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February 12, 2003

[REDACTED] Initiative Coordinator
Immigration Pro Bono Development and Bar Activation Project
American Bar Association
740 15th St. NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear [REDACTED]

Please let the following serve as my report on the Port Isabel Service Processing Center:

Introduction:

On January 31, 2003, a group of five (5) attorneys and one (1) staff person from the American Bar Association toured the Port Isabel Service Processing Center.
(See Exhibit 1.)

Upon our arrival we had a meeting that lasted over an hour with the following INS individuals:
[REDACTED] Center Administrator; [REDACTED] Assistant Officer in Charge; and
[REDACTED] Recreation Specialist.

It was explained to us that this is a short-term facility. The average length of detention is fourteen (14) days. It is a secure compound and basically a self-contained city. It has four (4) dorms with 200 beds per dorm. It is designed to house both males and females. This population is segregated by gender. The detainees are separated into three (3) categories from minimum risk to high risk. Category 1 is minimum risk and these detainees wear blue jumpsuits; Category 2 detainees wear orange; Category 3 is maximum risk and these detainees wear red jumpsuits. On our visit the detainee population was at 645. However, the population is expected to increase in the spring when Mexican Nationals cross the border in increasing number. Plans are in the works to increase the facility to 2,000 beds within the next 5 to 7 years.

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Post 9/11/2001:

The nationality breakdown of male and female detainees is attached. (Exhibit 2)
We were told that the facility has experienced an increase of detainees from Middle Eastern countries since 9/11/01. These detainees are not isolated or segregated. There are no isolation cells and detainees are segregated only for medical conditions, such as tuberculosis and for disciplinary reasons. The F.B.I. is contacted on detainees that are from "certain" countries. As there are more Middle Easterners since 9/11/01, the facility has made accommodations for their diets. Additionally, attorneys can talk to their clients in private and there are no recording devices in the limited interview rooms.

Impressions:

My impression is that the facility is much less confining than a jail, but still, by its nature as it is a secure compound, greatly restricts freedom. The detainees are treated humanely and the staff and detainees seem to have good communication between them. b6, b7C Center Administrator, and his administrative assistants seem to care about the rights of the detainees and are proud of their detainee Handbook and the quality of the meals. One staff member remarked, "People are happy here," which I think is a stretch, but does show that a decent relationship exists between staff and detainees.

Recommendations:

- All detainees, especially those without an attorney and who have been confined for a period of time, should have a brief case review and conference with an immigration attorney who can advise them where they are in the process and what they should expect, and in what time frame.
- At least one more doctor, either full or part-time, should be hired for the facility.
- Attention should be spent on physical recreational activities for the detainees. For starters, the basketball goal should be fixed or replaced so that the inmates can play basketball in their one hour of recreation.
- Inmates should not have to choose between spending an hour of recreation or spending an hour at the library.
- The library should put a priority on current immigration law and procedures as well as on knowledgeable staff to direct and assist detainees on computer usage so they can do research.
- Regular visits should be done by an American Bar Association entity in order to keep communication lines open and to help foster a good working relationship between INS and the ABA.

Sincerely,

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Port Isabel SPC

Project of
ABA Commission on Immigration Policy,
Practice and Pro-Bono

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Leader

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MALE MORNING REPORT

1/30/2003

NATIONALITY BREAKDOWN

1	ECUADOR
65	EL SALVADOR
67	GUATEMALA
106	HONDURAS
149	MEXICO
37	CHINA
15	NICARAGUA
0	BELIZE
2	AFGANISTAN
1	TANZANIA
2	ALBANIA
0	NIGERIA
44	BRAZIL
3	COLOMBIA
40	CUBA
1	CAMEROON
9	DOMICAN REPUBLIC
2	INDIA
1	VENENZUELA
4	POLAND
1	YEMEN
1	URUGUAY
0	ALGERIA
0	JAMAICA
0	ITALY
0	GERMANY
4	BANGLADESH
0	CHILE
3	PERU
1	SAUDI
0	RUSSIA
0	

TOTAL: **559**

FEMALE MORNING REPORT

1/30/2003

NATIONALITY BREAKDOWN

0	ECUADOR
14	EL SALVADOR
8	GUATEMALA
21	HONDURAS
11	MEXICO
2	CHINA
6	NICARAGUA
4	BRAZIL
19	CUBA
1	DOMINICAN REP.
0	GUYANA
1	COLOMBIA
1	PERU

TOTAL: 88