



EMAIL BULLETIN

SOME U.S. CONSULATES SUSPEND VISA SERVICES AFTER U.S. LAUNCHES ATTACK ON IRAQ

RESPONSE COMES AMID "HIGH" TERROR ALERT AND INCREASED SECURITY CONCERNS FOR U.S. PERSONS AND INTERESTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

21 March 2003

As of March 20, 2003, the U.S. Embassies and Consulates in the following locations announced either complete closure or temporary cessation of visa services * Almaty, Khazakstan * Amman, Jordan * All posts in Australia * Bucharest, Romania * Buenos Aires, Argentina * Cairo, Egypt * Caracas, Venezuela * Damascus, Syria * Istanbul, Turkey * Kabul, Afghanistan * Lagos, Nigeria * Paris, France * Nairobi, Kenya * Oslo, Norway * All posts in Pakistan * Riyadh, Saudi Arabia * Savanna, Yemen * Skopje, Macedonia * All posts in South Africa * Surabaya, Indonesia * Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel.

As the United States is now at war with Iraq and on "high" terror alert at home and abroad, we anticipate many more such announcements from U.S. Consulates suspending or largely scaling back visa services and operating on reduced schedules.

On March 19, 2003, the U.S. Department of State issued a Worldwide Caution which can be expected to affect consular procedures in many parts of the world, not just the usual "hot spots." Circumstances are changing rapidly, and we expect the situations at U.S. Consulates to remain fluid and dynamic for the foreseeable future. Individuals traveling abroad and expecting to apply for an immigrant or nonimmigrant visa in the near future should be advised that consulate hours and procedures worldwide can be expected to change rapidly with little or no advance notice. Applicants should verify the latest information prior to travel abroad and should remain informed of the specific Consular Post's procedures on a daily basis. Above all, employers must be aware, prior to sending employees abroad, that lengthy delays in consulate openings and visa issuance could delay the anticipated return of employees from their destinations abroad for weeks, or in some cases even months.