

# Audit Report

The Immigration and  
Naturalization Service's  
System Data Pertaining to  
Secondary Inspections at  
Selected Preclearance  
Airports



# THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE'S SYSTEM DATA PERTAINING TO SECONDARY INSPECTIONS AT SELECTED PRECLEARANCE AIRPORTS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) inspection program at airports relies daily on INS inspection data maintained in the Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS).<sup>1</sup> Inspectors review travel history data, including the results of prior inspections, when determining the admissibility of persons seeking entry into the United States. Additionally, other federal entities and INS programs, such as intelligence and counterterrorism, rely on these data to conduct some of their law enforcement responsibilities. For example, according to the Acting Assistant Commissioner for Inspections, the INS worked closely with the U.S. Department of State and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) following the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 to reconstruct events that resulted in the terrorists entering the United States.

Our audit focused on the INS's system data pertaining to secondary inspections — inspections of travelers who require a more detailed review than the standard inspection. Our primary objective was to determine whether the INS's data in TECS accurately reflected referrals of travelers to secondary and included secondary inspection results. We assessed data for three sites — the preclearance airports at Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.<sup>2</sup> According to INS statistics, these sites performed approximately 106,000 secondary inspections during FY 2000, or approximately 76 percent of the secondary inspection activity at all preclearance airports and about 10 percent of the secondary activity at all air ports of entry.

Our tests showed that the INS's data in TECS for the inspections performed at Montreal and Vancouver were reliable; i.e., in general, inspectors accurately designated whether travelers were referred to secondary and routinely recorded the results of secondary inspections in TECS. However, the TECS data for the inspections at Toronto

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<sup>1</sup> TECS, which was developed and is maintained by the Customs Service (U.S. Department of the Treasury), is a mainframe-based enforcement and inspection support system used by Customs, INS, and other federal agencies. The system was developed to store information about people who are of interest to law enforcement agencies so that their entry into the United States may be monitored or, if necessary, prevented. TECS supports the INS's inspection activities and, thus, contains inspection data on travelers who have entered or attempted to enter the United States.

<sup>2</sup> *Preclearance* is the full inspection at foreign ports of U.S.-bound travelers and their luggage for immigration, customs, public health, and agriculture purposes. Travelers who are precleared are able to enter the United States without undergoing any other clearance checks upon their arrival. Preclearance decreases the inspection workload at U.S. airports and allows inspectors to detect inadmissible persons prior to their arrival in the United States. As of the end of FY 2000, preclearance was operating at 11 airports, 7 of which were in Canada. The remaining 4 preclearance airports were in Aruba, Bermuda, and the Bahamas (2 airports).

were unreliable. Toronto's inspectors entered the required referral designation and secondary inspection results in TECS for only 3 percent of the approximately 51,000 secondary inspections performed during the audit period. Instead, the inspectors primarily entered the data in the port's stand-alone inspections tracking system. When inspectors do not enter travelers' referrals and secondary inspection results in the INS's centralized inspections system, inspectors determining the admissibility of those travelers when they again seek entry into the United States will not have the benefit of accurate and complete travel history information. The lack of reliable data could also jeopardize other INS law enforcement efforts, including the INS's ability to provide assistance to other federal entities.

During our analyses of the TECS data, we noted some material inconsistencies between the data and the INS's official statistics for the secondary inspection workload at Vancouver. Therefore, we expanded our audit tests to assess whether the statistics compiled from monthly port of entry data transmissions accurately reflected the number of secondary inspections performed. Such statistics are used by INS managers to evaluate field office performance and make operational decisions.

Our tests identified that the INS's statistics for the number of secondary inspections performed at Montreal and Toronto were reliable. However, the statistics for Vancouver significantly overstated the number of secondary inspections performed. As a result, INS management should be aware that reliance on those statistics could lead to poor decision making.

We discussed our results, conclusions, and recommendations with the INS port directors at Toronto and Vancouver and INS Headquarters officials from the Office of Inspections and Office of Field Operations. Additionally, we provided draft copies of this report to the INS. The INS concurred with all of our recommendations and provided comments on the actions completed and planned to implement the recommendations.

Additional information on our audit objectives, scope, and methodology is described in Appendix I. Background information on the immigration inspection process is provided in the Introduction section. The details of our work are contained in the Findings and Recommendations section. The INS's comments on the recommendations are in Appendix II, and our summary of the actions needed to close the audit is in Appendix III.

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AT SELECTED PRECLEARANCE AIRPORTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Travelers seeking entry into the United States must undergo an immigration inspection to ensure that they conform with legal requirements for entry into the country. In a standard inspection at an airport, known as a *primary* inspection, the inspector examines the person's travel documents (passport, visa, etc.) for authenticity, verifies the person's identity, queries law enforcement databases<sup>3</sup> to see if there is any reason why the person should not be admitted, asks basic questions pertinent to admissibility, and completes portions of applicable INS forms. The goal of the primary inspection is to quickly direct persons:

- who are readily admissible to the other Federal Inspection Services (FIS)<sup>4</sup> for the remainder of the inspection process or
- whose admissibility cannot readily be determined to another INS inspector for a more detailed inspection, known as a *secondary* inspection.

