

# Academy Review

December 2024



## Member Match Challenge: We Need Your Help!

This year, the Academy's annual #GivingTuesday fundraiser received an unexpected boost when two very generous AAD members – Thomas Boyatt and Carol Sisco – put forward a **\$35,000 Member Match Challenge**, which will double all contributions between now and December 31, dollar-for-dollar up to \$35,000.

Since the launch of the Challenge on November 19, with the help of many of you, **we have raised \$18,120**, and we are grateful for every contribution! No matter how large or small, each contribution helps us meet our goal and paves the ground for our work and projects in 2025 and beyond.



Please join this effort as it is not too late! Click or scan the QR code to go to our website to Donate to #GivingTuesday.

## 2024 BY THE NUMBERS

- 52 new podcast episodes
- 12 universities engaged
- 5 high schools engaged
- 17 new members elected
- 8 member events held
- 40 congressional offices engaged
- 74 RSOs briefed

Read more about these numbers throughout this newsletter.



## 2024 Awards Luncheon

The 35th Annual Awards Luncheon started with a big surprise as the **Secretary of State Antony Blinken** made a brief appearance to welcome the Luncheon guests and to congratulate this year's award recipients. Following the Secretary's remarks and departure, the event's official host **Acting Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs John Bass** presided over the lunch and the ceremony. This year, the Academy presented its top award, the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Award for Excellence in Diplomacy, to **Ambassador Anne Patterson**, recognizing her decades-long devotion to the enterprise of diplomacy across many difficult and dangerous assignments.

The Academy's other top award – the Henrieta Fore Award for Excellence in Development – honored **President Jimmy Carter** for his life-long dedication to development. Earlier this year, President Carter turned 100 and his health sadly kept him from attending the ceremony, so the CEO of the Carter Center Paige Alexander accepted the award on his behalf, delivering poignant remarks that celebrated his life and achievements.

**Charles Trueheart** received the 2024 Douglas Dillon Book Award for his memoir *Diplomats at War*, which explores the life in the Foreign Service and the work of two central American diplomats in Vietnam in 1963 – US Ambassador to Vietnam Frederick Nolting and his Deputy Chief of Mission William Trueheart. Finally, **Evan Gershkovich** of The Wall Street Journal and **David Ignatius** of The Washington Post received the 2024 Ross Media Award for their distinguished reporting and analysis of foreign affairs.

It was a great celebration of excellence across the different facets of diplomacy and a heartwarming reunion for many AAD members and friends.

# Blueprints Implementation: Political Realities Derail Progress

In 2024, the Academy saw a lot of ups and downs in its implementation of the Blueprints for a More Modern U.S. Diplomatic Service. Early congressional consultations revealed that in 2024 any proposals requiring new funding would be non-starters and that there is little appetite for additional training positions until the Department fills existing vacancies at posts. So, instead, the Academy focused its efforts on a budget-neutral proposal that would fence off the existing long-term training positions. The Academy also continued to educate congressional staffers about the importance of the Diplomatic Reserve Corps while waiting for the congressionally mandated report from the Department.



In April, the Academy engaged Anne Hingeley to serve as the main congressional liaison for the project. Anne brought with her nearly three decades of senior congressional relations experience from US Institute of Peace, NAAA-American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and Bannerman & Associates, Inc., and her expertise and involvement immediately had a huge impact in the project's congressional efforts in this difficult congressional environment.

With Anne's help, over the course of 2024, the Academy conducted over 40 meetings with congressional representatives and their staffs. By early summer, the Academy had its legislative language on fencing off existing training slots and requiring the Department to provide a strategy for establishing and maintaining a "training float" included into the working draft of the FY25 NDAA.

Unfortunately, as the year drew to a close, despite the early progress and continued reassurances from the committee staff, in December the Academy suddenly found out that its language was dropped from the NDAA. After some investigation, the Academy was able to ascertain that it was apparently due to minor staff differences in the last days and not due to some inherently partisan opposition, although the details are still uncertain. But the Academy is not giving up and will start the efforts anew in the new year.

