"Establishing a computerized system to track entries and exits from the United States should not even be a subject of debate. There are no technological factors, merely a lack of will and funding. What is more, the practice of requiring permanent residents who are not yet citizens to annually register their whereabouts with government, which was discontinued in the 1970s, should be renewed.

"The State Department's visa officers overseas need to be recognized as 'America's other Border Patrol.' Visa officers often have only 2 or 3 minutes to complete an application, and are pressured to approve a high proportion of applicants to avoid offending the host country. The granting of visas should become a freestanding, well-funded function that people sign up for from the start, rather than today's dreaded right of passage for rookie Foreign Service officers.

"The very morning of the September 11 attack, the House was about to resurrect a provision called 245(i), which allows illegal aliens to receive green cards in the United States rather than in their home countries.

"Because personnel abroad are best equipped to screen applicants, 245(i) negates any efforts to keep out those judged to be ineligible.

"Finally, whatever one thinks about the level of immigration, a temporary reduction in legal immigration and the admission of temporary workers and students is essential to allow the overhaul of our immigration infrastructure."

Did we hear that, Mr. Speaker? "A temporary reduction in illegal immigration, and I will say a pause in all immigration; I want a pause. I will soon introduce a bill to that effect. A pause, at least a 6-month pause, in all immigration into the United States, except for special circumstances, maybe national defense-related issues. But other than that, let us stop it. Because we have an overhaul to do with our entire system. Let us let the Department, let us let our new Secretary for the Department of Homeland Defense determine how best to go back into the field and try to defend our borders. But let us call a pause or a halt to immigration for at least 6 months.

"Only by lightening the INS' load can the agency both process its huge backlog and strengthen border controls.

"Improved border and visa controls may not catch all malefactors, but it will help alert us to conspiracies such as last Tuesday's attacks. If only a dozen of the conspirators had been identified by law enforcement officials during visa processing or border inspections, it is very possible the entire conspiracy would have been unraveled. We have, of course, seen some home-grown terrorists as well, but there is no reason to neglect border control.

"We should not overreact by eviscerating constitutional rights, includ-