



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 3, 2023

**Contact:** Matt Awbrey

Phone: 858.342.1035

Email: [mawbrey@afghanevac.org](mailto:mawbrey@afghanevac.org)

# **White House Ceremony Salutes Veterans and Volunteers Helping Afghans Resettle**

***‘Remarkable Partnership’: Cabinet Secretaries Mayorkas,  
McDonough Recognize Grassroot Coalition’s Work to Relocate  
Thousands of U.S. Allies from Afghanistan***

Washington, D.C. — Members of President Biden’s cabinet and senior national security officials welcomed dozens of veterans and frontline civilian volunteers to the White House on Thursday to recognize their grassroots efforts to help Afghan allies resettle in the United States following the end of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough, and a group of senior national security officials including National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Homeland Security Advisor Liz Sherwood-Randall [welcomed a group of about 80 individuals](#), including many representing the #AfghanEvac coalition, the primary umbrella group formed in the days following the fall of Kabul in August 2021 that represents more than 200 member organizations.

**“I appreciated the chance to thank the volunteers and veterans welcoming our Afghan allies. Our commitment to our Afghan partners is enduring. We will continue to welcome our Afghan allies who stood with us to the United States for many years to come,”** said National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

In a ceremony in the Indian Treaty Room — the site that was used by the White House from 2001-2002 to coordinate efforts in the early days of the Afghanistan war — federal officials described a “remarkable partnership” between the volunteers and the various government agencies involved in the effort to help Afghans resettle in the United States. They reaffirmed the Biden Administration’s commitment to keep working with the thousands of volunteers in the #AfghanEvac coalition to continue helping Afghans who worked with U.S. and allied forces



during America's longest war and to support them as they resettle in communities across the United States.

**“You make us better, and you make us more effective, and I think in partnership we’re able to deliver better results for all of the folks that we are collectively trying to serve,”** said U.S. Under Secretary of State John Bass, who was also in attendance, in a previous meeting with the coalition.

**“It’s one of the most remarkable partnerships I’ve seen,”** said Bass, comparing it to rare, large-scale efforts like the response to Hurricane Katrina. **“I’ve rarely if ever seen an instance in public-private work the extent to which people in this effort have just come to the table to solve problems.”**

**“A lot of history has been made in this room, but we are not yet ready to put the Afghan war in the history books – because we are not yet finished in our mission to help our Afghan allies find safety and security,”** said Shawn VanDiver, Navy veteran and founder of #AfghanEvac. **“This room is where the White House coordinated in the early days of the Afghan war, but more than two decades later our jobs are not done because we still have work to do, friends to help, and promises to keep. We appreciate this public show of support and recognition of the impact created by these volunteers – representing a cross-section of America – in helping our allies find a new home here in a nation they love.”**

**###**

## **About #AfghanEvac**

The more than 200 organizations that make up the non-partisan #AfghanEvac coalition work hand-in-hand with government entities and advocate for ways to provide new Afghan community members with the stability they need to resettle and thrive in their new lives here.

For twenty years, Afghan allies worked and fought side-by-side with U.S. and allied forces through the longest war in American history. The #AfghanEvac coalition is committed to ensuring that their service, partnership, and commitment to American ideals is honored.

**Website:** <https://afghanevac.org/press>