In a secondary inspection, the inspector is able to conduct more in-depth reviews and perform tasks that cannot be completed within the limited time frame of the primary inspection. For example, the inspector can query TECS to obtain the travel history of a person, reasons for any prior referrals, and the end results of those inspections by date, time, port of entry, and other conditions. Additionally, the inspector can query other law enforcement databases, such as the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS);<sup>5</sup> search the traveler's luggage; ask the traveler additional questions; obtain sworn statements from the traveler; and take the traveler's fingerprints or photograph. As with the primary inspection, persons deemed to be admissible by the secondary inspector are directed to the other FIS agencies for the remainder of the inspection process. If an inspector determines that the traveler is not admissible, the traveler is refused admission into the United States.

To facilitate the inspection process, the INS uses TECS, an automated system that allows inspectors to access and update law enforcement databases. To initiate a query of these databases, the inspector enters traveler information, such as name and date of birth.

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<sup>3</sup> These databases contain lookout information on persons of interest to law enforcement agencies as well as historical primary inspection data on individuals who have entered or attempted to enter the United States.

<sup>4</sup> The FIS consists of the INS (U.S. Department of Justice), Customs Service (U.S. Department of the Treasury), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture), and Public Health Service (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The INS's role is to protect the national interest by determining the admissibility of persons seeking entry into the United States and denying entry to those who are inadmissible.

<sup>5</sup> An NLETS query is used to search for state information on a traveler, such as state criminal history files.

TECS then compares the entered information to the databases and displays the results (i.e., possible matches to lookout information and primary inspection results for attempts to enter the United States during the preceding three months) on the inspector's computer screen. Using the results of the database query in conjunction with other components of the inspection (e.g., the review of travel documents), the inspector admits the traveler into the United States or refers the traveler to secondary inspection.

INS policy requires primary inspectors to document their referral decisions in TECS. To do this, TECS prompts the inspector to designate whether they have decided to refer the traveler to secondary. The system default is *No*, which means that the inspector can hit the *Enter* key to move on to the next step and, by doing so, the system will reflect that the traveler was *not* referred to secondary. To designate that the inspector has decided to refer the traveler, the inspector must enter a *Y* for *Yes*. After the inspector finishes the data entry for the inspection, TECS automatically creates a travel history record for the person that shows, among other things, the inspector's designation as to whether or not the inspection resulted in a referral to secondary. Additionally, if the inspector designated in TECS that the traveler was referred, the system sends a notification to the secondary inspectors and creates another record in which the secondary inspection results are to be recorded.

In addition to TECS, inspectors at Montreal and Toronto use the Forms Integration Management System (FIMS), a database system developed by personnel in the INS's Buffalo District<sup>6</sup> in 1993 that operates on a port of entry's local area network (LAN). FIMS was originally developed to automate the preparation of many of the forms used during secondary inspections. Although the initial version of FIMS provided a means to track some operational statistics, district personnel expanded the capabilities of the system a few years later to provide for the collection and tracking of performance data related to referrals and various aspects of the secondary inspection process.

Because FIMS is a system that was developed by a district office to improve the effectiveness of its own operations, the system was not designed to be integrated with TECS (the mainframe-based system maintained by the Customs Service). Thus, the data entered in TECS by inspectors during the inspection process do not upload to FIMS. As a result, in order for the ports in the Buffalo District to benefit from the performance measurement capability of FIMS, inspectors must also enter referrals and secondary inspection results in FIMS. The process for entering such data is similar to the process in TECS; i.e., designating a referral in FIMS creates a record in which secondary inspection results are to be recorded. For security and other reasons, the INS data in TECS was designed to be updated using established controlled-access procedures, not through

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<sup>6</sup> Both Montreal and Toronto report to the INS's Buffalo District Office. (Vancouver, which does not use FIMS, reports to the Seattle District Office.)

uploads from unofficial systems used at individual ports. Thus, entering data in FIMS in lieu of TECS is not sufficient because FIMS data cannot upload to TECS.

The Toronto port of entry began entering referrals and secondary inspection results in FIMS in May 1997. Port officials told us that the use of FIMS allows them to obtain beneficial management reports on port and inspector performance that TECS was not designed to provide. For example, the Port Director indicated that FIMS generates reports showing the number of secondary inspections performed and the average processing time by inspector.

The Montreal port of entry began entering referrals and secondary inspection results in FIMS in April 1999. Port officials there told us that the use of FIMS facilitates the secondary inspection process because the capabilities of the system allow them to display selected data on a designated computer from which airline representatives can obtain the status of travelers being processed in secondary. (The representatives need to know the status of travelers to decide whether to delay the departure of flights.) By providing the data in this manner, airline representatives no longer need to interrupt the secondary inspectors.

