

Deadly Diversity, Dumb Program

by Michelle Malkin

In the drawer of dumb, post-Sept. 11 immigration ideas, the State Department's Diversity Visa Lottery program sits near the top of the heap. What could be more out of touch with the national security goals of the War on Terror than giving away visas randomly to thousands of people from the Middle East to fulfill a politically correct social agenda?

Nearly 55,000 lucky lottery applicants and their family members qualify for permanent residency visas (green cards) every year, which put them on the path to American citizenship ahead of millions of other foreigners patiently waiting to come to this country. The visa lottery was championed by Sen. Ted Kennedy and signed into law by President George H. W. Bush in 1990 to admit more "underrepresented" immigrant minorities into the United States.

Michelle Malkin is a nationally-syndicated columnist. Her most recent book is Invasion: How America Still Welcomes Terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces on Our Shores. This article, ©2002, Creators Syndicate, Inc., is reprinted by permission.

Although originally intended to give a leg up to Irish immigrants, most of the winners are now from non-Western countries, including several terrorist-sponsoring and terrorist-friendly nations.

How many lives have been sacrificed at the altar of diversity through this immigration set-aside program? We now know of at least two casualties.

One of those who hit the visa lottery jackpot was Hala Hadayet, wife of Egyptian immigrant Hesham Mohamed Hadayet -- the gunman who killed two people at Los Angeles International Airport on July 4th. Hadayet should have been deported from this country six years ago. After entering the country legally in 1992 on a six-month visa, he overstayed illegally and then filed a petition for permanent residency.

An Immigration and Naturalization Service spokesman told the Orange County Register over the weekend that the reasons for Hadayet's rejection were "unclear." The agency initiated deportation proceedings, but, as in hundreds of thousands of cases, nothing ever came of it. In the meantime, Hadayet's wife put in an application for the visa lottery. She won, and so did her family. Both legal immigrants from abroad and illegal aliens currently evading the law inside our country are allowed to apply; winners can bring their

spouses and children under 21.

There is no fee to enter the visa lottery. There isn't even a government form. Applicants simply mail a photo, biographical information and a signature on a plain sheet of paper and wait for the computer-generated drawing results. Losers can keep applying every year. The only eligibility rules are a clean criminal record (other than violating our borders and overstaying visas, which don't count as crimes to our cotton-headed immigration authorities), a clean bill of health (easily faked), and a high school diploma/equivalent or two years of work experience (easily faked).

The diversity visa lottery program was a bad idea before Sept. 11 and July 4. At a time when people from around the world continue to seek asylum, claim refugee status, and immigrate to America legally, it is absurd that our government still feels compelled to run a lottery to "ensure diversity" of the immigrant population. It is even more outrageous that the program is open to illegal aliens who continue to flout our laws. The visa lottery is an immigration entitlement program based on the luck of the draw and political whims — rather than on our national interest.

How many more Hesham Hayadets are lurking among us? Among those who drew winning numbers in the most recent visa

lottery, whose results were announced by the State Department last month, were 1,551 individuals from Hadayet's native Egypt; 38 from terrorist hijacker-spawning

Saudi Arabia; and 2,259 from Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Syria — all official state sponsors of terrorism. The next lottery drawing is planned for next fall. Blinded by deadly

diversity worship, our government has no plans to bar al Qaeda strongholds from the lottery.

We continue to leave homeland defense to random chance. •