

# Academy Review

November 2025



## Navigating Chaos on the Hill to Implement Blueprints

In 2025 we continued our active engagement on the Hill to implement recommendations from the *Blueprints for a More Modern Diplomatic Service*, a project of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation. This effort encountered numerous challenges including shifts in leadership, staff, and priorities in both the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committees. AAD President Ron Neumann together with AAD's congressional team including Mike Van Dusen, Graeme Bannerman, Eric Rubin, and AAD's Congressional Liaison Anne Hingeley worked tirelessly to reestablish relations with key committee staff and other congressional offices about major *Blueprints* proposals, such as the Diplomatic Reserve Corps (DRC) and mid-career diplomatic education and training... (continued on p. 2)



## Response to the New Administration

It has been a year of heartbreaks for American Diplomacy with USAID being shuttered, foreign assistance and public diplomacy programs cut off, large numbers of Foreign and Civil Service professionals unceremoniously laid off, collective bargaining rights of national security agencies curtailed, prestigious Foreign Service fellowships discontinued, and senior leadership positions being filled with underqualified party loyalists. These developments could not go unanswered. Throughout the year, the Academy held several virtual **Town Halls**, sent two **letters to Secretary Rubio**, both of which went unanswered, and issued **numerous public statements**. Following the Board's decision, AAD made two contributions to AFSA's Legal Defense Fund and joined USGLC to contribute to the broader effort to protect institutions of American Diplomacy. Several AAD members also formed the **Academy Reaction Group (ARG)** to better coordinate information sharing and public outreach. The Academy will continue these and other efforts to defend non-partisan professional diplomacy.

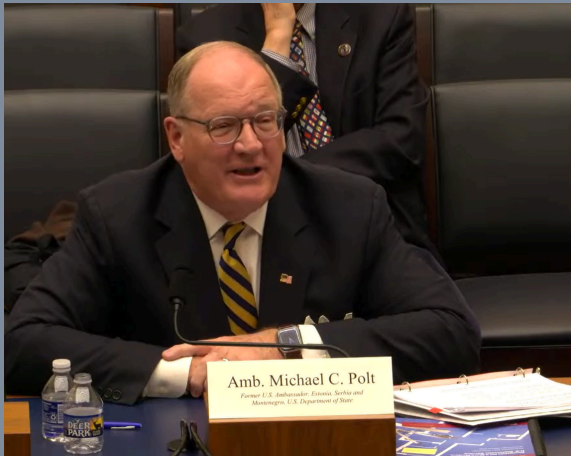


## WE MOVED!

After many memorable years in the Ring Building, the Academy together with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation moved to a new location this summer. **Our new office is at 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 200.** While our address has changed, our mission remains the same. We look forward to welcoming members, partners, and guests to our new space. Please update your records and visit us soon!



# Navigating Chaos on the Hill to Implement *Blueprints*

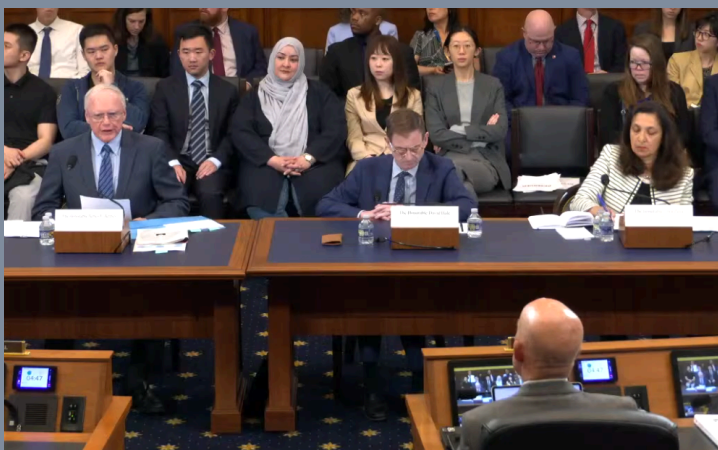


AAD member Mike Polt testifying before the HFAC Subcommittee on Middle East and North Africa, March 25, 2025.

standalone draft bill on the DRC, drawn heavily from the legislative language proposed in the *Blueprints* report. Thus far, none of the text has been included in the House version of the State Department Reauthorization Bill that was marked up by HFAC. However, there is support for including these provisions before this Congress ends.

