



Published on *The Weekly Standard* (<http://www.weeklystandard.com>)

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## A Spirited Fight

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November 11, 2013 7:10 AM

By now we know that winning the war on terror requires a commitment to peace and stability in far-flung places—a component that goes hand-in-hand with military might. Of course this is easier said than done. Certainly there are a slew of organizations focused on relief efforts, but how many of these groups work side-by-side with U.S. forces, delivering nonlethal assistance to one village at a time, with funding from private American citizens? There's at least one—it's called [Spirit of America](#).

Everything from motorbikes for the Afghan Local Police and medical-grade tourniquets to computers, radios, and winter clothing—Spirit of America is ready and willing to provide assistance. And the more supplies we provide to these villagers, the less dependent they are on, say, the Taliban. "There are people trying to solve a problem halfway around the world," says Spirit of America founder and CEO Jim Hake. "How do we address these problems without going to war?" Hake, who was motivated to create the organization following the attacks of September 11, 2001, describes these global threats as "a competition of ideas." He and his staff of eight are intent on winning this competition.

When the founder visited THE WEEKLY STANDARD last week, he was accompanied by two of his colleagues, Isaac Eagan and Chris Clary. Eagan, an Army veteran who did two tours in Iraq, had just arrived the night before from Spirit of America missions in Jordan and Mauritania. Clary, a Green Beret now in the reserves, was on his way back to Afghanistan for a seven-month stretch (where he had already done two tours). Eagan explains the need to find the "root causes of instability" and stressed that "it really is about developing relationships." Clary spoke of his closeness to an Afghan family and his hope to see them again. When the supplies arrive, Clary tells the villagers they were paid for by private American citizens. Both men stressed the importance of security in the region first, followed by stable governance.

But unlike most other charitable nonprofits in the region, Spirit of America is not considered neutral. Rather, it supports the U.S. missions abroad, coordinates with the troops, and aims to deliver a positive message about America's commitment. Unfortunately, these men are also worried about the reduction of forces in Afghanistan. Since Spirit of America only goes where our armed forces go, a total pullout from that country would mean the end of assistance from them. Eagan says the villagers do worry: "Are we going to lose supplies when the Americans leave?"

Regardless, the Spirit of America team continues to fight the good fight, thanks to the generosity of common citizens. To help Spirit of America, please visit [www.spiritofamerica.net](http://www.spiritofamerica.net).

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