December 31, 2003. The U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia is scheduled to implement the new fingerprinting procedures on December 7, 2003.

As reported in recent Tindall & Foster Email Bulletins, U.S. Consulates worldwide will gradually implement similar procedures for capturing biometric data from visa applicants over the coming months in order to comply with the October 26, 2004, deadline for issuing visas which carry biometric identifiers of the applicant. This new visa format has been dubbed the "Lincoln" visa because President Lincoln's likeness appears as an anti-fraud feature on the face of the visa. All Consular Posts should phase in procedures for capturing biometric identifiers and issuing the Lincoln visa and may provide very little advance notice. Visa applicants should be aware that their fingerprints and possibly digital photographs may need to be taken by consular employees as part of the visa application process. Applicants with case-specific questions or concerns regarding these new procedures should contact their Tindall & Foster attorney in advance of applying for their visas.