In the Senate, the 2025 State Department Authorization Bill was included as an amendment in the FY26 NDAA. It also did not include any language on the DRC, but it has a small provision, written by the Academy, that would fence off long-term mid-level training and require Secretary's approval before an FSO could be pulled away from training because of other needs of the Department.

At this point, with the government shutdown in progress, it is unclear what pieces will end up in the final 2025 State Authorization.



AAD member Jim Jeffrey testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, April 30, 2025.

Continued from page 1...

Additionally, AAD members Mike Polt and Jim Jeffrey made a strong case for the Diplomatic Reserve Corps in their testimonies before the HFAC Subcommittee responsible for the State Department's Management issues.

Earlier in the year, the Academy saw some promising developments. Both the Senate and House Republicans were generally supportive of the DRC idea, and the staff of Chairman Mast (R-FL) even asked the Academy for a draft text requiring the State Department to produce a detailed plan for the DRC, which we supplied. In parallel, Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) put forward a

## GEARING UP FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE ACT REFORM

Starting in 2026, the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Brian Mast (R-FL) intends to rewrite the Foreign Service Act of 1980. At this point, AAD does not know the scope or the intention of his plan. However, Chairman Mast's staff just reiterated that they would like to closely consult with the Academy during the entire process. So, the Academy has started its review of the FS Act as it prepares to take full advantage of this opportunity to protect and strengthen American diplomacy.

5 FOREIGN SERVICE ACT OF 1980 (P.L. 96-465) Sec. 101

Sec. 2206. Other conforming amendments.  
Sec. 2207. Model foreign language competence posts.  
CHAPTER 3—AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE \* \* \*  
CHAPTER 4—SAVING PROVISIONS, CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT, AND EFFECTIVE DATE  
Sec. 2401. Saving provisions.  
Sec. 2402. Congressional oversight of implementation.  
Sec. 2403. Effective date.

TITLE I—THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES  
CHAPTER 1—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. [22 U.S.C. 3901] FINDINGS AND OBJECTIVES.—(a) The Congress finds that—

(1) a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States;  
(2) the scope and complexity of the foreign affairs of the Nation have heightened the need for a professional foreign service that will serve the foreign affairs interests of the United States in an integrated fashion and that can provide a resource of qualified personnel for the President, the Secretary of State, and the agencies concerned with foreign affairs;  
(3) the Foreign Service of the United States, established under the Act of May 24, 1924 (commonly known as the Rogers Act) and continued by the Foreign Service Act of 1946, must be preserved, strengthened, and improved in order to carry out its mission effectively in response to the complex challenges of modern diplomacy and international relations;  
(4) the members of the Foreign Service should be representative of the American people, aware of the principles and history of the United States and informed of current concerns and trends in American life, knowledgeable of the affairs, cultures, and languages of other countries, and available to serve in assignments throughout the world; and  
(5) the Foreign Service should be operated on the basis of merit principles.

(b) The objective of this Act is to strengthen and improve the Foreign Service of the United States by—

(1) assuring, in accordance with merit principles, admission through impartial and rigorous examination, acquisition of career status only by those who have demonstrated their fitness through successful completion of probationary assignments, effective career development, advancement and retention of the ablest, and separation of those who do not meet the requisite standards of performance;  
(2) fostering the development and vigorous implementation of policies and procedures, including affirmative action programs, which will facilitate and encourage (A) entry into and advancement in the Foreign Service by persons from all segments of American society, and (B) equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or disability;

May 5, 2025

As Amended Through P.L. 118-159, Enacted December 23, 2024



# OUTREACH PROGRAMS

## University Outreach Programs

Throughout 2025, the Academy continued to implement its recurring outreach programs at four universities.

In February, AAD member Patrick Duddy braved winter storms to travel from North Carolina to Moscow, ID for a weeklong AAD program at University of Idaho. As part of his visit, he gave the Martin Forum address on US Relations with Venezuela, taught a short course on inter-American relations, and met with international studies and business students. Also in February, Ron Neumann travelled to University of Miami for a two-day program made possible through the efforts and generosity of AAD member Chuck Cobb. The program included multiple classroom visits, a lunch with select students and faculty, and a public lecture during which Neumann and Cobb held a fireside chat giving students an inside look at the work of a diplomat. They particularly emphasized the sense of meaning and purpose that comes from a career in public service.

