Immigration Restriction by Remote Control: Visa Denials on the Rise

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In a post on the History News Network, Elliott Young writes on the use of visa denials to regulate immigration by the Trump administration:

"The dramatic rise in visa denials in recent years prevents hundreds of thousands of immigrants and non-immigrant visitors from entering the US. Consular officials have drastically cut the number of non-immigrant visas issued from almost 11 million in 2015 to just over 9 million in 2018. At the same time, new international students in the US dropped by almost 7 percent in the 2017-18 academic year, and the latest data show signs of a continuing decline. Shuttering overseas immigration services will make it even harder for immigrants to apply for legal entry to the US.

Comparing data from 2016 and 2018, analysis by the Cato Institute shows that denials of visas to potential immigrants have increased since Trump took office by more than 37 percent. In 2018, 150,000 more immigrants were refused visas than in 2016.

While the president wants to focus our attention on the dramatic rise in border apprehensions, reaching 467,000 people last year, more than 620,000 were denied immigrant visas.

Today, the backlog in visa applications stands at 4.1 million worldwide, and for Mexicans it is 1.3 million. The wait time for most Mexicans is thus well over 20 years. When people talk about immigrants getting in line and waiting their turn, they need to recognize that that the line has become absurdly long."