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Dr. George H. Atkinson  
Science and Technology Advisor  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear George,

I write as the President of the International Council for Science (ICSU) to express grave concern about the continuing restrictions placed on scientists' participation in international scientific meetings that is resulting from current U.S. visa policies. These policies are having unintended consequences: they have erected a major barrier to the progress of science and to the free and open exchange of scientific knowledge that the U.S. has traditionally championed. In the end, the participation of scientists from around the world in scientific conferences, symposia and other meetings strengthens democracy and benefits all citizens. The U.S. has unintentionally become a major impediment to global scientific progress instead of a strong supporter of the open exchange of knowledge for the betterment of citizens of the world. I understand the rationale for the instigation of these policies, but also know that their original formulation is causing undue and unintended consequences. The global scientific community requests your assistance in bring balance to U.S. visa policies. We are hopeful that America's historic support of science and its powerful potential to improve society around the world might be reestablished.

Science is by its nature international. The science community has a strong tradition of *open publication of results from scientific research, collaboration in large international research programmes, open debates and discussions at scientific symposia and congresses.* This international collaboration and the associated free and open exchange and challenge of new knowledge are essential for the creation of new knowledge. As you know well, this new knowledge in turn drives the economic and social development of nations.

ICSU has a long and proud tradition of facilitating and supporting international cooperation within the science community. Science transcends national boundaries; it is indeed universal. One of ICSU's core principles is the Principle of the Universality of Science. This principle is defined in ICSU's statutes and has been a cornerstone for policy and action.

The Principle of the Universality of Science is fundamental to scientific progress. This principle embodies freedom of movement, association, expression and communication for scientists. In pursuing its objectives in support of the rights and responsibilities of scientists, ICSU actively upholds this principle, and, in doing so, opposes any

discrimination on the basis of factors such as ethnic origin, religion, citizenship, language, political stance, gender or age. ICSU does not accept disruption of its own activities by statements or actions that intentionally or otherwise prevent the application of this principle.

The prevention of *bona fide* scientists' attendance at international scientific meetings counters this Principle of Universality. U.S. visa policies are doing just that. ICSU has already expressed concern about this problem. In September 2001 ICSU's President Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa of Japan and the Chairman of the ICSU Committee on the Freedom in the Conduct of Science, Professor James C. I. Dooge from Ireland, wrote to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to point out the potential problems relating to the security measures introduced by the United States.

More recently, (3 December 2003) one of the ICSU international scientific unions, the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP), wrote to Dr. John H. Marburger, Director of OSTP, stating that "if scientists are excluded from attending IUPAP sponsored international conferences by a host country on ground of national origin, IUPAP should not sponsor any further events in that country until such exclusions have been eliminated". IUPAP concludes that under the current restrictions, IUPAP cannot guarantee its sponsorship of future US-based conferences. ICSU is concerned that other ICSU bodies will make similar recommendations should the current problems with US visa procedures not be addressed.

We also note the "Statement and Recommendations on Visa Problems Harming America's Scientific, Economic, and Security Interest" of 12 May 2004 in which more than 20 scientific, higher-education and engineering groups in the US have urged the US government to adopt some practical recommendations for solving the current visa-processing crisis.

The U.S. is the premier scientific nation. The international scientific community depends on close ties and collaboration with the U.S. scientific community. This role makes it all the more important for our nation to lead in its facilitation and support of the free and open exchange of scientific information and of scientists. It is my hope that the U.S. government can find appropriate solutions to the current visa problems in a way that strongly and truly supports the development of science while also addressing its legitimate security interests.

I appreciate your efforts to resolve the problems, request resolution of the current difficulties and offer my support toward those ends.

Sincerely,

Jane Lubchenco  
President

Cc: ICSU Officers: H. Yoshikawa (Japan) Past-President, G. Mehta (India) President-Elect, A.M. Cetto (Mexico) Secretary General, P. Tyson (South Africa), Vice President, D. Parry (New Zealand) Vice President, R. Elliott (U.K.) Treasurer, T. Rosswall (Sweden) Executive Director

Bruce Alberts, President, U.S. National Academy of Sciences  
John Marburger, Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Warren Washington, Chair, National Science Board

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR VISAS

As background for our Council discussion of the visa situation, I had asked the organizers of two conferences that were held in the US this summer to let me know how things went. Both of these conferences followed the US Liaison Committee's advice and registered the conferences with the National Academy of Sciences, [http://www7.nationalacademies.org/visas/Organizing\\_a\\_Meeting.html#P41\\_2615](http://www7.nationalacademies.org/visas/Organizing_a_Meeting.html#P41_2615), and kept in touch with the staff person there and also with Amy Flatten, the APS Director of International Affairs, who kept in touch with people at the State Department. If anyone notified the conference organizers that they were having problems with their visas, they were asked to send the needed information for the National Academies assistance program. Most did this, but some did not.

