This Week . . .

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IDEOLOGICAL RESTRICTIONS CLAUSE REMOVED FROM VISA LEGISLATION

Spurred by the mounting embarrassment of excluding people from the United States on the basis of their ideologies or beliefs, Congress adopted and the White House approved an amendment to the State Department Authorization Act repealing key provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. The amendment asserts: "no alien may be denied a visa or excluded from admission into the United States, subject to restrictions or conditions on entry into the United States, or subject to deportation because of any past, current, or expected beliefs, statements, or associations which, if engaged in by a United States citizen in the United States, would be protected under the Constitution of the United States."

Aliens can still be excluded or deported under the executive branch's authority to protect national security and foreign policy (except for reason of belief, statement, or association as noted above) and if an individual "has engaged, in an individual capacity or as a member of an organization, in a terrorist activity or is likely to engage after entry in a terrorist activity."

This amendment fundamentally revises the McCarran-Walter Act, passed in 1952 over the veto of President Truman, which permitted the exclusion of foreigners on political grounds.
The new provision will be in effect from January 1, 1988 to the end of February 1989. It was initiated by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) with the support of Sens. Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and Paul Simon (D-IL). Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) was its chief sponsor in the House. Rep. Frank and Sen. Moynihan hope to thoroughly revise McCarran-Walter this year. Frank has introduced a bill (H.R. 1119) to accomplish this task. The Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee held hearings on the bill this summer and a vote will probably be scheduled early next year.

The McCarran-Walter Act has been in the news in recent years because of the exclusion of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Nobel Laureate author; novelist Graham Greene; playwright Dario Fo; Mrs. Hortensia Allende, the widow of former Chilean president Salvador Allende Gossens; and Gen. Nino Pasti, a former NATO official. Caught by the visa-denial language of McCarran-Walter, the exclusions of these and other luminaries have embarrassed a nation that proclaims its commitment to free speech. Other not-so-famous people, including scholars, have also been snared by the visa-denial provisions of McCarran-Walter.

When Data Collide: Of Obligations, Expenditures, and PFRDCs

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is mandated by Congress to track the state of American science. This process takes many forms, including the publication of statistical compilations on federal funding for research at universities and colleges. These tables use a variety of data sources and offer a bewildering array of information. In 1987 the NSF released Academic Science/Engineering R&D Funds, FY 1985 (abbreviated below as S/E), from which COSSA compiled and offered to interested organizations and individuals a ranking of universities according to their receipt of federal funding for social and behavioral science research.

One of the universities ranked responded to this compilation with the observation that it was ranked too low and argued that, on the basis of different data, it should have been ranked much higher. The data used to support this were extracted from Federal Support to Universities, Colleges, and Selected Nonprofit Institutions, FY 1985 (F-S). The difference in the ranking of this university between S/E and F-S was over 60 places, representing a discrepancy of roughly $9 million in federal funding for the social and behavioral sciences. A review of the rankings demonstrated that there was no interpretive error, and that the divergence was supported by the data.

How then to account for the $9 million? An explanation was sought in the two surveys being used. Different types of federal monies were being discussed (S/E used expenditures whereas F-S used obligations), and the fiscal base was slightly larger in the case of S/E, which included Federally Funded Research and Development Centers while F-S did not. As important as these variables were, perhaps of even greater impact was the way the
data were collected. S/E data were collected using a questionnaire distributed by NSF to doctoral-degree granting institutions, which meant not only that the institution told NSF how much it had spent but also which academic departments or on-campus institutes had used the funding. F-S data were gathered directly from the federal funding agencies and were therefore tabulated by type of grant program within the agencies, which did not necessarily correspond to university departments and institutes receiving the funds.

One example of this problem was recently brought to light by Jean Mayer, the president of Tufts University. In a letter to the Chronicle of Higher Education (January 13, 1988), Dr. Mayer noted the omission of almost $10 million in federal funding from an NSF survey of federal obligations to colleges and universities for FY 1986. This omission, which resulted from the failure of a federal agency to include funding for a research institute at Tufts in the figures forwarded to NSF, dropped the university from 75th place for total federal obligations in FY 1985 to 92nd in FY 1986.

The "coding problem," as one NSF statistician called it, can cause confusion. A university with a small department of psychology, for example, may receive an enormous amount of federal funding for research on cognition, artificial intelligence, or operations research. Granting agencies would consider this behavioral science funding and code it as such for the NSF, but a university would report it to NSF according to the departments using that funding; it might therefore show up under computer science, engineering, or other categories. Another coding problem is the perpetual quandary of deciphering "n.e.c." (not elsewhere classified). This means the particular funding being referred to was not categorized under separate disciplinary headings, which does not exclude the possibility of its appearing under one or more disciplines the next year.