Unlike TECS data, which are centralized and accessible by INS inspectors at most ports of entry, FIMS data are only maintained on a port of entry's LAN and can only be accessed by inspectors at that location. According to INS Headquarters officials, FIMS is to be considered a supplement to TECS, not a replacement for it.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TECS DATA PERTAINING TO SECONDARY INSPECTIONS AT TORONTO

*The TECS data pertaining to the secondary inspections performed at the Toronto airport during FY 1999 were unreliable because inspectors often failed to designate referrals in TECS and primarily entered inspection results in FIMS instead of TECS. Toronto's inspectors entered the required referral designation and secondary inspection results in TECS for only 3 percent of the approximately 51,000 secondary inspections performed during the year. When inspectors do not enter such information in TECS, primary inspectors performing future inspections of the travelers will not know that they were referred to secondary on previous attempts to enter the country and, therefore, will not be able to consider the referrals when determining admissibility. Additionally, should the travelers again be referred for further inspection, secondary inspectors will not be able to consider and follow up on conclusions reached during prior secondary inspections or save time by taking advantage of work previously performed. Further, the lack of reliable referral and secondary results data could jeopardize other INS law enforcement efforts and preclude the INS from providing meaningful assistance to other federal entities.*

As previously mentioned, INS policy requires primary inspectors to designate their referral decisions in TECS. Because the system default for the referral designation is *No*, inspectors need only change the designation to *Yes* if they refer a traveler to secondary. If inspectors fail to designate that they referred a traveler:

- the travel history record in TECS will inaccurately reflect that the traveler was **not** referred, which could be interpreted during future inspections to mean that the traveler was admitted into the United States after the primary inspection, and
- TECS will not create the system record in which secondary inspectors are required to document the results of the more detailed inspection, i.e., whether the traveler was allowed to enter the United States or refused admission.

Despite the INS's requirements, our analyses of TECS and FIMS data showed that Toronto's inspectors entered both the required referral designation and secondary inspection results in TECS for only 1,337 (or about 3 percent) of the approximately 51,000 secondary inspections performed during FY 1999. Thus, Toronto's TECS data



could not be relied on to identify the travelers referred to secondary or the results of secondary inspections.

Instead of designating referrals through TECS, Toronto's primary inspectors often referred travelers to secondary through FIMS; i.e., the inspectors would use TECS to query the law enforcement databases but then switch to FIMS to designate the referral without changing the TECS referral designation to *Yes*.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, our analyses showed that 11,744 secondary inspection records in FIMS had corresponding TECS records which inaccurately showed that the travelers had *not* been referred to secondary. For example, on June 9, 1999, a traveler presented himself for inspection at the Toronto airport at approximately 1:30 p.m. Although the FIMS data showed that this traveler had been referred to secondary and subsequently denied admission into the United States, the corresponding TECS travel history record showed that the traveler had *not* been referred by the primary inspector for further inspection.

In addition to Toronto's primary inspectors not routinely designating referrals in TECS, further analyses showed that, even when the inspectors designated referrals as required, secondary inspectors rarely entered the results of the more detailed inspections in TECS. Specifically, our analyses showed that, of the 35,030 referrals made through TECS, inspectors entered the results for only 1,337 (or about 4 percent).<sup>8</sup> Instead, inspectors primarily entered the results in FIMS.

When inspectors do not enter travelers' referrals and secondary inspection results in TECS, inspectors performing future inspections of those travelers will not have the benefit of that data when determining admissibility. For example, when primary inspectors query the law enforcement databases, the 3-month travel history information displayed on their computers will inaccurately show that prior primary inspections did *not* result in referrals to secondary. Thus, the inspectors will not be aware of the referrals and, therefore, will not be able to consider them along with the other components of the inspection (e.g., the review of travel documents and responses to questions) when determining admissibility. This could lead to the inspectors admitting travelers into the United States who otherwise might be referred to secondary and subsequently refused. When the travel history information available to secondary inspectors does not include evidence of prior referrals to secondary or the results of those inspections, the inspectors will not be able to consider

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<sup>7</sup> Primary inspectors at Montreal started inspections using TECS and completed the data entry for the inspection in TECS, to include changing the referral designation to *Yes*, before they switched to FIMS to enter referral information. Although this method resulted in primary inspectors duplicating some work, port management said it was worth it because the method allowed airline representatives to obtain needed information on the status of travelers without interrupting the secondary inspectors. (See page 3 for further discussion.)

<sup>8</sup> Our analyses of the 1,337 TECS records with secondary inspection results showed no trends; i.e., results data were entered by various inspectors throughout the year and the results included admissions into the United States, as well as refusals.

and follow up on the conclusions reached previously, including any refusals.<sup>9</sup> This could lead to secondary inspectors admitting travelers into the country who otherwise might be refused<sup>10</sup> or, at a minimum, result in inefficiencies in the secondary inspection process. For example, if a secondary inspector did not enter their determination that a traveler with a criminal record had obtained a waiver for all grounds of exclusion, another secondary inspector during a future inspection may perform an in-depth review of the traveler when only verification of the traveler's status may be needed.