On the issue of the Diplomatic Reserve Corps, in June of 2024, the State Department finally issued its report to Congress on the Diplomatic Reserve Corps, in which it generally recommended establishing a Reserve Corps, although their proposal is significantly smaller than recommended by the Blueprints report. However, recognizing the difficult congressional budget climate, the Academy still saw this development as progress, as the Department's proposal would still require the same legislative action. Once the initial Reserve is established, the program could be scaled in the long run.

With that realization in mind, on October 15, the Academy partnered with Partnership for Secure America to organize a lunch briefing for congressional staffers featuring Tibor Nagy and Jamie Foggo on the subject of "More Diplomacy, Less Military: What Does It Look Like in Africa?" The event drew a substantial interest among the staffers, with 42 actual attendees, who represented 37 distinct congressional offices, with eleven on the Republican side and twenty-six on the Democrat side. Twelve of the attendees were from the Senate, and 30 from the House. The Academy will continue its work on the Reserve Corps in 2025.





# Commercial Diplomacy

## CABDA Implementation

The issue of commercial diplomacy continues to be an important one for the Academy. In June, AAD welcomed the Administration's announcement about the formation of the Economic Diplomacy Action Group (EDAG), as mandated by the 2019 CABDA Act ("Championing American Business Through Diplomacy Act"). Unfortunately, this crucial step was rather belated, and no other actions followed this initial roll-out. As this Administration wraps up its work, the Academy is refocusing its commercial diplomacy efforts back on Congress.

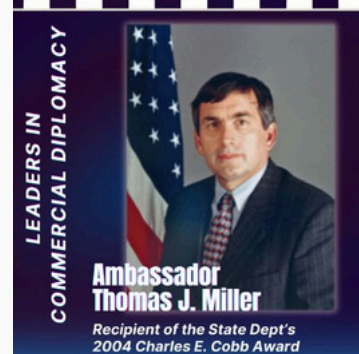
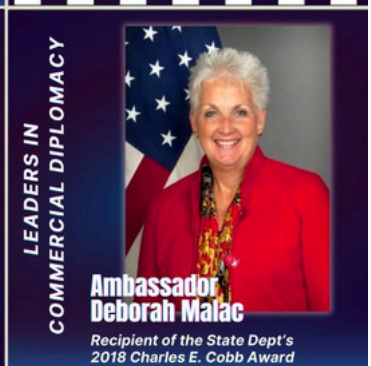
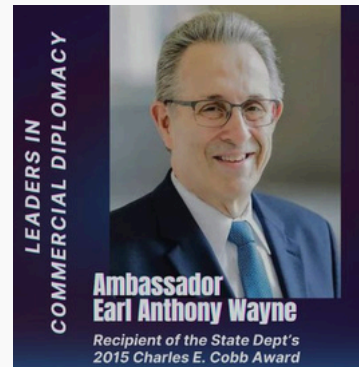
## Charles E. Cobb Award

Earlier this year, AAD member Ambassador Chuck Cobb entrusted the Academy with managing the endowment that he generously created for the State Department's annual Charles E. Cobb Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development and Commercial Diplomacy. The award recognizes outstanding contributions toward innovative and successful trade development and export promotion for the U.S. by a career ambassador serving abroad or those who have served as Charge d'Affaires for at least six months.

This year, the Cobb Award went to [Troy Fitrell, U.S. Ambassador to Guinea](#). AAD members Chuck Cobb, Deborah McCarthy and Ronald Neumann were a part of this year's selection committee chaired by the Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs.

In addition to the involvement in the selection of the new Cobb Award recipients, AAD also began featuring past Cobb Award recipients on its social media channels in a series titled "**Leaders in Commercial Diplomacy.**" So far, AAD profiled commercial achievements of Ambassadors Tony Wayne, Tom Miller, and Deborah Malac.