On September 15-16, AAD members John Beyrle, Rose Gottemoeller, Cathy Novelli, and Ron Neumann visited the University of Michigan for a packed program, which included class visits at two local high schools, meetings with undergraduate students, and a public discussion on the topic of “Europe and America: Where are we and where are we going?”

On October 26-29, Kathleen Doherty, Philip Reeker, Susan Reichle, and Ron Neumann travelled to Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska for meetings with students, classroom visits, and a large public discussion about “Diplomacy: Changing Fundamentally or Just Revolving?” To wrap up the year, AAD member Donna Hrinak will travel to Florida on November 17-19 for a second program at University of Miami.



## Upcoming Outreach Programs

**Nov. 17-19, 2025**

University of Miami Program featuring Donna Hrinak

**Nov. 21, 2025**

AAD Monticello Conference “Representing a Nation: The Making of a Diplomat” featuring Marc Grossman, Alonzo Fulgham, James Jeffrey, Carol Perez and Ron Neumann.

**Feb. 23-25, 2026**

AAD Ambassadors Forum at Georgia Southern University featuring Deborah McCarthy, Ron Neumann, Philip Reeker, and Kathleen Stephens.

# OUTREACH PROGRAMS (continued)



## Sisco Memorial Forum

In 2025, the Academy's Sisco Memorial Forum travelled to Tempe, Arizona where AAD member Michael Polt hosted the speakers in his capacity as ASU Ambassador-in-Residence and co-founder of the Leadership, Diplomacy and National Security Lab. The Forum featured AAD members Laura Kennedy, Deborah McCarthy, and Ron Neumann, who spoke to the students and faculty of Arizona State University about "America First Foreign Policy: What to Expect from the New Administration's Diplomacy." In addition to the main public event, AAD speakers also participated in several meetings with ASU's students and faculty and paid a visit to Tempe High School.



## UC Riverside DC Foreign Policy Seminar

On September 8-12, 2025, the Academy welcomed the second cohort of 21 undergraduate Public Policy students from UC Riverside into its new office for a weeklong seminar on various topics in foreign policy and diplomacy. Each day, they had three 1.5 or 2-hour sessions with AAD members. In the course of the week they heard from 14 different speakers: Ron Neumann, Graeme Bannerman, Allan Mustard, Arnold Chacon, Tom Countryman, Lee Feinstein, Tibor Nagy, Alonzo Fulgham, Alexander Arvizu, Jo Ellen Powell, Aaron Williams, Maria Reissaus, Cathy Novelli, and Susan Ziadeh. This program has been generously endowed by a UC Riverside alumnus and a former FSO Robert Heath, who together with another donor put aside enough funds for eight more years of such visits. The Academy and UCR are already working on the next year's program.



## High School Outreach Programs

The Academy now has outreach programs at three different high schools. In March, Ron Neumann inaugurated a day-long program at Wyoming High School in Ohio, which came about because of the efforts by AAD member and WHS alum Tom Boyatt. Neumann spoke to an assembly of over 150 juniors and seniors about the importance of American diplomacy, visited classrooms, and chatted with dozens of students during lunch. The program was a wonderful opportunity to engage high school students on the role of diplomacy in American foreign policy. On November 6-7, Susan Kosinski Fritz will visit the Kent School in Connecticut for our recurring annual two-day program that includes student engagement, classroom visits, and a formal address. And on November 13-14, Alexander Arvizu will do a similar two-day visit at the Hotchkiss School.





## The General & The Ambassador Podcast University Outreach

In 2025, the Academy was able to bring its podcast The General and the Ambassador® to two universities. On February 7, AAD member Don Yamamoto travelled to Indiana University's Hamilton-Lugar School to discuss US engagement with Somalia and the Horn of Africa as well as human rights issues in US-China relations. Then, on February 18, AAD member Stu Jones visited University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill to speak about "Iraq: The Diplomatic and Military Fight Against ISIS."



