

L'usage de tout système électronique ou informatique est interdit dans cette épreuve

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Stay at Home Europe

Handcuffs? Interrogation? Woe to the foreigner who arrives in America without the proper credentials.

Like other British citizens, Ali Hasan did not require a visa when he landed at John F. Kennedy International Airport in May. An employee of Human Rights Watch, he was en route to the organization's New York headquarters. He had traveled to America repeatedly on the same British passport. Yet on this trip, an immigration official took Hasan aside because his passport read Born: Karachi, Pakistan. As he was fingerprinted and photographed, Hasan explained in his impeccable Oxford accent he was a British citizen who had lived in the United Kingdom since he was 12. Came the response: "You are obviously not British enough."

The United States may have been built on welcoming the tired, poor, huddled masses, but now the door is slamming even on the educated elite. These days, the Statue of Liberty might as well hold up a sign that says GO BACK. Since 9-11 the United States has introduced a series of measures aimed at better screening and monitoring of foreigners, going so far as to register males between 16 and 45 from "countries of concern" (chiefly Arab, Muslim and Middle Eastern nations, as well as North Korea and parts of sub-Saharan Africa). Even European passport-holders accustomed to sailing through immigration are increasingly facing suspicion and, often, outright hostility when they arrive. As America pulls up its welcome mat, it is in danger of further alienating some of its closest allies. "Even foreign-exchange students from France are being rejected by host families," says Clyde Prestowitz, author of *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions*. "I can't imagine anything dumber than such a superficial, primitive, emotional reaction."

For years, some 27 countries, most of them in Western Europe, enjoyed what is known as the Visa Waiver Program, which allowed their residents to visit America on business or pleasure for up to 90 days without a visa. No longer. Beginning Oct. 1 all Europeans must possess a new machine-readable digital passport if they want to enter the United States without a visa.

Otherwise, they must obtain a visa—in person—from a U.S. embassy or consulate. (Residents of Greece and Turkey will need a visa regardless.) The plan was written up before 9-11 and scheduled to go into effect in 2007. But it was pushed up after the terrorist attacks, leaving many foreign governments scrambling.

Éric PAPE, NEWSWEEK July 28, 2003