9 FAM PART IV Appendix D, 300 MACHINE READABLE NONIMMIGRANT VISA

(TL:VISA-267; 04-25-2001)

9 FAM 301 PROTOTYPE: ANVIS

(TL:VISA-267; 04-25-2001)

The Department has explored the development of machine-readable visas for some years. A prototype, ANVIS (Automated Nonimmigrant Visa Issuance System), was installed as a pilot project in Toronto in 1976. It was designed to improve the security of the visa by use of a special counterfoil and the encoding of certain data readable only by the inspector at the port-of-entry. The project was terminated in February 1986 for two reasons: the installation of NIVCAPS and the lack of a concentrated effort to develop and use machine readers.

9 FAM 302 MRV (MACHINE-READABLE VISA)

(TL:VISA-119; 7-3-95)

a. The H-2A machine-readable visa was the direct predecessor of the current machine readable visa (MRV) system. The test site for the H-2A visa was Hermosillo, Mexico; the post selected to process the special workers' visas. The visas were designed as a passport-size document, identical in size to the MRV, but without the photo feature. These visas were printed on a daisy-wheel printer (pin feed forms) linked to a VS computer.

b. A machine-readable visa was mandated by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 which provided the legal underpinnings and the funding for MRV. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was also interested in producing a machine-readable visa.

c. MRV was first installed at Santo Domingo as a pilot program in September 1989. Although it synthesized the concepts developed with the H-2A machine readable visa, it has been upgraded in several respects, most notably by integrating a photograph into the visa and bringing the encoded (machine-readable) portion into conformity with a format established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

d. The principal work on the MRV, including the designing and planning, was carried out by the Visa Office. It was decided at the outset that internal controls must be strengthened at the beginning of the visa process. Although foreign service nationals (FSNs) at all posts are responsible for data entry and visa printing, a foreign service officer must be responsible for the adjudication of the application and authorization for issuance. As an additional security feature to these standard procedures, the system was so designed that no visa can be issued by MRV without an officer actually entering the system to register his or her approval. Although this takes an extra few seconds of an officer's time per visa, this internal control feature provides an exceptional security enhancement.

e. The case tracking, record-keeping and reporting functions of NIVCAPS are integral parts of the MRV system. The ultimate goal is to have the MRV system at all visa-issuing foreign service posts.

f. A visa issued by the MRV system is shown as 9 FAM PART IV Appendix D, Exhibit III.