The results were surprisingly benign.

In the final report for the Semiconductor Conference in July, 2 people were denied visas, one Chinese and one Russian, and 6 visas were pending when the conference started. Of these, none started the visa application process at least 3 months prior to the conference as IUPAP and the US Liaison committee have strongly recommended. The two who were denied also started somewhat late, but this might not have made a difference. (4 people from China and 21 from Russia attended.) Attached is the report from the NAS.

For the Exotic Nuclei and Atomic Masses conference in September, it appears that everyone who communicated with the conference organizers has received his or her visa, but that one person dropped out because he didn't want to give up his passport for a long time. I have attached the report from the conference organizer, Carl Gross. They expect about 250 people to attend.

It is clear that many people had difficulties. It is also clear that the conference organizers and the NAS people worked very hard to achieve such good results.

The bottom line is that for these two conferences two visas were denied for the conference that had about 1000 participants. This doesn't seem to be a good basis for denying sponsorship for 2005 conferences in the US. If you would like me to try to gather more information, please let me know what you would like. As far as I know, the only other 2004 IUPAP conference scheduled for the US is in December.

Best regards,  
Judy

CLOSED CASES

Days Delayed	Last Name	First Name	Citizenship	Consulate and Country	Date of Application	Date of Interview	Date Reported to State	Status	Status Category	Date Visa Granted	Case Description
14	Wu	Hua	China	Berlin, Germany	5/5/04	5/5/04	6/14/04	Closed	Denied, action taken	7/13/04	NA 7/14/04: DOS-refused 214b 7/15/05: Denied, will interview NA again no 7/20 7/14/04: DOS-visa issued 7/13/04 7/13/04
14	Kruglova	Marina	Russia	Moscow, Russia	5/28/04	6/21/04		Closed	Denied, no action taken		
14	Dvurechenskiy	Anatoly	Russia	Moscow, Russia	3/2/04	3/11/04	6/21/04	Closed	Granted, action taken		
13	Shubina	Tatiana	Russia	St. Petersburg, Russia	3/11/04	4/8/04	5/21/04	Closed	Granted, action taken	7/20/04	7/14/04: DOS-case on hold 7/14/04: DOS-contact post for 7/20/04 more info
11	Radulovic	Nenad	Montenegro	Copenhagen, Denmark	4/30/04	4/30/04	6/14/04	Closed	Granted, action taken		
10	Wang	Jiannong	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China	4/20/04	4/20/04	6/3/04	Closed	Granted, action taken	7/9/04	7/14/04: Visa granted but trip canceled due to delay 7/9/04 7/14/04: DOS-visa issued 7/9/04
8	Zhuraviev	Konstantin	Russia	Moscow, Russia	4/23/04	5/7/04	6/21/04	Closed	Granted, action taken	7/9/04	7/14/04: DOS-visa issue 7/9/04 7/14/04: DOS-visa issued
8	Yakunin	Mikhail	Russia	Ekaterinburg, Russia	5/20/04	6/10/04	7/13/04	Closed	Granted, action taken	7/12/04	7/12/04

PENDING CASES

Days Delayed	Last Name	First Name	Citizenship	Consulate and Country	Date of Application	Date of Interview	Date Reported to State	Status	Status Category	Date Visa Granted	Case Description
10	Molodtsov	Serguei Lvovich	Russia	Berlin, Germany	4/29/04	4/29/04	7/13/04	Pending	resent to DOS 7/23/04		7/13/04: Email returned 7/14/04: DOS-case pending 7/23/04: Email returned 8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation 8/9/04: Email returned 7/14/04: DOS-case on hold 8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation 7/14/04: DOS-contact post for more info
8	Ge	Weikun	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China	5/7/04	5/7/04	6/21/04	Pending	resent to DOS 7/23/04		8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation 7/16/04: Case reported by AFS from applicant and sent case to DOS 7/22/04: DOS-still pending 8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation
7	Wang	Kaiyou	China	London, UK	5/27/04	5/27/04	7/13/04	Pending	resent to DOS 7/23/04		8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation 7/16/04: Case reported by AFS from applicant and sent case to DOS 7/22/04: DOS-still pending 8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation
6	Dzyubenko	Alexander	Russia	Berlin, Germany	6/10/04	6/10/04	7/19/04	Pending	resent to DOS 8/5/04		
5	Olikh	Jaroslav	Ukraine	Kiev, Ukraine	6/15/04	6/15/04	7/23/04	Pending	Delayed, case reported to State resent to DOS		8/9/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation 8/6/04: Asked applicant for update on visa situation
5	Iqbal	Muhammad Zafar	Pakistan	Islamabad, Pakistan	5/25/04	6/16/04	7/23/04	Pending	resent to DOS 7/30/04		