## American Diplomat Podcast

This year, the American Diplomat Podcast co-hosted by AAD member Pete Romero and writer/producer Laura Bennett continued to record and post new content from its new home at Arizona State University with support from the Academy, AFSA, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Its latest episodes cover a wide range of subjects, including tariffs, insurgencies, trade wars, the war in Gaza, the tribulations of American diplomatic institutions, and the changing US relations with friends, allies, and enemies. In total, Pete and Laura released 40 new episodes in 2025, reaching over 1.2 million all-time downloads and sporting over 5000 followers on Apple podcasts. Whether you're new to the Academy or have been a member for decades, make sure to tune in, follow, and tell all your friends!



## AAD INTERN PROJECTS

Every semester, AAD welcomes interns to its team. In addition to assisting the Academy with its day-to-day work, our interns also get to design and implement their individual projects. Below is the list of outstanding and diverse projects completed by our interns.

### ***VIRTUAL PANEL "DIPLOMACY VS. MILITARY ACTION: RETHINKING COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES"***

On April 17, 2025, Academy intern Aline Boutros, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, held a virtual discussion centered around "Diplomacy vs. Military Action: Rethinking Counter-Terrorism Strategies." The panel, moderated by Ron Neumann, featured AAD members Susan Ziadeh, Douglas Lute, and Dr. Ken Yamashita.

### ***THE FUTURE OF DIPLOMACY VIDEO SERIES***

As part of her internship, Virginia Tech student Marlaina Garczynski (Summer '25) produced a series of short videos featuring six AAD members discussing their views on the future of diplomacy, from climate change to artificial intelligence and beyond.

### ***DIPLOMACY AND THE ARTS***

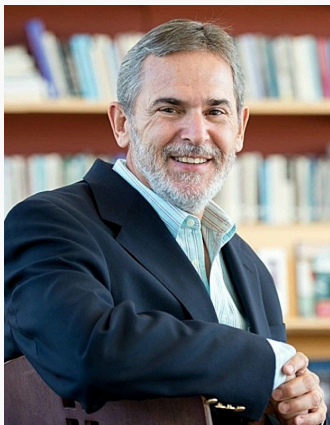
Summer '25 intern Evan Stubbs, a student at University of Pennsylvania, wrote an article about the relationship between diplomacy and the arts based on his interviews with ten AAD members.

# IN MEMORIAM

The Academy lost several great friends and colleagues this year. We thank them for their friendship and service and honor their memory.



**Richard Armitage**  
Apr. 26, 1945 – Apr. 13, 2025



**Richard Boucher**  
Dec. 13, 1951 – Jun. 27, 2025



**Ruth Davis**  
May 28, 1943 – May 3, 2025



**Lino Gutierrez**  
Mar. 26, 1951 – May 3, 2025



**William Harrop**  
Feb. 19, 1929 – Jun. 6, 2025



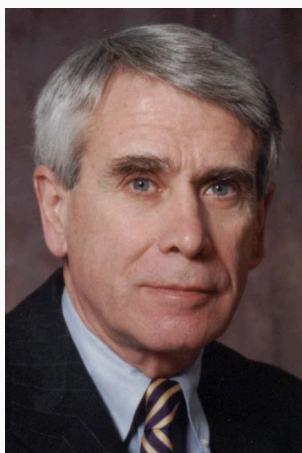
**James Keith**  
Jun. 20, 1957 – Apr. 8, 2025



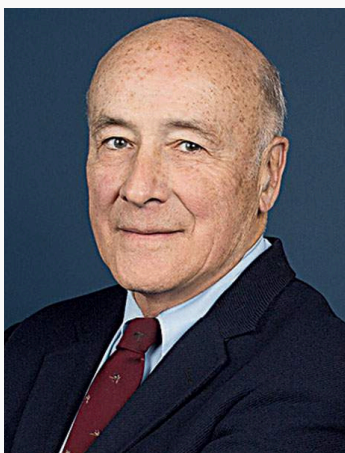
**Melvyn Levitsky**  
Mar. 19, 1938 – May 17, 2025



**William H. Luers**  
May 15, 1929 – May 10, 2025



**Thomas M.T. Niles**  
Sept. 22, 1939 – Apr. 30, 2025



**Joseph S. Nye**  
Jan. 19, 1937 – May 6, 2025



**William H. Webster**  
Mar. 6, 1924 – Aug. 8, 2025



**Frank G. Wisner, Jr.**  
Jul. 2, 1938 – Feb. 24, 2025



## Annual Meeting

On May 29, 2025, the Academy once again welcomed over 90 members and guests to annual meeting and luncheon, which featured AFSA President Tom Yazdgerdi as the keynote speaker. Yazdgerdi updated the Academy on AFSA's efforts to defend professional Foreign Service and engage with the new leadership of the State Department. Academy chairman Thomas Shannon also gave remarks on the overall state of the Academy, and committee members presented updates on their work.