The lack of accurate and complete data in TECS affects more than just inspectors performing daily inspections. Other federal agencies and other programs within the INS, such as counterterrorism and intelligence, rely on the referral and secondary results data to accomplish some of their law enforcement responsibilities. For example, as mentioned previously, the Acting Assistant Commissioner for Inspections told us that the INS worked closely with the U.S. Department of State and the FBI following the bombing of the World Trade Center to reconstruct the travel history on the terrorists. He also said that the INS provides travel history data to the Drug Enforcement Administration, when requested, to help with its efforts to track the movement of drug couriers. He further said that FIS procedures at airports require INS secondary inspectors, when documenting the results of their inspections, to record in TECS the reasons for any referrals to Customs so that its inspectors, upon viewing the system information, can best focus their inspections. The Acting Assistant Commissioner and other INS officials said that, within the INS, the referral and secondary results data are used:

- as a source for creating and updating lookouts and intelligence reports and reconstructing travel patterns of individuals or groups (e.g., persons suspected of smuggling aliens),
- to substantiate the legitimacy of and resolve complaints against the INS (e.g., if a traveler claimed to have been routinely referred to secondary for no justifiable reason during several trips to the United States), and
- for evaluating port performance and making operational decisions.

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<sup>9</sup> A primary or secondary inspector may become aware of prior referrals to secondary and the results of those inspections if a lookout record exists which details that information. A secondary inspector may also become aware of that information through statements made by the traveler, in which case it would be incumbent on the inspector to follow up on such information.

<sup>10</sup> For example, by analyzing the secondary data in TECS for a traveler's prior attempts to enter the country, a secondary inspector may establish that the traveler's statements during the current inspection are untruthful. The willful misrepresentation of a material fact to gain admission into the United States is grounds for inadmissibility under the Immigration and Nationality Act. Without the information from the prior inspections, the inspector may not detect the misrepresentation and may admit the traveler into the country even though they should be refused.

We discussed the usage of TECS with the Port Director at Toronto. The Port Director was not aware that primary inspectors were not always designating referrals to secondary in TECS and agreed that having that information in TECS is important. The Port Director was aware that inspectors were not always entering the results of secondary inspections in TECS but thought that had improved beginning in FY 2000. He told us that, at a district meeting of Port Directors in mid-1999, they were directed to ensure that secondary information was being entered in TECS. He said that he, in turn, discussed the matter with port supervisors who instructed the inspectors to enter the information in TECS.

The Port Director explained that Toronto's steady, high volume of passengers made it difficult to maintain both TECS and FIMS. He said that, to him, it was more important for secondary inspection data to be entered in FIMS because that system is more useful to port management. Specifically, he said that FIMS data is used for annual performance appraisals. Nevertheless, the Port Director said that in October 1999 he assigned a supervisory immigration inspector the collateral duty of ensuring that secondary results would be entered in TECS, which was why the Port Director thought that the FY 2000 data would show improvement in that area.

We analyzed TECS data for a 1-week period in April 2000 to determine whether Toronto's inspectors had improved with respect to entering secondary inspection results in TECS. Our analyses showed that the inspectors did not enter secondary results for 488 (or 78 percent) of the 623 secondary referrals made through TECS. Although a 22-percent rate of entering secondary data in TECS is an improvement over the FY 1999 rate of 4 percent, it is still unacceptable.

We also discussed Toronto's usage of TECS with INS Headquarters officials from the Office of Inspections and the Office of Field Operations. The Acting Assistant Commissioner for Inspections and the Director of Field Operations told us that they were aware that the use of locally developed systems, such as FIMS, had resulted in some ports not routinely using TECS. The officials explained that the INS had attempted to develop a new inspections system that incorporated the desirable features of FIMS (e.g., preparation of forms and management reports). According to the officials, unlike the locally developed systems, the INS system was to be linked with TECS. Thus, the use of the new INS system would have provided ports the improved processes of the locally developed systems, yet would have still maintained the inspection data centrally. The officials said that the development of the improved inspections system was discontinued in FY 1999 due to a lack of funding.

The Acting Assistant Commissioner for Inspections stressed that it was critical that inspectors enter referral and secondary results data in TECS. He said that inaccurate referral data and the absence of secondary results data in the INS's centralized inspections

system could compromise the integrity of the inspections process because inspectors would not have access to information that could be valuable in developing the follow-up questions necessary to determine admissibility and would be unknowingly considering false or incomplete data when making such determinations. He said that entering referral and secondary results data in “homegrown” systems instead of TECS, as inspectors were doing in Toronto, provides no help to inspectors at other ports who need access to complete travel history data during subsequent inspections of travelers.

In addition to the above, the Acting Assistant Commissioner said that, while the importance of entering the referral and secondary results data in TECS may not seem evident during an individual traveler’s inspection, the importance becomes abundantly evident when that data is subsequently needed to help identify persons who are a threat to national security, involved in criminal activity, or seeking entry into the United States for other than legitimate reasons.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Acting INS Commissioner:

1. Ensure that primary inspectors at the Toronto airport routinely designate referrals to secondary in TECS.
2. Ensure that secondary inspectors at the Toronto airport routinely record results of secondary inspections in TECS.
3. Evaluate whether reviews of other ports of entry are warranted to ensure that inspectors are routinely entering secondary referrals in TECS, as well as the results of secondary inspections.

