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The Academy Welcomes Tom Shannon as the New Chairman

Washington, D.C. – The American Academy of Diplomacy is proud to announce that starting in 2022 Ambassador Thomas A. Shannon, Jr. has succeeded Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering as the new Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Academy. Ambassador Shannon’s more than three decades of government service and diplomatic experience as well as prior membership on the Academy’s Board make him particularly well-suited to take on this leadership role. Ambassador Pickering, who served in this role since 2005, will remain a member of the Academy’s Board as Chair Emeritus.

Academy President Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann welcomed the appointment, saying that “anyone taking Tom Pickering’s place has a major task, but Tom Pickering, the board and I are confident that we have found the right skills and dedication in Tom Shannon.”

Ambassador Shannon spent nearly 35 years in the Foreign Service, obtaining the personal rank of Career Ambassador, the highest in the U.S. Foreign Service. During his illustrious career, he served six US presidents and 11 Secretaries of State. In 2016, he was appointed by President Barak Obama to serve as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. During his tenure as Under Secretary, Ambassador Shannon was in charge of bilateral and multilateral foreign policymaking and implementation and oversaw diplomatic activity globally and in our missions to international organizations. He managed the State Department during the presidential transition, led bilateral and strategic stability talks with the Russian Federation, worked with our allies to oversee Iranian compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and expanded US engagement in Central Asia, among other things.

Prior to that appointment, Ambassador Shannon served as Counselor of the Department, U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, and US Deputy Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. His other Foreign Service assignments were at U.S. embassies in Guatemala, Brazil, South Africa, and Venezuela. In Washington, he also previously served as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (2005-2009), Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the National Security Council (2003-2005), Deputy Assistant Secretary of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department of State (2002-2003), and Director of Andean Affairs (2001-2002).

Strengthening American Diplomacy

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Following his retirement from the State Department, Ambassador Shannon joined the law firm Arnold & Porter as Senior International Policy Advisor and Co-Chair of the Global Law and Public Policy Practice. Concurrently, he holds the position of the Charles and Marie Robertson Visiting Professor at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, where he is also a Co-Director of the History and the Practice of Diplomacy Program. Ambassador Shannon serves as the Co-Chair of the Inter-American Dialogue's Board of Directors and Chair of the Advisory Council of the Brazil Institute at the Wilson Center. He also sits on the on the Boards of Directors for the Council of the Americas, Global Americans, U.S.-Europe Alliance, and Fundación Euroamerica.

Ambassador Shannon noted, "I am deeply honored to take on the Chairmanship of the Academy's Board of Directors at this important time. I look forward to building on Ambassador Pickering's tremendous legacy and working with my distinguished colleagues to advance public understanding of the consequential role of diplomacy in advancing American interests and prosperity and protecting and promoting American values."

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