

## Bipartisan Support for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program

- ✓ **General Peter Chiarelli (Ret.)**. “They should be helped. They should be helped to get in to the country, both them and their families, and anyone else in their family that is under duress. They should be helped to resettle, to be able to find a job, find housing, adequate housing, and integrated into our society [...] they ought to be regarded as veterans, as heroes, no less so than any born American is a hero. In many cases, even more so.”<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **General David Petraeus (Ret.)**. “We have an obligation to look after those who have served us and served our mission, and served their own country, so very faithfully and often involving a great deal of sacrifice. They put their lives on the line.”<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ **General John W. Nicholson, Jr.** “Failure to adequately demonstrate a shared understanding of their sacrifices and honor our commitment to any Afghan who supports the International Security Assistance Force and Resolute Support missions could have grave consequences for these individuals and bolster the propaganda our enemies.”<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ **General John F. Campbell (Ret.)**. “Their support of our mission has resulted in our Afghan partners facing threats from insurgent groups throughout the country. They frequently live in fear that they or their families will be targeted for kidnappings and death. Many have suffered this fate already. The SIV program offers hope that their sacrifices on our behalf will not be forgotten.”<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ **General Stanley McChrystal (Ret.)**. “Many of our Afghan allies have not only been mission-essential—serving as the eyes and ears of our own troops and often saving American lives—but have risked their own and their families’ lives in the line of duty. Protecting these allies is as much a matter of American national morality as it is American national security.”<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **General Robert Neller**. “They are out there should to shoulder with marines, soldiers, sailors, and airmen risking their lives and sharing the risk and providing great services to keep our citizens alive, our folks alive [...] I know commanders up to the rank of flag and general officers are involved in this. I signed off on all of these myself. And I know there are background checks. And I fully support, with the proper vetting process, that this program be allowed to continue.”<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ **Chief of Staff of the United States Army General Mark Milley**. “Those are the brave men and women who have fought along our side and there are American men and women in uniform who are alive today because a lot of those Afghans put their lives on the line.”<sup>7</sup>
- ✓ **Brig. General Charles H. Cleveland (Ret.)**. “We’ve really been trying to reinforce the fact to Afghans that we are committed to you, and this gives the enemy some propaganda to say, ‘Hey, these people really aren’t committed to you.’ It’s our credibility that is on the line.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwmMvilBpww>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwmMvilBpww>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/05/25/top-general-urges-lawmakers-preserve-afghan-visa-program.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/4603/text>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/4603/text>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/16-69\\_09-15-16.pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/16-69_09-15-16.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?415302-1/armed-services-chiefs-testify-defense-budget-challenges>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/10/us/politics/afghan-translators-military-visas.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/10/us/politics/afghan-translators-military-visas.html?_r=0)

- ✓ **Former Ambassador Ryan Crocker.** “This is truly a matter of life and death. I know hundreds of people who have been threatened because of their affiliation with the United States. Some have been killed. Today, many are in hiding, praying that the United States keeps its word.”<sup>9</sup>
- ✓ **Former Secretary of State John Kerry.** “The United States is in danger of sending the wrong message to Afghan interpreters and others who risked their lives helping our troops and diplomats do their jobs in Afghanistan over the last decade [...] now there is a unique opportunity for Democrats and Republicans in Congress to work together once again to authorize enough visas for this program. It’s the least we can do for our Afghan allies.”<sup>10</sup>
- ✓ **Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).** “By protecting our Afghan friends from reprisals, and welcoming them into our American family, we can assert that the United States is still a great and good country—and that we do not abandon those who risked their lives to serve with us.”<sup>11</sup>
- ✓ **Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR).** “The viability of the Afghan SIV program must be a priority. If we don’t help our allies on the ground now when they become threatened, why would anyone help the United States in the future?”<sup>12</sup>
- ✓ **Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC).** “America has a moral obligation to provide these Afghans with safety from the Taliban who seek to harm them and their families for assisting America’s mission in Afghanistan.”<sup>13</sup>
- ✓ **Senator John McCain (R-AZ).** “This legislation would ensure the continuation of this vital Special Immigrant Visa program, and send a clear message that America will not turn its back on those who, at great personal risk, stand with us in the fight against terror.”<sup>14</sup>
- ✓ **Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL).** “America will find itself in war again and it’s naïve to think we won’t. And the folks that we’re going to need in that next conflict are going to look at if we kept our promises in the prior one.”<sup>15</sup>
- ✓ **Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA).** “It’s the same promise that we make to any of our allies across the globe: that we will stand by them, that we will be with them, that we will protect them in times of peril [...] these are men and women who put their lives on the line, not just for their country, but for ours. In fact, they’ve frankly done a lot more to protect our national security than the vast majority of Americans. So we ought to treat them with respect, we ought to, at the very least, give them a chance to continue living and not be killed in their home country by the same enemies that we joined together to fight against.”<sup>16</sup>
- ✓ **General Carter F. Ham.** “The reality is that for a military that is charged with protecting America by operating overseas principally, there will be continued reliance on host nation persons for as long as we can foresee the future [...] to put it quite simply, without these great people, the United States could not have accomplished all that was required.”<sup>17</sup>
- ✓ **Former Ambassador James Jeffrey.** “So, if we want good people to work with us and keep working with us, we have to find ways to protect them. It starts with our visa system.”<sup>18</sup>
- ✓ **Former Ambassador Richard Olson.** “The moral responsibility we have to the people that have worked with us in difficult environments, it’s really in our national interest, that we cannot be seen as abandoning people who have helped us if we expect to have any credibility in future interventions.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/05/12/dont-let-the-u-s-abandon-thousands-of-afghans-who-worked-for-us/?utm\\_term=.3244b864b99e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/05/12/dont-let-the-u-s-abandon-thousands-of-afghans-who-worked-for-us/?utm_term=.3244b864b99e)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0602-kerry-afghan-withdrawal-20140603-story.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/23/opinion/a-broken-promise-in-afghanistan.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://blumenauer.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/blumenauer-us-embassy-kabul-halting-siv-interviews-unacceptable-we-need>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/03/21/senators-want-special-visas-afghans-helped-us-military.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/03/21/senators-want-special-visas-afghans-helped-us-military.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwmMvilBpwg>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwmMvilBpwg>

<sup>17</sup> Remarks made at National Defense University’s College of International Security Affairs, Chancellor’s Lecture Series: Strategically Protecting Soft Networks, March 29, 2017.

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