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Ryan Crocker, Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan & Iraq, Named Schlesinger Professor at UVa's Miller Center

Ryan Crocker, former U.S. ambassador to several of the world's most troubled hotspots including Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, has been named the James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor at the University of Virginia's Miller Center. Throughout 2013, Crocker, as a visiting professor, will take part in several Miller Center initiatives, speaking, writing and advising on foreign policy and national security matters.

"Ambassador Crocker's experience is unparalleled. Through his many diplomatic posts, he has gained unique insight into one of the most troubled regions in the world. We are looking forward to working closely with him and providing him with a forum that I believe will benefit policymakers, scholars and students," said Gerald L. Baliles, director and CEO of the Miller Center.

Crocker said, "I have long been impressed with the Miller Center. I look forward to joining the U.Va. community and working on issues that are vital to our nation's national security and future."

Crocker holds the diplomatic rank of career ambassador, the U.S. Foreign Service's highest rank. He served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 and U.S. ambassador to Iraq from 2007 to 2009. He previously served as U.S. ambassador to Pakistan from 2004 to 2007; to Syria from 1998 to 2001; to Kuwait from 1994 to 1997; and to Lebanon from 1990 to 1993. In 2009, President George W. Bush awarded Crocker the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, citing him for the work he did following the attacks of Sept. 11 "to build a worldwide coalition to combat terrorism and help millions of oppressed people travel the path to liberty and democracy."

In 2010, Crocker became dean of Texas A&M University's George Bush School of Government and Public Service. During the current academic year, he is serving as a Kissinger Senior Fellow at Yale University's Johnson Center for the Study of American Diplomacy.

Crocker attended University College Dublin and Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, where he received a B.A. in English literature.

The James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professorship was created in 2007. It provides a unique opportunity for public servants with experience in foreign policy and national security to participate as visiting faculty in Miller Center programs, interact with students at U.Va., and engage in writing with support from the Miller Center.

The inaugural Schlesinger professor was Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, former U.S. ambassador to China under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Command.

Schlesinger served as secretary of defense from 1973 to 1975 and as the nation's first energy secretary from 1977 to 1979. He also held leadership roles with the Central Intelligence Agency and the Atomic Energy Commission during a distinguished career in public service. Schlesinger taught economics at U.Va. from 1955 to 1963.

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