## 2. INS STATISTICS FOR SECONDARY INSPECTION WORKLOAD AT VANCOUVER

*The INS's FY 1999 statistics for Vancouver's secondary inspection workload were significantly overstated because the methods used by Vancouver officials to prepare monthly activity reports incorrectly counted inspections of travelers with certain types of travel documents as completed in secondary rather than primary. As a result, INS managers cannot reliably use the statistics to evaluate port performance or make operational decisions.*

The Inspections Summary Report is the basic activity report used by the INS to collect statistical data on the inspections program. The report summarizes various aspects of INS inspection activity, including the number of inspections performed, primary inspections resulting in admissions into the United States, and secondary inspections. Ports of entry compile local statistics and enter their monthly reports into an automated system designed to track inspection activity and other operational data. The system combines the data to generate monthly, year-to-date, and annual INS-wide statistics. According to INS policy, the Inspections Summary Reports are a basis for field office performance evaluations, resource allocations, and a wide range of other analyses critical to the agency's mission.

When comparing downloads of TECS data to the year-end Inspections Summary Report for Vancouver, we noted that the number of secondary inspections shown on the report was 64 percent higher than the number of secondary records in TECS. The report showed 37,015 secondary inspections while TECS showed 22,550.<sup>11</sup>

We discussed the differences noted between the reports and supporting TECS data with the Port Director and other officials at Vancouver. The officials said that, until July 1999, the number of secondary inspections shown on the reports was calculated using a percentage of the total number of travelers inspected.<sup>12</sup> The officials indicated that the percentage used reflected port management's decision to count some inspections as completed in secondary, even if they were fully completed by primary inspectors (which meant that the travelers were not referred to secondary for further processing). The officials explained that inspections of travelers with certain types of travel documents take

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<sup>11</sup> Our tests to determine the reliability of the TECS data pertaining to secondary inspections identified that, in general, inspectors at Vancouver accurately designated whether travelers were referred to secondary and routinely recorded the results of secondary inspections in TECS. Therefore, we concluded that the TECS data for Vancouver could be used as a basis for evaluating the reliability of the number of secondary inspections shown on the Inspections Summary Reports.

<sup>12</sup> The officials said that the total number of inspections was derived from information provided by the airlines to Customs Service officials at the airport.

longer than most primary inspections; thus, for reporting purposes, the officials considered those inspections to be *secondary* work. One example of this practice pertained to inspections of travelers transiting through the United States to another country without a visa (known as Transit Without Visa or TWOV). The officials said that they considered all inspections of TWOVs as secondary inspections, even though TWOV inspections are completed in primary, if possible. The officials said that, in July 1999, they began using a different method to calculate the number of secondary inspections; i.e., the number was based on secondary inspections data in TECS but then adjusted to count some inspections as completed in secondary instead of primary, such as inspections of TWOVs.<sup>13</sup>

Because Vancouver's methods for preparing its monthly Inspections Summary Reports incorrectly counted some inspections of travelers as completed in secondary rather than primary, the applicable INS statistics were inaccurate. For example, the FY 1999 Inspections Summary Report for Vancouver showed that *all* inspections of TWOVs, which totaled 4,077, were completed in secondary. However, TECS data for the same period supported that only 370 TWOVs were processed in secondary. Thus, Vancouver's secondary inspection statistics for the year were overstated by 3,707 (4,077 minus 370) due to the method used for counting TWOV inspections.<sup>14</sup>

We did not perform analyses to quantify the effect of Vancouver's practice of incorrectly counting other inspections as *secondary* work when they were completed in primary. However, these additional overstatements would decrease the reliability of Vancouver's secondary statistics even further.

Accurate statistical information on the number of secondary inspections could be a valuable tool for INS managers in evaluating and improving port performance and making operational decisions. However, because the statistics for Vancouver's secondary inspection workload were significantly overstated, INS management should be aware that reliance on the statistics could lead to poor decision making.

We discussed Vancouver's methods for determining the number of secondary inspections with officials from the Office of Inspections and the Office of Field Operations. The Acting Assistant Commissioner for Inspections and the Director of Field Operations agreed that the methods were not correct. The Acting Assistant Commissioner said that the methods were contrary to all policy issued by INS Headquarters.

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<sup>13</sup> Our analyses of applicable TECS data and statistics for Montreal and Toronto showed that neither of these ports counted inspections completed in primary as secondary inspections as Vancouver was doing.

<sup>14</sup> The FY 1999 Inspections Summary Reports for Montreal and Toronto showed that neither of these sites counted *all* inspections of TWOVs as secondary inspections. To the contrary, the reports showed that Montreal and Toronto counted the vast majority of their TWOV inspections as completed in primary. (Montreal's report showed that only about 6 percent of their TWOV inspections were completed in secondary; Toronto's report showed about 5 percent.)

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Acting INS Commissioner:

4. Ensure that the Vancouver port of entry discontinues its practice of counting inspections of travelers as secondary inspections on its monthly Inspections Summary Reports if the travelers' inspections were completed in primary.
5. Evaluate whether reviews of other ports of entry are warranted to ensure that secondary inspections are accurately reported on monthly Inspections Summary Reports.

