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THE WHITE HOUSE  
 WASHINGTON

May 15, 1975

*Handwritten initials: JMC*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JIM CANNON *JMC*  
 SUBJECT: Federal Border Enforcement Operations Plan

BACKGROUND:

On March 18, 1975, you directed the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury to fix responsibility for routine patrol and for coordination of Federal enforcement activities on the Southwest border (Tab A). Your directive was responsive to Congressional action, which halted an OMB plan to coordinate the activities of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Customs Bureau in the area and the subsequent recommendations of a House Committee on Government Operations Report.

ANALYSIS:

The recently submitted plan, set forth as a joint Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Commissioner of Customs and the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization (Tab B) does not completely comply with your directives. While it does recognize the statutory law enforcement responsibilities of each agency and the need for cooperation in the areas of common communications channels, information exchange, operations intelligence and cross designation of duties, it is not a completely specific operational plan with distinct areas of accountability. Moreover, it does not contain a Departmental level agreement of understanding on border operations; it does not make reference to your directive or the House Government Operations Committee's recommendations; and it does not contain a deadline for completion of action. The Memorandum of Understanding does provide, however, for regional coordination, joint instructions issued by the National Headquarters of Customs and INS and is accompanied by an additional coordinating agreement between Customs and the Drug Enforcement Agency of the Justice Department.

Although the Memorandum of Understanding does not reach the level of specificity which you requested in the operational area, it is probably the best agreement possible between the agencies, given the personalities of the leaders of the Agencies and the institutionalized rivalries between the Agencies. The Congressional Liaison Office has advised that it is their belief that the concerned Congressional Committees will be relatively satisfied with the Memorandum of Understanding and the subsequent coordination between Customs, INS and DEA.