



United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

September 24, 2003

Mr. Kenneth White
White and Associates
18801 Ventura Blvd.
Suite 205
Tarzana, CA 91356

Dear Mr. White:

Thank you for your facsimiles of September 7 and 16, 2003 conveying your views on visa processing at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. I will not address the specific cases that you raised since case-specific comment should emanate from the Embassy.

To speak to your more general concerns, the Consular Section in Moscow operates in conformity with Department of State regulations and procedures and handles an extremely heavy and complex workload with great efficiency. This is not to say that there are never any problems. These do occur which is why we encourage applicants and their representatives to stay in contact with the Embassy to identify and deal with any issues that may arise.

In regard to your concerns about possible refunds for DV-2003 applicants who do not receive visas due to administrative clearances, let me point out that the fee paid by these applicants is for the review and processing of their applications, not issuance of a visa. Clearances are an integral part of the application process for which this fee is charged. Participation in the DV program is entirely voluntary; applicants are invited, not required to apply, and the issuance of a visa is not guaranteed.

Since September 11, 2001, the statutory and, perforce, the regulatory environment has grown increasingly complex in all areas that relate to homeland security. The visa process is no exception. As we move to ensure the security of our borders and the integrity of the visa process one effect has certainly been more intensive scrutiny of visa applications and longer processing times. We regret this but we are bound by explicit instructions from Congress and the desire of the American people for secure borders to carry out scrupulously all legal and procedural requirements for the protection of the security of the United States.

I trust that the above information will be useful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Barry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Catherine Barry
Managing Director
Visa Services