## Member Lunches

Throughout the year, the Academy hosted several exciting member events at DACOR Bacon House. In February, Alina Romanowski spoke about "Shifting Sands of U.S.-Iraq Policy." In June, Bill Burns addressed the membership about "America and a World in Transformation." And in September, Reuben Brigety briefed AAD members on the state of US-South African relations. And we are not quite done for the year yet! On December 16, come to hear AAD's new member George Kent speak about "Ride4Ukraine: Engaging Americans on Ukraine-Russia Along the TransAmerica Bike Trail." The Academy is grateful to all our speakers and members who have attended these discussions in person and via Zoom! We are always on the lookout for new topics and speakers, so if you are interested in speaking or have ideas about a topic, please let us know.



## Future Member Events

**Dec 16, 2025**

Member Lunch with new member George Kent on "Ride4Ukraine: Engaging Americans on Ukraine-Russia Along the TransAmerica Bike Trail" at DACOR Bacon House

**Feb 10, 2026**

New Members Lunch at DACOR Bacon House

# NEW MEMBERS

The 2025 New Member Election cycle set several new records. **The Academy elected 50 new members** this year, its largest new member class ever. The Membership committee, chaired by Frank Almaguer, reviewed numerous nominations, ultimately approving 55 to be put to a vote by AAD membership, another record. An unprecedented number of 97 current AAD members participated in the nomination process either as nominators or seconders, and 270 of eligible AAD members cast their vote, which translated into a record turnout of 70.1%.

The 2025 New Member Class is the largest in AAD's history and once again includes a very accomplished group:

- Notable numbers: 46% women, 10% Asian American, 8% African-American, and 2% Hispanic.
- US agencies: Department of State, USAID, Department of Defense, National Security Council, US Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, EPA, US Army, US Navy, Peace Corps, US Senate, US House of Representatives, Army Corps of Engineers
- NGOs and Think Thanks: Too many to include here!
- Int'l Agencies: The United Nations, International Organization for Migration
- University Affiliations: American University, George Washington University, Denver University, William & Mary Law School, Johns Hopkins University, Tufts University, University of Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, University of Washington.

The Academy's leadership and staff will officially welcome the new members at the **New Members Lunch on February 10, 2026**.

## Staff Update

This year, the Academy welcomed two new staff members. **Morgan Kogan**, who previously interned at the Academy, returned as our new Program & Finance Assistant, replacing Sienna Ross, who left for other opportunities. Morgan has done a remarkable job in assisting with the Academy's finances and rapidly growing outreach programs, as well as navigating two of the most intense intern recruitment rounds in history.

In September, we also welcomed our new Graduate Fellow **Josh Davis**, who recently completed his M.A. in Conflict Resolution at Georgetown University. Josh has taken over for Kobe Young, who left to do an internship at the CSIS PONI program and wrap up his M.A. at GW.

This year, our internship program became a lot more competitive as we received nearly 500 applications for both the summer and the fall. We are also successfully attracting candidates from a wider selection of universities across the country. In the winter, our interns were Kaitlyn Maloy from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Aline Boutros from University of Texas at Austin. In the summer, we had Danica Raich from American University, Marlaina Garczynski from Virginia Tech, and Evan Stubbs from University of Pennsylvania. And finally, this fall, our intern team includes **Camille Day** (Pepperdine University), **Colin FitzSimmons** (George Washington University), and **Maria Ryan** (College of the Holy Cross). We are grateful for their enthusiastic contributions to the work of the Academy!



Morgan Kogan



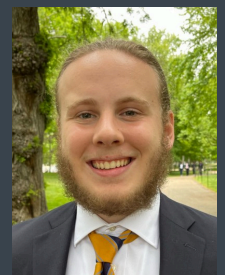
Josh Davis



Camille Day



Maria Ryan



Colin FitzSimmons