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Academy Strongly Opposes RIFs of Additional Foreign Service Personnel

Washington, D.C. – The American Academy of Diplomacy considers indefensible the decision of the U.S. Department of State to implement the “reduction in force” (RIF) of more than 200 Foreign Service personnel announced on May 4. At a moment when the United States finds itself embroiled in a military conflict with Iran, navigating one of the most complex military and diplomatic challenges in a generation, the State Department has inexplicably chosen to further denude itself of competence and expertise. This decision, institutional malpractice of the highest order, will directly undermine the ability of our government to keep our nation safe and prosperous and to advance our nation’s interests abroad, including supporting American citizens traveling and living outside of the United States. Perplexingly, even as the Department haphazardly removes experienced Foreign Service Officers with critical skills, it is simultaneously hiring new personnel. As the American Foreign Service Association has [noted](#), this is not sound workforce planning and is a disruption to the career diplomatic cadre at a moment when the country can least afford it.

The Academy is a non-partisan organization made up of retired senior diplomats and other national security professionals who have served in the most consequential positions of U.S. national security, in the United States and abroad. The Academy is dedicated to improving the ability of the Department of State and other national security agencies to serve elected leaders and the American people. For this reason, we convey our firm rejection of the decision to move ahead with these RIFs, urge the Secretary to rescind this action, and urge Congress to protect America’s diplomatic workforce by enacting relevant legislation that would restore and codify the Foreign Affairs Manual provisions that should have governed the RIF process.

Several Academy members who are former ambassadors are willing to speak on the record with interested journalists about the damaging impact of these RIFs on America’s diplomatic workforce and national security. Please contact academy@academyofdiplomacy.org or 202-331-3721 if you are a member of the press who would like to speak with our members about this.

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Strengthening American Diplomacy

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