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Academy Endorses Congress Efforts to Get Diplomats Out of Fortress Embassies

Washington, D.C. – The American Academy of Diplomacy applauds the bipartisan effort in the Congress to change the risk paradigm for U.S. diplomats and strongly endorses the bipartisan bill H.R. 6034 (“Diplomatic Support and Security Act of 2021”), which seeks to update the language and structure of the Accountability Review Board (ARB) process. The Academy also strongly endorses the parallel bipartisan Senate bill S.A. 4456 (“Diplomatic Support and Security Act of 2021”), introduced as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022.

The need for this effort has been endorsed by former senior diplomats, generals, admirals, and USAID administrators. The Academy greatly appreciates ongoing and past congressional support for the State Department to build embassies that keep our personnel safe, but American diplomats must find ways to mitigate risk and still get outside Embassy walls to advance American national security goals. As Secretary of State Blinken recently pointed out, American diplomats find that it is “harder than it needs to be for them to do the kind of on-the-ground, person-to-person diplomacy that is so essential...A world of zero risk is not a world in which American diplomacy can deliver. We have to accept risk, and manage it smartly.” Finding new ways to work safely in a dangerous world requires working with Congress for new authorities and policies.

The American Academy of Diplomacy is a non-partisan and non-governmental organization of former senior diplomats including both career and non-career appointees. It is dedicated to strengthening the professionalism of diplomacy and explaining to the American people the importance of diplomacy.

This statement has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Academy.

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Strengthening American Diplomacy