



April 27, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the elimination of the list of countries whose nationals have been subject to registration under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS)—effectively ending the NSEERS registration process through the publication of a notice in the Federal Register:

http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2011-10305_PI.pdf.

DHS and the U.S. government have conducted roundtables, meetings, and town halls with our community partners around the nation, regarding the (NSEERS) process.

As many of you know, NSEERS was first implemented in 2002 as a temporary measure in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and was designed to record the arrival, stay, and departure of certain individuals from countries chosen based on an analysis of possible national security threats. The NSEERS registration required approximately 30 minutes in secondary inspection, per person, per arrival; and NSEERS registrants were also required to register upon departure at one of the 118 designated ports of departure, limiting travel flexibility.

Since NSEERS was created, DHS has implemented several automated systems that capture arrival and/or exit information, making the manual entry of this data via the NSEERS registration process redundant, inefficient and unnecessary. The improved and expanded DHS and Department of State systems capture the same information for visitors, regardless of nationality.

As a result of these advances and your input, we are pleased to announce that the Department is officially ending the NSEERS registration process. This step will streamline the collection of data for individuals entering or exiting the United States, regardless of nationality.

Because the Secretary of Homeland Security's authority under the NSEERS regulations is broader than the manual information flow based on country designation that has now ended, the underlying NSEERS regulation will remain in place in the event a special registration program is again needed.

Of course, all persons, baggage, and their conveyances arriving in or leaving the United States are subject to inspection and any traveler and his or her belongings may be subject to secondary screening for a variety of reasons, but referrals to secondary screening are not done automatically based on nationality. Rather, under DHS policy, screening is based on many criteria, which are carefully designed to reflect current intelligence and respect civil rights requirements.

Yours,

Margo Schlanger

Margo Schlanger
DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties