September 18, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C. St. NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We understand that the State Department reorganization plan forwarded to OMB has been deemed "pre-decisional" and will therefore not be made public.

On behalf of the Board of the American Academy of Diplomacy, a non-partisan and non-governmental organization comprising senior former career and non-career diplomatic practitioners, we ask that you reconsider this decision and make your recommendations available for public comment. The Academy, whose only interest is in strengthening American diplomacy, is already on record supporting many needed changes in the State Department’s structure and staffing. Indeed, we would hope to make the Academy’s extensive experience available and relevant to any conversations about the future of the Department so that we might be able to support the outcome of this process, just as we supported your decision on reducing special envoys. We cannot do so if your vision and plans remain publicly unavailable.

As the recent report prepared by your consultants very properly highlighted, the Civil Service and Foreign Service employees who work for you are patriotic, dedicated, public servants. Many have gone in harm’s way and more will do so. For nearly eight months these employees, and many of their families, have lived in a state of suspended animation, not knowing how reorganization will affect their lives and careers. In light of their sacrifices for our Country, it strikes us as unfair to ask them to remain in this limbo for additional months while the Administration considers in private your recommendations for change. Keeping your decisions from public view will only fuel the suspicion and low morale which now affects so many in the Department. We ask that you be transparent with those most affected by your efforts to build efficiency and expertise. Not doing so prejudices their future support. Your leadership and America’s diplomacy would be better served by allowing public comment. It is on that basis that we respectfully ask that you reconsider this decision.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Pickering  
Chairman

Ronald E. Neumann  
President