

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Statement on the Second Anniversary of the End of United States Military Operations in Afghanistan

August 30, 2023

Two years ago, the United States ended nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan, the longest war in American history.

Today we pause to remember the selfless service of generations of brave women and men over the course of the conflict, who, time and time again, sacrificed their own safety and security for that of their fellow Americans. That includes the 2,461 U.S. servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice and 20,744 of their brother- and sisters-in-arms who were wounded in action. These servicemembers dared all, risked all, and gave all to our Nation. We owe them and their families a debt we can never fully repay.

I remain forever grateful to the military members, diplomats, intelligence professionals, and development specialists who not only worked together to advance the United States Afghan mission for two decades, but who also conducted our withdrawal with the same resolve and bravery that defined U.S. service in Afghanistan. Together, they helped evacuate approximately 120,000 people in one of the largest airlifts in history. And every day since, they have skillfully used every military, diplomatic, and intelligence resource available to continue to protect our homeland from terrorist threats in Afghanistan and around the world. We have demonstrated that we do not need a permanent troop presence on the ground in harm's way to take action against terrorists and those who wish to do us harm.

Finally, I am proud that our Nation has welcomed more than 117,000 Afghan newcomers. I am thankful for the work of our veterans and fellow Americans who remained relentless advocates for our Afghan allies, and I am grateful for the generosity of State and local governments and our resettlement partners who continue to welcome them into their communities. We will also continue to support the Afghan people, and we are proud to be the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

Just as they contributed to our mission in Afghanistan for 20 years, our Afghan allies are now making vast contributions across our Nation. And, just as they stood with us, I remain committed to standing with them, including urging Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act so we can provide a pathway to permanent legal status for our Afghan friends and neighbors.

Let us continue to meet our sacred obligation to our servicemembers, veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors, who gave so much over so many years in Afghanistan. Let us continue to do right by our Afghan partners who also served and sacrificed. And let us continue to honor our fallen warriors and their families by continuing on their work to secure and defend our Nation—together.

Categories: Statements by the President : U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, 2d anniversary of end.

Subjects: Afghanistan, U.S. evacuation of interpreters, service contractors, and affiliated nationals; Afghanistan, U.S. military withdrawal, 2d anniversary; Afghanistan, U.S. servicemembers, casualties; Counterterrorism and homeland security; Refugees and migrants, U.S. admission policy.

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