Stay tuned for new Cobb Award profiles in 2025!



## BRSO Ambassadorial Panels

The Academy continues to work with the Diplomatic Security part of FSI to facilitate ambassadorial panels as part of the Basic RSO course for agents preparing for their first overseas deployment. In 2024, during 4 separate sessions, two Academy members spoke to each class, offering new ARSOs a unique chance to get a front-office perspective before they deploy. The Academy is grateful to those Academy members who gave their time to participate in the 2024 program: Larry Andre, Piper Campbell, Arnold Chacon, Chris Henzel, Philip Kosnett, Mary Beth Leonard, Eric Rubin and Matthew Tueller. Overall, AAD members were able to brief 74 outgoing ARSOs.

# OUTREACH PROGRAMS



## Sisco Memorial Forum

In 2024, the Academy's Sisco Memorial Forum returned to the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, where Academy member Barbara Stephenson is the Vice Provost for Global Affairs, Chief Global Officer and the Head of The Diplomacy Initiative. This year's discussion addressed an important question of "What Is Environmental Diplomacy?" and featured AAD members Robert Blake, Alonzo Fulgham and Anthony "Bud" Rock. In addition to the main public event, AAD speakers also met with the students to answer questions on current events and careers in diplomacy. Overall, the program's attendees walked away with a greater appreciation of the multidimensional, coalition-building nature of environmental diplomacy.



## Arthur Ross Discussion at Monticello

On November 14, the Academy returned to Jefferson's Monticello for yet another thought-provoking public discussion in collaboration with the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies and the University of Virginia Center for Politics. This year, the program focused on the subject of "Elections and Diplomacy: Charting a Smooth Course Through Turbulent Electoral Waters." The day started with an informal student roundtable that gave a group of UVA students an opportunity to engage with the speakers. The official program commenced with a lecture by Dr. Tyson Reeder, who talked about the foreign interference in early American elections during James Madison's time. Following Dr. Reeder's eye-opening presentation, a panel of Academy members consisting of Graeme Bannerman, Philip Kosnett and Wanda Nesbitt, discussed their wide-ranging experiences with election observation missions, managing election fallout in a host country, and explaining American elections to foreigners. In the afternoon, Academy Chairman Thomas Shannon delivered a captivating keynote address, in which he reflected on the intersection of elections and diplomacy, both foreign and domestic, and how that intersection impacts the image and interests of the US around the world.



## International Leadership of Texas

On October 7, the Academy once again welcomed a group of over 30 high schoolers from the International Leadership of Texas schools at its office for a day-long discussion of foreign affairs and diplomacy. The students heard from AAD members Krishna Urs, Greta Holtz, Tezi Schaffer and John Herbst. Each presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session, during which the students discussed current foreign policy issues and received advice on pursuing careers in diplomacy.





# OUTREACH PROGRAMS

## University Outreach Programs

Throughout 2024, the Academy continued to implement its recurring outreach programs and started several new programs. On October 20-22, AAD members David Satterfield, Jake Wallis, Susan Ziadeh and Ron Neumann visited the University of Michigan for a packed program, which included class visits at Huron High School, meetings with undergraduate students, and a public discussion on the topic of “Essentialities of Peace in the Middle East.” On October 27-30, AAD members Piper Campbell, Harry Thomas, Molly Williamson and Ron Neumann travelled to Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska to speak about “Southeast Asia – US Economics, Security, and Diplomacy.” On November 13-14, Susan Ziadeh also visited Hotchkiss School in Connecticut, where she made a formal presentation on the Middle East and visited several different classes. On December 5-6, Makila James completed a similar visit to Kent School, also in Connecticut, where she was able to connect with students in 5 classes, at mealtimes and in other meetings.