## AUDIT OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

### Audit Objectives

We audited the INS's system data pertaining to secondary inspections at selected preclearance airports. The specific objectives of our audit were to determine whether:

- the INS's data in the Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS) accurately reflected referrals of travelers to secondary and included secondary inspection results and
- the INS's official inspections workload statistics compiled from monthly port of entry data transmissions accurately reflected the number of secondary inspections performed.

### Scope and Methodology

We performed the audit in accordance with the *Government Auditing Standards* and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and procedures as we deemed necessary. However, we may not be considered by others to be completely independent of the INS, as required by the standards, because the INS has reimbursed us for work that pertained to INS fee-supported programs. Nonetheless, we consider ourselves independent and do not believe that our reimbursement arrangement with the INS has had any effect with regard to our conduct of the audit.

In performing the audit, we reviewed selected documents; interviewed INS personnel from the Office of Inspections, Office of Field Operations, and the Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver air ports of entry; analyzed various data pertaining to secondary inspections for the above-named airports; and assessed operations at the Montreal airport. The period covered by the audit was FY 1999. As shown in the table on the next page, the secondary inspections performed during that period at the three sampled sites accounted for approximately 73 percent of the secondary inspection activity at all preclearance airports and about 12 percent of the secondary activity at all air ports of entry.



## FY 1999 INSPECTION ACTIVITY FOR SITES REVIEWED

Sites	Secondary Inspections
All Air Ports of Entry	876,969
All Preclearance Airports	141,362
<b>Sites Reviewed</b>	
Montreal	17,380
Toronto	48,294
Vancouver	<u>37,015</u>
Subtotal	102,689
<b>Sites Reviewed as Percent of All Air Ports of Entry</b>	
	11.7 %
<b>Sites Reviewed as Percent of All Preclearance Airports</b>	
	72.6 %

Source: INS Inspections Summary Reports

Note: Our analyses of INS data pertaining to the secondary inspections performed during FY 1999 at the three sampled sites identified that the INS's statistics for the secondary inspection workload at Vancouver were significantly overstated as discussed in the report beginning on page 9. Our analyses also identified that the statistics for Montreal and Toronto were understated by 1 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Because the understatements were immaterial, we concluded that Montreal's and Toronto's statistics were sufficiently reliable for evaluating port performance and making resource allocations.

To achieve the audit's objectives, we used computer-processed INS data contained in TECS, the Forms Integration Management System (FIMS), and Inspections Summary Reports. As mentioned in the report, TECS contains inspection data on travelers who have entered or attempted to enter the United States, including travelers referred to secondary inspection. FIMS, a database system used by the Montreal and Toronto airports to facilitate the secondary inspection process, also contains data on travelers referred to secondary. INS Inspections Summary Reports summarize various aspects of inspection activity, including secondary inspections, for the ports of entry. We determined that the objectives could best be achieved by analyzing 100 percent of the system records pertaining to the secondary inspections at the three airports. Therefore, rather than conducting tests of the INS's management controls to determine the extent to which we could rely on the controls to reduce data testing, we obtained downloads of needed FY 1999 data and performed our analyses using those data.

As discussed in the report, we determined that the TECS data for Toronto could not be relied on to provide inspectors complete and accurate travel history information on travelers who had previously been referred to secondary. Additionally, we determined that the Inspections Summary Reports for Vancouver could not be relied on to provide managers accurate information on the port's secondary inspection workload.

We used FIMS data to help identify the universe of travelers processed in secondary at Montreal and Toronto. We assessed the reliability of the data by obtaining information from port management and performing various tests. For example, we analyzed selected fields in 100 percent of the FIMS records to ensure that key data elements were present and excluded from our analyses the few records that did not actually represent referrals to secondary.<sup>15</sup> Although our tests did not include tracing each FIMS record to supporting documentation, we concluded, based on the results of the tests performed and information obtained, that the FIMS data were sufficiently reliable to achieve our audit objectives.

There were no laws or external regulations directly applicable to our audit objectives. Thus, there is no Statement on Compliance with Laws and Regulations in this report.

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<sup>15</sup> FIMS was designed, in part, to track various port statistics, including some that are not related to secondary inspections. As a result, some FIMS records do not represent referrals to secondary.



U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

HQOIA 110/8.2-C

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MAR - 5 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR GUY K. ZIMMERMAN  
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDIT  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FROM: Mary Ann Wyrsh  
Acting Commissioner  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

SUBJECT: The Immigrations and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to  
Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the subject draft report and solicited input from the senior management officials who are most significantly impacted -- the Executive Associate Commissioner for Field Operations and Acting Executive Associate Commissioner for Programs. I reviewed the responses and concur with the corrective actions planned. The responses are attached for your review.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Stanley, Audit Liaison, at (202) 514-8800.

Attachments (2)

cc: Vickie L. Sloan, DOJ Audit Liaison



U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

HQOPS 110/8.2

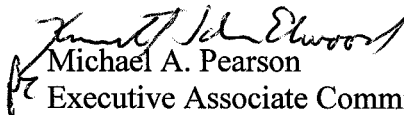
Office of the Executive Associate Commissioner

425 I Street NW  
Washington, DC 20536

FEB 15 2001

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING COMMISSIONER

FROM:

  
Michael A. Pearson  
Executive Associate Commissioner  
Office of Field Operations

SUBJECT: The Immigration and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

This is in response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) draft report on the above-mentioned subject. We agree with the OIG findings and thank them for their efforts in improving the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) inspections mission.

