



January 3, 2022

Open Letter to Donors

In the wake of our hasty and ill-managed exit from Afghanistan, it is interesting to note that the Taliban is struggling to impose its authority on the country. They are beset by extremist groups who regard the Taliban as too timid and insufficiently radical for their tastes. Thus they send suicide bombers into public squares and ambush Taliban fighters in the countryside. The people of Afghanistan had probably assumed that at a minimum the Taliban triumph would mean an end to that sort of thing, but no such luck. Having established a climate hospitable to terrorism, the Taliban is now reaping what it has sowed as their country descends into abject poverty and chaos. Their “victory” is ephemeral.

Peace remains a pipe dream for the Afghans and for us. The War on Terrorism launched on September 11, 2001, has gone on for 20 years and counting. To gain perspective on this situation, we must look back to the ancient Roman Empire that lasted a thousand years. Like us, the Romans were required to fight more or less constantly against barbarian tribes that challenged them at every turn. Generation after generation of Romans answered the call to arms. The only alternative they had was to give up everything they had and believed in – which was not a valid alternative. They fought on in what surely seemed to them a perpetual war.

Like the ancient Romans, we too are caught up in perpetual war. Today our forces are called upon to battle the forces of darkness all over the world. Our troops need and deserve our support. We hope and pray that the casualty lists will disappear, but there is faint hope of that. 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 depend upon. 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.

Our work like the war on terrorism is not finished. Recently we launched something new – the Veterans Caregivers Alliance – along with other organizations to provide support to the legions of caregivers who dedicate their lives to our wounded warriors. Most of these caregivers are spouses of wounded warriors many of whom bear extraordinary burdens caring for their husbands who are unable to work. They take care of the kids, pay the bills and otherwise keep the home fires burning.

They need and deserve all the support we can give them. Everyone here at the Coalition is devoted to serving those who bear the burden of our freedom, and we will continue to do so for as long as we have your support. Without your support we would have to close our doors.

As for Afghanistan, we spent 20 years fighting the fanatics and striving to teach the Afghans a better way of life. Many thousands of them rallied to our flag. Women have gone to school and acquired educations – a radical development in that backward part of the world. Many are terrified of the resurgence of the Taliban, and they have reason to be. Already the Taliban thugs are terrorizing women and girls, even as they themselves are terrorized by those even more radical than they are. We tried and many of us died trying to avoid this result but in the end the forces of ignorance and fear prevailed.

But the struggle continues. I do not know what the next phase of our war against the forces of darkness will look like; I only know it will continue. Failure is not an option.

In the meantime, our troops have done all they could do in Afghanistan. The government reports the cost of our foreign wars in terms of dollars and cents in the yearly budget. But the real costs go on a lot longer than that. As President Lincoln said in his second inaugural address, we must now care for those who bore the brunt of the battles, and their widows and their orphans. Today, as always, we – and the veterans we serve – depend on your support.

David W. Walker
President and Chief Executive Officer
Coalition to Salute America's Heroes