In addition to these recurring programs, the Academy also started a new program at the University of Idaho. Ron Neumann conducted the inaugural visit there in April, and in September, Stephanie Williams spoke at their prestigious annual Borah Symposium. In October, Ron Neumann also spoke at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA.



## Newest Program: UC Riverside Public Policy Seminar in DC

On December 16-20, the Academy welcomed a group of 18 undergraduate Public Policy students from UC Riverside into its office for a week-long seminar on various topics in foreign policy and diplomacy. Every day, they had three 1.5 or 2-hour sessions with AAD members. In the course of the week they heard from 18 different speakers, including Ronald Neumann, Graeme Bannerman, Craig Allen, Arnold Chacon, Paula Dobriansky, Erika Barks-Ruggles, Alonzo Fulgham, Cathy Novelli, Jimmy Kolker, Tibor Nagy, David Shear, Tom Countryman, Jo Ellen Powell, Aaron Williams, Maria Reissaus, Molly Williamson, Pamela Spratlen and Jeffrey DeLaurentis. Thank you to all the speakers for their time and dedication!



This program has been generously endowed by a US Riverside alumnus and a former FSO Robert Heath, who together with another donor put aside enough funds for nine more years of such visits. The Academy looks forward to engaging with more curious and dedicated students from UC Riverside in the years to come.



# OUTREACH PROGRAMS (continued)

## The General & The Ambassador Podcast: Outreach Programs

The university outreach program designed to bring the content of *The General and the Ambassador Podcast* into college classrooms, had a lot more success this year as the Academy was able to complete 8 more programs. Luis Arreaga visited Illinois State University. Geeta Pasi went to University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Ted Osius spoke at Texas Tech University. Ron Neumann and Paul Jones went to Montgomery, AL where they spoke at Troy University and also at Montgomery Catholic High School. Hugo Llorens visited Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT, and Robin Sanders and Kip Ward spoke at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. In 2025, at least 8 more university visits can be carried out with the funding set aside for this program.



## American Diplomat Podcast

This year, the American Diplomat Podcast continued to record and post new content from its new official home at Arizona State University with support from the Academy, the American Foreign Service Association, and the Carnegie Corporation. Its latest episodes cover a wide range of subjects, including AI, space diplomacy, immigration, Mexico, NATO, Ukraine, Russia, Taiwan, and everything in between. In total, the podcast's hosts Pete Romero and Laura Bennett produced 52 new episodes this year, and on April 13, the podcast celebrated its one millionth download!



## Looking Forward To 2025

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Feb. 4-7, 2025   | Program at University of Idaho featuring Amb. Donna Hrinak   |
| Feb. 11, 2025    | New Members Welcome Lunch  |
| Feb. 12-13, 2025 | Program at University of Miami featuring Amb. Ronald Neumann   |
| Feb. 13-14, 2025 | "The General & the Ambassador" program at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill featuring Amb. Stuart Jones |
| Mar. 4-6, 2025   | Sisco Memorial Forum at Arizona State University   |
| Mar. 17-18, 2025 | Program at Wyoming High School in Ohio featuring Amb. Ronald Neumann   |



## Annual Meeting

On June 3, the Academy welcomed almost 100 Academy members to its 2024 Annual Meeting. Over 40 members joined the meeting virtually. Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard R. Verma provided keynote remarks on the successes and challenges of the Department's modernization efforts. Academy Chairman Thomas Shannon and President Ronald Neumann updated members on the overall state of the Academy, and Program Director Maria Reissaus discussed the Academy's widespread outreach efforts. Committee chairs presented updates on their hard work. Chairs of the Audit Committee, the Ross Media Award Committee and the Dillon Book Award Committee encouraged members to join their ranks.



## In Memoriam

The Academy lost several great friends and colleagues since the previous issue of the newsletter – John C. Kornblum (Dec. 21, 2023), Nicholas Veliotes (May 14, 2024), Tina Kaidanow (Oct 16, 2024), and Sheldon Jack Kryz (Oct. 18, 2024). We thank them for their friendship and service and honor their memory.



