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**U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Talking Points
Census Request on Arabic Information
7-12-04**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our Nation's borders.

CBP's priority mission is to keep terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.

During 2002, the U.S. Customs Service, now CBP, was assisting in tracking terrorists financing by looking for people leaving the country with more than \$10,000 without declaring it.

This was part of Operation Oasis, a Customs Outbound Bulk-Currency initiative coordinated by Operation Green Quest to track terrorist financing. From October 2001, through May 2003, Customs executed 713 seizures totaling more than \$26.6 million.

Therefore, to educate travelers, U.S. Customs requested demographic information from Census to post signage and other information in various languages at ports of entry.

Each year, CBP processes approximately 412 million travelers at international airports, seaports and land border crossings.

An informed traveler is our best ally, so to better facilitate the millions of travelers, U.S. Customs and Border Protection tries to educate travelers on the various U.S. laws and regulations before they begin travel.

In order to assist travelers who may be traveling to or from the Middle East, CBP is attempting to determine airport and port of entry locations where Arabic-speaking travelers are most likely to transit. Pamphlets and signage in Arabic will be placed in these locations.

This educational campaign includes brochures, pamphlets, posters and signage in seven languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese and Chinese, displayed and distributed to international travelers as they enter and exit the United States.

As part of our educational campaign, U.S. Customs and Border Protection uses various data to help us determine the amount of materials we need to

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produce, the most widely used languages, and ultimately where these materials would communicate the message. (For example, since we share a common border with Mexico, we will post information in Spanish at ports of entry along our Southern border).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection takes any allegations of racial profiling seriously. CBP is working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to address any concerns.

The senior leadership of the Department of Homeland Security realizes that we cannot do an effective job in homeland security without actively, fully connecting with the Arab and Muslim community. The Arab and Muslim community is part of the fabric of this country, and we recognize that we must work together in partnership.

Q&A's

There were 2 requests ~ why was the first redacted in the FOIA.

The first request generated information very similar in nature to the second monetary request. The information was never included in agency policy or decisions therefore it was redacted from the FOIA request as being pre-decisional material part of the deliberative process of the agency.

The information for both requests is public information that anyone could go to the Census web site and search for. U.S. Customs at the time, requested assistance in tabulating this information for ease of use.

What would you tell Arab Americans who are concerned that they are being targeted?

We do not discriminate based on gender or ethnicity. We encourage those who are going to travel abroad to do so, but we want to ensure that everyone understands U.S. laws and regulations before you travel to avoid any delays. For those traveling abroad, it's important to understand the monetary reporting laws for the \$10,000 declarations so that people can properly report what they are taking and returning with. It's not illegal to travel with more than \$10,000, but you must report it.

Why such detail in breaking down your request by country?

Again, that information was never used.

What databases did this information get put into?

This information was never included in any databases and was used for reference only. Since the initial request, the information has been discarded and not used for any other purposes.