The Division of Science Resources Studies at NSF is well aware of the problem of conflicting rankings and is working to strengthen its data collection methods. Over time, however, the discrepancies between data sets "tend to even out," according to one researcher. The coding problems will, it seems, remain for now; there is at present no simple crosswalk for reconciling the two data sets.

RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE URGED FOR USAID

The impact of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs is sometimes less economic than it is entrepreneurial: they can be seen as having important short-term affects but significant long-term impact is delayed until imitators and partners (both bilateral and multilateral) fund similar programs on a much wider scale than the agency can. That at least is the assumption underlying deliberations by USAID's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) concerning the issue of sustainable agriculture in "less-developed countries" (LDCs),

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an assumption shared by agency personnel. One senior staff person characterized USAID programs in this age of ever-tighter budget constraints as "catalytic to leveraging other people's resources."

The Office of Research and University Programs of USAID's Science and Technology bureau contracted with a panel of experts from the National Research Council (NRC) to prepare an analysis of the issue of sustainable agriculture for the RAC (the members of the NRC panel are listed below). The panel was invited to respond to a USAID paper on developing a global environment in which LDCs are responsive to the need for long-term agricultural support and development systems. Sustainable agriculture, for the panel, cannot be defined so much as characterized by the spatial and temporal dimensions of maintaining the biological and ecological integrity of natural resources in agricultural regions to ensure long-term productive capacities.

The USAID paper on sustainable agriculture posited four basic areas of discussion: sustainability of food production and rural income; sustainability of natural resources; environmental and biological diversity; and other issues, including policy decisions and research. In responding to the first three the panel outlined a basic conception of how the characteristics of sustainable agriculture systems could answer the needs implied under each of these headings. Topics for future research were identified as labor (what role should the workforce play in sustainable agricultural systems?) and profitability (how, given local conditions and the need to develop appropriate management strategies, can profits be sustained?).

Discussion of the panel report focused on the problems of defining the concept of sustainable agriculture, the difficulties of presenting programs to develop sustainable agriculture systems to Congress, and the apparent omission of socioeconomic factors in the report. The chair of the panel, Frederick Hutchinson (vice-president for agricultural programs at Ohio State University), stressed in his opening remarks that although the report made no explicit mention of the impact on individuals and societies of developing sustainable agriculture systems, this was less because the panel was unconcerned with this aspect of the problem and more because the consideration of such problems was not included in the USAID paper prepared for the panel. (The final report on sustainable agriculture will apparently include a discussion of socioeconomic factors.) A further problem, stemming from the USAID's Congressional mandate, is the difficulty that would be encountered in securing funding for a sustainable agriculture initiative. USAID is required by law to include a cost-benefit analysis in program proposals, something panel members felt was impossible for sustainable agriculture. The long-term projects that would be necessary under sustainable agriculture initiative would have to be measured using new criteria.

Another aspect of the sustainable agriculture issue is the existence of an agricultural infrastructure--including land-grant colleges--developed in part by USAID and independently operated
for the past decade. USAID is in the process of examining the
condition of this infrastructure under the rubric of biological
diversity (a series of programs supported by Congressionally
earmarked funds); sustainable agriculture is one of the methods
being used. The importance of the RAC meeting in this context
can be gauged by how the results of its discussions are
disseminated to the field officers responsible for developing and
maintaining USAID programs. Personal contact (inviting key USAID
staffers to panel discussions and hosting luncheons for senior
agency personnel at which panel findings are presented) and
publications (distribution of final RAC reports) are the primary
means of intra-agency information. As an agency staffer close to
the RAC puts it, the RAC is concerned with education and has at
best an indirect impact on field operations.

The members of the NRC panel on sustainable agriculture
were: Frederick Hutchinson (chair); Charles Benbrook (NRC Board
on Agriculture); Klaus Flach (U.S. Department of Agriculture);
Stuart Gage (Michigan State University); Stephen Gliessman
(University of California, Santa Cruz); Walter Parham (Office of
Technology Assessment); Ned Raun (Winrock International Institute
for Agricultural Development); and Earl Swanson (University of
Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).

TREASURE TROVE FOR SOCIAL SCIENTISTS: THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

When author Charles Merrill Mount was arrested in Boston
last August and charged with attempting to sell allegedly stolen
documents, his case focused attention on a vexing problem for
federal records management specialists: identifying what records
are in the National Archives. Although series of records are
cataloged, individual pieces within series often are not, making
it difficult for archivists to identify what is actually held.

