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AMNESTY EFFECT

INS to speed up process of approved visa papers

Steps have been taken to speed up the enormous backlog in the issuance of immigrant visas for beneficiaries of approved preference or non-preference petitions, of which 119,400 are Filipinos, a top White House official said.

At the same time, President Carter's proposals on alien amnesty will be followed by what the official termed as "an in depth, comprehensive review of immigration policy and the Immigration and Naturalization Act."

This was disclosed by Stuart Eizenstat, Presidential assistant for domestic affairs and policy, in response to a position paper submitted to the White House by Reuben Seguritan, a Filipino lawyer.

Another Filipino, Tino Calabia, chairperson for a group called Immigration Task Force, Mid Atlantic Pacific Asian Coalition, also submitted his recommendations. The two are members of the Committee of Concerned Asian Americans who met with key Carter officials two months ago. At this conference, Asian American problems relating to immigration and other areas were brought to the attention of Presidential aides.

Immigration Commissioner Leonel Castillo has already begun steps "to alleviate the enormous backlog which exists so that those who are entitled for adjustment of status may obtain documentation more expeditiously," Mr. Eizenstat said in his letter to Mr. Seguritan.

The White House official was reacting to a proposal that "all Filipinos who are the beneficiary of an approved preference or non-preference petition should be granted immigrant visas immediately."

Turning to the issue of foreign medical graduates, Mr. Eizenstat said that the Immigration Service and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare are "aware of the problems... and are trying to do whatever is possible administratively to prevent hardship until a comprehensive analysis and recommendation is made on immigration policy and its statutes."

The White House had been urged by the Committee of Concerned Asian Americans to lift the two-year foreign residence requirement for foreign-educated doctors as well as the Visa Qualifying Examination.

Many alien physicians who came to this country as exchange visitors cannot generally adjust their status to that of a permanent resident unless they have gone home to their country of origin and resided there for at least two years, the White House was told.

In urging abolition of the visa qualifying test, the committee stressed that this requirement is "extremely unfair" because alien physicians are

required to take it even if they had passed the ECFMG, FLEX and specialty board examinations.

Also before the White House is another recommendation that foreign nursing graduates under H-1 visas be allowed to remain and work for at least five years from the time of their entry. At present, nurses who do not pass licensure examinations within a year of their arrival lose their visas as well as their jobs.

Mr. Eizenstat assured Mr. Seguritan that his views will be given "careful consideration" during the process of reviewing the nation's entire immigration structure. "We will be consulting with immigration attorneys who have practical experience, such as yourself, in an effort to focus on important problem areas such as you raised," Mr. Eizenstat said.