## Member Lunches

Throughout 2024, the Academy hosted five hybrid Member Lunches as well as one virtual discussion. In January, AAD's 2023 Ross Award recipient Thomas Friedman discussed the Israel-Hamas conflict. In May, Paul Jones talked about Poland's experience with populism. In June, Tom Pickering and Frank Wisner led a virtual discussion of the current state of relations between the US and Iran, and then at the end of the month, Stu Eizenstat discussed his new book *The Art of Diplomacy: How American Negotiators Reached Historic Agreements that Changed the World*. In October, the Academy welcomed John Sullivan to speak about his book *Midnight in Moscow: A Memoir from the Front Lines of Russia's War Against Ukraine*. Finally, in December, Deborah McCarthy shared with the members her experience as the lead US negotiator of the UN Cybercrime Treaty. The Academy thanks its speakers and all who joined in person and via Zoom! If you would like to speak at one of our next member lunches or have a request for a particular topic, please let AAD staff know.



# Staff Update

This year, the Academy saw several staff changes. AAD's Program Associate Katie Azelby, who has been an indispensable member of the team since 2021, left to pursue a fellowship at GAO in connection with her MPA program at George Washington University (GWU). While we wish her all the best in her academic and professional pursuits, we will certainly miss her! Sienna Ross, AAD's full-time Program & Finance Assistant, performs many of Katie's duties.

In August, the Academy welcomed back former intern Kobe Young (Spring 2024) as a year-long part-time Graduate Fellow, as he starts his MA program at GWU.

This year the Academy had another stellar group of interns, who included Kobe Young, (Texas Tech University), Benny Hwang (George Washington University), Abigail Assadi (Georgetown University), Janani Shivakumar (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill), Yulia Hutsul (Georgetown University), and Patrick Alexander (American University). We are grateful for their contributions to the work of the Academy! In January of 2025, the Academy will welcome two new interns – Aline Butros (University of Texas at Austin) and Kaitlyn Maloy (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill).



# MEMBER CORNER

## New members

In 2024, the Academy welcomed 17 new members into its ranks. The Membership Committee, chaired by Janice Jacobs, received numerous nominations, ultimately approving 19 to be put to a vote by the Academy membership. This year's election also achieved the highest turnout on record, as 68.4 percent (258) of eligible AAD members cast their vote. The 2024 New Member Class once again includes a diverse and very accomplished group:

- Notable numbers: 23% women, 11.75% Asian American, 11.75% Hispanic
- US agencies: US Department of State, US Department of Defense, USAID, National Security Council, Peace Corps, Marine Corps, and Congress.
- Int'l Agencies: The United Nations, UN World Food Program, International Telecommunication Union
- NGO and Think Tank Affiliation: Brookings, Council on Foreign Relations, Eurasia Foundation, Far East Lunch Group, Foreign Policy for America, Foreign Service Association of Northern CA, IFES, National Security Leaders of America, USAID Alumni Association, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, US Institute of Peace, Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, Wilson Center.
- University Affiliations: Dartmouth, George Mason University, Georgetown, Indiana University, Vassar College, UC Davis, University of South Florida

The Academy's leadership and staff will officially welcome the new members at the New Members Lunch on February 11, 2025.

## Social Media

The Academy's social media presence continues to grow on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok! The Academy's LinkedIn averages almost 240 new followers and 33,000 post impressions per month, and in June its X account surpassed 5,000 followers! Throughout 2024, the Academy marked Women's History, Black History, Asian American History, Pride, Hispanic Heritage, and Native American History months through special programming that celebrated a diverse representation of its members. The Academy's Summer Reads series has returned to highlight what books members are reading this summer, and because of its popularity had to be extended into Fall Reads. And the ongoing "Mondays With Members" series remains an audience-favorite. Follow the Academy for all things diplomacy!