This lack of documentation is one of the hurdles researchers
face in using the Archives. But it is not an insurmountable
barrier, and often presents opportunities (serendipity, as every
scholar knows, is one of the driving forces of research). In
recognition of the fact that many researchers are unaware of the
possible research potential of federal records, the National
Archives and Records Administration is reaching out to scholars
who might not normally use the National Archives.

In recent years the use of records in the Archives by social
scientists has increased, as evinced by the number of articles
in social science journals which cite sources from the Archives.
But the Archives remains essentially an untapped treasure trove
for social scientists. The mission of the Archives is to
preserve the permanently valuable records of government,
including computerized records (which include much of interest to
social scientists), but, despite the growing importance of
historical studies in such disciplines as economics, sociology,
and anthropology, the holdings in the Archives are underused by
scholars outside the groups traditionally associated with the use
of archival material (historians, political scientists, and
genealogists).
Hidden at the top of the Archives building in Washington, DC, is the Machine-readable Branch (MRB), which is charged with accessioning, preserving, and making available to researchers computerized records of the federal government. All of these are on half-inch magnetic tape, which means that in order to use them researchers must have access to a tape-reading computer. The records are thus not as readily accessible as, say, manuscript customs receipts, but the MRB copies tapes for researchers at a basic cost of $90 a data set. An efficient way to access the records is to use the documentation (code books, data-collection instruments, and so forth), which sketch the broad outlines of computer records and are available as tape, photocopies, or microfiche according to the data set used.

The records are classified by agency. Some of the records deposited have been compiled in the course of normal business, such as those of the Civil Aeronautics Board (which compiled records necessary to regulate the airline industry) and the Internal Revenue Service (a sample of individual and corporate tax returns). Also available are data from special programs, including a longitudinal retirement study conducted by the Social Security Administration during the 1960s and 1970s, and records of efforts by the Defense Department to apply business management techniques to the war effort. Some agencies, however, are been so forthcoming, including the Census Bureau and the Department of Health and Human Services. The former tends to retain its records, while the latter deposits its files with the National Technical Information Service, a branch of the Department of Commerce.

One difficulty researchers face is discovering precisely what is available at the MRB. A catalog in preparation has been delayed by budget constraints and the rapid development of MRB holdings, although a title list should be available sometime before the end of FY 1988. The MRB is encouraging researchers to overcome this difficulty and use the tapes not only because of the untapped resources available, but also for the sake of preserving the records themselves. Magnetic tapes, unlike most other media, need to be used for the sake of preservation: the Archives must copy each tape at least once a decade to preserve the magnetic field and thus to preserve the data. (This also presents a problem when agencies wait until the maximum of 30 years has elapsed before submitting records to the Archives; in 30 years computer records could become unusable.)

Social scientists are encouraged to contact the MRB for information on holdings in their areas of interest. Moreover, researchers who find that a computer record is not available through the Archives should contact the agency involved to ensure the record is transmitted to the Archives. The chief of the Machine-readable Branch is Dr. Edie Hedlin; inquiries should be addressed to her at MRB (NNSR), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408; telephone inquiries can be made to Ms. Margaret Adams at 202/523-6771. General inquiries regarding National Archives holdings can be directed to Reference Services, 202/523-3220. <<

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COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for further information or application materials. A comprehensive listing of federal funding sources is contained in COSSA’s Guide to Federal Funding for Social Scientists.

Visiting Scholars Program and Dissertation Fellowships

- Visiting Scholars Program

The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) annually selects up to six visiting scholars, known as William C. Foster Fellows, for 12 month assignments in Washington, DC. Fellows are expected to contribute to the ongoing work of the Agency and are assigned to one of the four bureaus of ACDA (Multilateral Affairs; Verification and Intelligence; Strategic Programs; and Nuclear Weapons Control). Applicants must be U.S. citizens or nationals currently on the faculties of institutions of higher education. Security clearance will be required of all fellows.

Budget: Salaries for fellows will be based on regular salary levels plus travel expenses to and from Washington and either a per diem allowance or relocation costs.

Application Procedures: Applicants should submit letters of application indicating the perspective and expertise they believe they would bring to the Agency and indicating specific positions they are applying for (contact ACDA for information on positions open to fellows). Applicants can submit at their own discretion letters of recommendation and publications.


- Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowships

The Hubert H. Humphrey fellowships support unclassified doctoral dissertation research in arms control and disarmament. Graduate students preparing dissertations or law students preparing substantial papers in partial fulfillment of further degree requirements are eligible for support.

Budget: The stipend for PhD candidates is $5,000 plus tuition and fees to a maximum of $3,400; funding for law students is prorated according to the credits given for the research paper.


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