**Recommendation 1:** Ensure that primary inspectors at the Toronto airport routinely designate referrals to secondary in TECS.

**INS Response:** Concur. The Office of Field Operations (HQOPS) will issue a memo to the Eastern Region requiring the Toronto airport to refer all travelers to secondary through the use of the Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS)<sup>1</sup>. This memo will be signed and issued by March 31, 2001. Additionally, the Eastern Region will report to the HQOPS on Toronto's performance for the third and fourth quarters of this fiscal year.

**Recommendation 2:** Ensure that secondary inspectors at the Toronto airport routinely record results of secondary inspections in TECS.

**INS Response:** Concur. HQOPS will issue a memo to the Eastern Region requiring the Toronto airport to record the results of all secondary inspections in IBIS. This memo will be signed and issued by March 31, 2001. Additionally, the Eastern Region will report to HQOPS on Toronto's performance for the third and fourth quarters of this fiscal year.

<sup>1</sup> IBIS is the umbrella platform where TECS resides. - 16 -

Memorandum for the Acting Commissioner

Page 2

Subject: The Immigration and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

**Recommendation 4:** Ensure that the Vancouver Port-of-Entry discontinues its practice of counting inspections of travelers as secondary inspections on its monthly Inspections Summary Reports if the travelers inspections were completed in primary.

**INS Response:** Concur. HQOPS will issue a memo to the Western Region requiring the Vancouver airport to discontinue its practice of counting inspections of travelers as secondary inspections on its monthly Inspections Summary Reports if the traveler's inspections were completed on primary. This memo will be signed and issued by March 31, 2001. Additionally, the Western Region will report to HQOPS on Vancouver's performance for the third and fourth quarters of this fiscal year.

If you have any questions, please contact Shonnie Lyon of the Inspections Operations Branch, at 514-8521.



U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

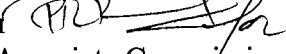
HQINS 70/3.2

Office of the Executive Associate Commissioner

425 I Street NW  
Washington, DC 20536

FEB 16 2001

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING COMMISSIONER

FROM: Michael D. Cronin   
Acting Executive Associate Commissioner  
Office of Programs

SUBJECT: The Immigration and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to  
Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

The Office of Programs has reviewed the Draft Audit Report prepared by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on the above subject and concurs with the findings of the report and the two recommendations therein assigned for review and comment. Immigrations Inspectors access the Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS) mainframe database at ports of entry under the auspices of the Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS). The Office of Inspections is in the process of updating the training manuals for this system to reflect the connection between IBIS and TECS.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Evaluate whether reviews of other ports of entry are warranted to ensure that inspectors are routinely entering secondary referrals in TECS (Treasury Enforcement Communications System), as well as the results of secondary inspections.

**INS RESPONSE: Concur.** The Office of Programs has evaluated the feasibility of reviewing secondary referrals in TECS at other ports and concurs with the OIG recommendation. The Office of Programs is requesting that the Office of Field Operations check each site for compliance by September 30. Attached is a copy of the request.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** Evaluate whether reviews of other ports of entry are warranted to ensure that secondary inspections are accurately reported on monthly Inspections Summary Reports.

Memorandum for the Acting Commissioner

2

Subject: The Immigration and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to  
Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

**INS RESPONSE: Concur.** The Office of Programs concurs with the OIG recommendation and will institute procedures to regularly monitor the monthly Inspections Summary Reports to ensure that ports are accurately recording secondary inspections. Procedures to ensure that all ports of entry are accurately recording secondary inspections are currently under development and will be disseminated to field offices by May 30.

The point of contact for the above response in the Office of Inspections is Elizabeth Tisdale, Assistant Chief Inspector, 202-514-0912.

Attachment



U.S. Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

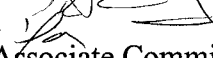
HQINS 70/3.2

Office of the Executive Associate Commissioner

425 I Street NW  
Washington, DC 20536

FEB 16 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR MICHAEL A. PEARSON  
EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER  
OFFICE OF FIELD OPERATIONS

FROM: Michael D. Cronin   
Acting Executive Associate Commissioner  
Office of Programs

SUBJECT: The Immigration and Naturalization Service's System Data Pertaining to  
Secondary Inspections at Selected Preclearance Airports

The recent audit by the Office of the Inspector General on the above subject made several recommendations with regards to secondary inspections at airports. One of the recommendations is to review other ports of entry to ensure that inspectors are routinely entering secondary referrals in the Treasury Enforcement System (TECS), as well as the results of secondary inspections.

The Office of Programs concurs with this recommendation and would like to request that the Office of Field Operations check each of the airports for compliance with this policy recommendation. Procedures to meet this requirement will be developed by the Office of Inspections and provided to the Office of Field Operations by May 30. Recommended completion of the reviews of the ports has been set for the end of this fiscal year.

