United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

March 12, 2003

Memorandum

To: Solicitor
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus

From: P. Lynn Scarlett
Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Guidance for Planning and Performing Official Overseas Travel During Periods of Possible Conflict

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide travel guidance and procedures to Departmental personnel during periods of possible conflict overseas. As a general rule, travel to overseas areas of possible conflict must always be mission-critical, and should be avoided whenever possible.

Employees planning to commence travel to or travel through such areas should contact their supervisor and their bureau or Departmental Office of International Affairs to keep abreast of the current situation in these areas. Please note that anticipated conflict or disruption of travel services is not considered as justification to use non U.S. flag carriers for passenger transportation, unless U.S. flag carriers are not available.

Employees who are planning to travel to overseas areas may also check with the Department of State country advisory notices (http://travel.state.gov/travelwarnings.html) before initiating travel. Employees who are already in travel status when a conflict arises or becomes imminent should contact their immediate supervisor for further instructions, and stay in close contact with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate staff.

U.S. embassy clearance is always required for governmental employees planning to travel to foreign countries. If an overseas conflict arises, bureau International Affairs Offices must reconfirm all embassy clearances for travel to countries subject to conflict before travel is initiated.

In the event of an evacuation from a foreign area, all employees must comply with the Department of State instructions. Do not seek special permission to remain in country

unless your continued presence has been requested by the Embassy **and** you receive DOI supervisory clearance to remain in country.

The Department's goal is to ensure the safety of all employees and still accomplish the assigned mission; therefore, your assistance and corporation in the coming months is key to meeting this goal.