

Dated: February 11, 2003.

Frederick J. Kenney,

Executive Secretary, Shipping Coordinating Committee, Department of State.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Secretary

[Public Notice 4283]

Extension of the Restriction on the Use of United States Passports for Travel To, In or Through Iraq

On February 1, 1991, pursuant to the authority of 22 U.S.C. 211a and Executive Order 11295 (31 FR 10603), and in accordance with 22 CFR 51.73(a)(2) and (a)(3), all United States passports, with certain exceptions, were declared invalid for travel to, in, or through Iraq unless specifically validated for such travel. The restriction was originally imposed on the grounds that (1) armed hostilities then were taking place in Iraq and Kuwait and (2) there was an imminent danger to the safety of United States travelers to Iraq. American citizens then residing in Iraq and American professional reporters and journalists on assignment there were exempted from the restriction on the grounds that such exemptions were in the national interest. The restriction has been extended for additional one-year periods since then, and was last extended through February 25, 2003.

Conditions in Iraq remain hazardous for Americans. In an effort to compel Iraq to fulfill its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions, the United Nation has initiated an intensive inspections program. Mounting tensions between the Iraqi regime and the international community create an increasingly hazardous atmosphere for Americans in Iraq. If hostilities were to break out, the risk to Americans would be grave. The Iraqi regime has in the past demonstrated a willingness to use violence and intimidation against foreigners to pursue its foreign policy goals, and we believe it remains prepared to do so in the future.

At the outbreak of the Gulf War, the Iraqi regime took private citizens, including Americans, hostage and forced them to serve as "human shields" at strategic sites throughout Iraq. The Iraqi government has long asserted that it cannot ensure the safety of U.S. citizen United Nations humanitarian workers in Iraq, prompting the United Nations to remove them. Iraq regularly fires anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles at

U.S. and coalition aircraft patrolling the no-fly ones over northern and southern Iraq, and regularly illuminates U.S. and coalition aircraft with target-acquisition radar.

The tactics Iraq uses in the repression of its own civilian population creates a high risk to innocent bystanders. In addition, U.S. citizens and other foreigners working inside Kuwait near the Iraqi borders have been detained by Iraqi authorities in the past and sentenced to lengthy jail terms for alleged illegal entry into the country. Although our interests are represented by the Embassy of Poland in Baghdad, its ability to obtain consular access to detained U.S. citizens and to perform emergency services is constrained. In light of these circumstances, and pursuant to the authorities set forth in 22 U.S.C. 211a, Executive Order 11295, and 22 CFR 51.73, I have determined that Iraq continues to be a country where "there is imminent danger to the public health or physical safety of United States travellers".

Accordingly, United States passports shall continue to be invalid for travel to, in or through Iraq unless specifically validated for such travel under the authority of the Secretary of State. This restriction on the validity of U.S. passports for travel to, in or through Iraq shall not apply to and journalists on assignment there.

The Public Notice shall be effective from the date it is published in the Federal Register and shall expire at midnight on February 25, 2004, unless sooner extended or revoked by Public Notice.

Dated: February 12, 2003.

Colin L. Powell,

Secretary of State, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 03-4105 Filed 2-24-03; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Notice of Request for Public Comment Regarding Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) Beneficiary Countries

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In compliance with section 203(f) of the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) (19 U.S.C. 3201), as amended by the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is

requesting the views of interested parties on whether the countries designated as ATPDEA beneficiary countries in Presidential Proclamation 7616 of October 31, 2002, are meeting the eligibility criteria provided for in section 204(b)(6)(B) of the ATPA, as amended by the ATPDEA.

DATES: Public comments are due at USTR no later than 5 p.m., March 27, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Submissions by mail or express delivery: Public Reading Room, ATTN: ATPDEA Beneficiary Countries, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 1724 F Street, Room F12P1, NW., Washington, DC 20508. Submissions by electronic mail: FR0030@ustr.gov. See requirements for submissions below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bennett Harman, Office of the Americas, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Room 523, Washington, DC 20508. The telephone number is (202) 395-5190.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Signed into law on August 6, 2002, the Trade Act of 2002 contains, in title XXXI, provisions for enhanced trade benefits for eligible Andean countries. Titled the "Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act" (ATPDEA), the ATPDEA renews the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), and amends the ATPA to provide preferential treatment for certain products previously excluded from such treatment. In Presidential Proclamation 7616 of October 31, 2002, the President designated Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru as ATPDEA beneficiary countries. Section 203(f) of the ATPA, as amended by the ATPDEA, requires the USTR, not later than April 30, 2003, to submit to Congress a report on the operation of the ATPA. Section 203(f)(2) requires USTR, before submitting such report, to request comments on whether beneficiary countries are meeting the criteria listed in section 204(6)(B). USTR refers interested parties to the **Federal Register** notice published on August 15, 2002 (67 FR 53379), for a full list of section 204(6)(B)'s eligibility criteria.

Submitting Comments: Comments, in English, may be submitted by mail, express delivery service, or e-mail (to FR0030@ustr.gov). It is strongly recommended that comments submitted by mail or express delivery service also be sent by e-mail. Persons making submissions by e-mail should use the following subject line: "ATPDEA Beneficiary Countries". Documents should be submitted as either WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.TXT) files. Supporting documentation