



January 2019

Open Letter to Donors

Another New Year is upon us and once again I put pen to paper to thank you for your continuing support. This presents an opportunity to remind you why we are here and that despite rumors to the contrary, there is no evidence that the need for our services has evaporated.

President Trump recently underscored that factual distortion when he suddenly announced he was withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria and ordering a major reduction of our force in Afghanistan. No doubt he believed he was expressing the will of the American people who have grown weary of our seemingly endless engagement on foreign battlefields – the continuing cost in dollars and blood. But Trump immediately ran into a hailstorm of criticism from all sectors of the political spectrum.

The most immediate concern expressed by those opposed to the President's actions was its likely impact on our allies, especially the many people of various nationalities who are fighting with us against the terrorists. The grim reality is that the terrorists – the Taliban, al-Qaeda, ISIS and other assorted groups – are still very much in the field wreaking death and havoc around the world.

This is a war without end – something new in our history. Previous generations of Americans have fought bloody wars but they tended to be short. World War II lasted several years, but from the time our soldiers stormed ashore in Normandy on June 6, 1944, until Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, was less than a year.

By contrast, the War on Terrorism that launched on September 11, 2001, has gone on for 17 years and counting. The hard truth is that this war is by no means winding down; it is expanding. We are currently fighting terrorists in 80 nations on six continents. This war is not just being waged by the Pentagon which has spent \$1.9 trillion during that time. The State Department has spent \$127 billion to train police, military and border patrol agents in many countries, and to develop antiterrorism education programs. The 80 nations participating in our war against terrorism include 40 military bases, 65 counterterrorism training facilities, 26 U.S. military exercises, 14 with troops actively engaged in combat and 7 where we manage air and drone strikes.

Today our forces – that includes U.S. Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard – but also agents of other federal and state agencies working under cover, are identifying threats and dealing with them. They all need and deserve our support. We all hope and pray that the casualty lists will disappear, but there is no end in sight. The wounded may not command as much media exposure today but they are still coming home with missing limbs and broken spirits. They often must wait weeks or months for the benefits they have earned and need. We remain one of the few organizations available to fill that void in addition to helping wounded veterans cope with post-traumatic stress and acquire useful employment in the private sector. .

Everyone here at the Coalition is devoted to serving those who bear the burden of our freedom, we will continue to do so for as long as we have your support. Please let us know if you have questions about our work. Today, as always, we depend on your support.

David W. Walker
President & CEO
Coalition to Salute America's Heroes