

Press Releases: U.S. Researchers Awarded in Thailand

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
February 1, 2018

We congratulate the two U.S. research teams awarded the prestigious Prince Mahidol Awards on January 31 in Bangkok, Thailand. The awards, presented by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, recognized the two teams' remarkable achievements in the fields of medicine and public health.

The annual Mahidol Awards were established in 1992 on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Thailand's Prince Mahidol Adulyadej, grandfather of His Majesty Rama X, the current King of Thailand. Prince Mahidol studied public health and medicine in the United States at MIT and Harvard, and the awards recognize groundbreaking achievements in each of those two fields.

In the field of medicine, the U.S. National Human Genome Research Institute was awarded for its work to map the entirety of the human genome. This collaborative effort, led by the United States, but including researchers from 20 institutions in six countries, enabled subsequent waves of new and important medical research. Dr. Eric Green accepted the award on behalf of the Institute. In the field of public health, the U.S. research team of Professor Porter W. Anderson, Jr., Dr. John B. Robbins, Dr. Rachel Schneerson, and Professor Mathuram Santosham were honored for their important work in developing a vaccine to help prevent childhood meningitis.

This year, the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand celebrate 200 years of friendship, dating from initial government to government contact in 1818. The U.S. is proud and deeply honored that the Prince Mahidol Award 2017 has recognized the contributions and achievements of several American medical and public health professionals. The longstanding health cooperation between our two countries continues to be a key component of the relationship. For more than 60 years, the United States and Thailand have worked hand-in-hand to research and develop vaccines and drugs to prevent and treat diseases, ultimately improving the lives of the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, the people of the United States of America, and the people of the world.

The Department of State applauds the winners for their accomplishments, commends the Thai organizers for their vision of a world safe from disease, and deeply appreciates the enduring spirit of scientific and medical cooperation between the United States and Thailand.

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Press Releases: Recent Events in Kenya

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Washington, DC
February 1, 2018

The United States is gravely concerned by Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga's self-"inauguration" on January 30. We reject actions that undermine Kenya's Constitution and the rule of law. Uhuru Kenyatta was elected as President of the Republic of Kenya on October 26, 2017 in a poll that was upheld by Kenya's Supreme Court. Grievances must be resolved through appropriate legal mechanisms.

We commend the restraint shown by security forces and urge them to continue to refrain from any unnecessary or excessive use of force. Any arrests and prosecutions must be made in full accordance with the rule of law and demonstrate transparent due process. We urge all Kenyans to reject violence and hatred. Protesters have a right to assemble peacefully, to express their views freely, and to hold opinions without interference.

We are also deeply concerned by the Government's action to shut down, intimidate, and restrict the media. Freedom of expression, including for members of the media, is essential to democracy and is enshrined in Kenya's

Constitution. We urge the Government and all Kenyans to respect freedom of expression and implement court orders calling for the restoration of television broadcasts.

We again urge Kenyan leaders and citizens to begin a national conversation to build cohesion and address long-standing issues. The United States continues to support efforts by religious, business, and civil society leaders to begin this conversation in the near future and calls on everyone to participate in this endeavor. The United States stands firmly with the people of Kenya; it is only Kenyans who can find a way to resolve their differences and chart the destiny of this great country.

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Press Releases: Joint Statement on United States of America and European Union Holding the 15th Information Society Dialogue

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
February 1, 2018

The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America and the European Union on the occasion of the 15th Information Society Dialogue.

Begin Text:

On 1 February 2018, Linda Corugedo Steneberg, Directorate General for

Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) Director for International Affairs, European Commission, and Robert Strayer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy, U.S Department of State, co-chaired the 15th Information Society Dialogue between the European Union (EU) and the United States of America. The EU and the United States are close strategic partners sharing common values.

Strengthening the global digital economy is a shared priority and a pillar of our trade relationship. The private sector is a key partner in this endeavor; both delegations participated in discussions with industry representatives on digital and ICT issues.

In the course of the Dialogue, DG CONNECT updated the United States on current and upcoming initiatives related to the Digital Single Market, a priority for the European Commission. The United States likewise updated DG CONNECT on U.S. Information and Communications Technology priorities and perspectives on a broad range of issues. Topics of discussion ranged from cyber-security, 5G, Next Generation Technologies, the telecoms regulatory framework, online platforms to data flows. Each side also explained its approach to important issues of personal data protection and the free flow of data. We also recognized the central role played by data as an engine of digital transformation and a facilitator for transatlantic trade.

The U.S. Delegation provided a briefing on two recent changes in the United States – the Executive Order on the cybersecurity of federal networks and critical infrastructure and the Federal Communications Commission’s Order “Restoring Internet Freedom.”

We agreed on the importance of EU-U.S. coordination in key international fora such as the G7, G20, the International Telecommunication Union, and the Internet Governance Forum. We reaffirmed the need for multi-stakeholder approaches in defending and promoting an open Internet.

The discussions will continue on many levels in light of shared digital transformation goals. The United States agreed to host the next Dialogue. Upcoming high level visits on both sides will complement this year’s successful Information Society Dialogue.

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[Press Releases: On Under Secretary of State Thomas A. Shannon](#)

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
February 1, 2018

I want to congratulate Tom Shannon on his distinguished career, a record of service that spans almost 35 years. His time was well spent.

Tom's counsel has been well received over multiple administrations. I particularly appreciate his depth of knowledge, the role he played during the transition – as Acting Secretary of State during my confirmation and later as Acting Deputy Secretary – and his contributions to our strategy process over the past year.

Tom has served his country at home and abroad. At each post, he has also served his colleagues. Tom exhibits a devotion to service that has and shall continue to inspire State Department colleagues. As he refocuses now on family, I wish Tom and his wife Guisela a happy and healthy retirement.

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[Press Releases: Publication of Final](#)

Rule Changing the Passport Execution Fee

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
January 31, 2018

The Department of State published a [Final Rule](#) on January 31, 2018, that increases the passport execution fee. The passport execution fee will be \$35 starting on April 2, 2018. This rule increased the fee \$10 from the previous \$25 fee. Individuals who apply for a passport renewal by mail will not see a fee increase.

Passport execution involves the submission of a passport application in person to a passport acceptance agent for identity verification and document review. The majority of these passport applications are executed before a U.S. Postal Service passport acceptance agent, and many are executed before state and local government officials as well. Approximately 10 percent of in-person passport applications are executed before a Department of State official.

The Department of State generally sets consular fees at an amount calculated to achieve recovery of the costs to the U.S. government of providing the consular service. The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs determines the cost of each service through a Cost of Service Model. The most recently approved update to the Cost of Service Model showed that the costs associated with passport execution were higher than the current fee of \$25. A similar study conducted by the U.S. Postal Service came to the same conclusion. In both cases, the studies showed that the cost of the passport execution service was close to \$35. The Department seeks to recover for the U.S. government, as far as possible, the cost of providing consular services through the collection of consular fees.

The proposed fee change was published in the Federal Register as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and public comments were accepted until November 18, 2016, 60 days after the Notice's publication. The Final Rule, implementing the change, includes the Department's response to relevant comments received. The passport execution fee change will take effect no earlier than 60 days after receipt of the Final Rule in Congress, pursuant to the Congressional Review Act.

There are no other changes to fees for consular services at this time. Fee information also can be found on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website, travel.state.gov, and on the websites of U.S. embassies and consulates.

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