The point of contact in the Office of Programs is Assistant Chief Inspector Elizabeth A. Tisdale. She can be reached at 514-0912.



**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, AUDIT DIVISION  
ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF ACTIONS NECESSARY TO CLOSE REPORT**

The INS response to the audit (Appendix II) concurred with all of our recommendations and included actions completed and planned to address each recommendation. This appendix summarizes our assessment of the response and the INS actions needed to close the report.

**Recommendation Number:**

1. **Resolved.** The INS response indicated that the Office of Field Operations, INS Headquarters, will issue a memorandum by March 31, 2001, to the Eastern Region requiring inspectors at the Toronto airport to designate in TECS<sup>16</sup> all referrals of travelers to secondary. The response also indicated that the Office of Field Operations, through the Eastern Region, will monitor the port's performance for the remainder of the fiscal year to ensure that inspectors are designating referrals in TECS as required. This recommendation can be closed when we receive (1) the above-mentioned memorandum, (2) procedures for monitoring Toronto's performance that will adequately determine if inspectors are routinely designating referrals to secondary in TECS, (3) results of monitoring efforts through the end of FY 2001, and (4) the Office of Field Operations' assurance, based on the assessment of Toronto's performance, that primary inspectors at the airport are routinely designating referrals to secondary in TECS.
  
2. **Resolved.** The INS response indicated that the Office of Field Operations will issue a memorandum by March 31, 2001, to the Eastern Region requiring inspectors at the Toronto airport to record in TECS<sup>17</sup> the results of all secondary inspections. The response also indicated that the Office of Field Operations, through the Eastern Region, will monitor the port's performance for the remainder of the fiscal year to ensure that inspectors are entering the results of secondary inspections in TECS as required. This recommendation can be closed when we receive (1) the above-mentioned memorandum, (2) procedures for monitoring Toronto's performance that

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<sup>16</sup> The portion of the INS response addressing this recommendation, which was signed by the Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Field Operations, referred to the Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS) rather than TECS. As explained in the INS response (see page 18), immigration inspectors at ports of entry use IBIS to access the TECS mainframe database, which is where referral and secondary inspection results data are entered and maintained. Because other portions of the INS response (see portions from the Acting Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Programs, pages 18 and 20) make it clear that actions will be taken to ensure that TECS will accurately reflect referrals of travelers to secondary and include secondary inspection results, we took no exception with the INS's response to this recommendation.

<sup>17</sup> The portion of the INS response addressing this recommendation also referred to IBIS instead of TECS. For the reasons described in the preceding footnote, we took no exception with the INS's response to this recommendation.

will adequately determine if inspectors are routinely entering the results of secondary inspections in TECS, (3) results of monitoring efforts through the end of FY 2001, and (4) the Office of Field Operations' assurance, based on the assessment of Toronto's performance, that secondary inspectors at the airport are routinely recording the results of secondary inspections in TECS.

3. **Resolved.** The INS response included a memorandum from the Acting Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Programs, requesting that the Office of Field Operations check each airport by the end of FY 2001 to ensure that inspectors are routinely entering secondary referrals and the results of secondary inspections in TECS. The memorandum stated that procedures for conducting the reviews will be developed by the Office of Inspections by May 30, 2001. This recommendation can be closed when we receive (1) procedures for conducting the reviews that will adequately determine if inspectors are routinely entering secondary referrals and the results of secondary inspections in TECS and (2) a summary of the results of the completed reviews, including actions planned to ensure compliance for any airport found to be non-compliant.
  
4. **Resolved.** The INS response indicated that the Office of Field Operations will issue a memorandum by March 31, 2001, to the Western Region requiring the Vancouver airport to discontinue its practice of counting inspections of travelers as secondary inspections on its monthly Inspections Summary Reports if the inspections were completed in primary. The response also indicated that the Office of Field Operations, through the Western Region, will monitor the port's performance for the remainder of the fiscal year to ensure that monthly reports accurately reflect the number of secondary inspections performed. This recommendation can be closed when we receive (1) the above-mentioned memorandum, (2) procedures for monitoring Vancouver's performance that will adequately determine if the secondary inspections recorded on monthly Inspections Summary Reports are accurate, (3) results of monitoring efforts through the end of FY 2001, and (4) the Office of Field Operations' assurance, based on the assessment of Vancouver's performance, that the port's monthly Inspections Summary Reports accurately reflect the number of secondary inspections performed.
  
5. **Resolved.** The INS response stated that the Office of Programs will institute procedures to regularly monitor monthly Inspections Summary Reports to ensure that airports are accurately recording secondary inspections. The response also stated that procedures to ensure that airports are accurately recording secondary inspections are currently being developed and will be disseminated to the field by May 30, 2001. This recommendation can be closed when we receive (1) procedures for airports that adequately describe the steps for recording secondary inspections, (2) confirmation that the procedures have been disseminated to applicable airports,

## **APPENDIX III**

(3) procedures for monitoring monthly Inspections Summary Reports that will adequately determine if airports are accurately recording secondary inspections, and  
(4) results of monitoring efforts through the end of FY 2001, including actions planned to ensure compliance for any airport found to be non-compliant.