



Annual Report 2016

Founded in 2003, Spirit of America (SoA) is a 501c3 tax-exempt public charity. Our mission is to support the safety and success of American troops and diplomats and the local people they want to help. SoA provides assistance in response to local needs identified by deployed US troops and diplomats. We apply our resources at the intersection of security, humanitarian need, and US national interest. This support makes our deployed personnel safer and more successful in their missions and helps local people not reached by large-scale aid programs. At the same time, we provide Americans with an opportunity to connect with and support the work of those who serve abroad, a connection that leads to a more well-informed public and more effective US engagement in the world.

In 2016, Spirit of America continued to focus on four major global security and stability challenges, all identified as top priorities by deployed military commanders and diplomats:

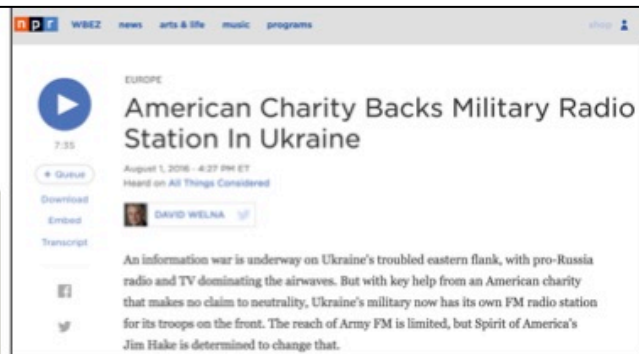
1. Supporting the counter-Islamic State effort throughout the Middle East, with an emphasis on providing critical humanitarian assistance and enhancing US-advised partners' capacity in both Syria and Iraq;
2. Countering Islamic extremism in West Africa, working with US teams to confront the constellation of violent extremist actors threatening regional security and stability;
3. Supporting US missions to counter Transnational Criminal Organizations and Drug Trafficking Organizations in Central and South America, with a particular focus on countering youth recruitment into those groups;
4. Deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, specifically in Ukraine, where we worked with the US Embassy on projects designed to counter pervasive Russian propaganda efforts.

In addition, Spirit of America provided assistance in response to US priorities in several countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Throughout the course of 2016, Spirit of America's all-veteran field team designed and implemented 94 projects in 34 countries.



Spirit of America Project locations, 2016

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In addition, Spirit of America's work in support of US Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Eastern Europe was highlighted in the January-June 2016 edition of *Special Warfare Magazine*, the professional publication of Army Special Operations.



Rear Admiral Brian Losey, United States Navy (Ret.)
Former commander of US Navy Special Warfare Command

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SELECTED PROJECT EXAMPLES

Iraq and Syria



The United States and its coalition partners are focused on defeating the Islamic State and ending the extremist group's reign of terror in Iraq and Syria. As the campaign progresses, US Special Operations Forces have identified several critical local needs to Spirit of America.

In response, SoA has provided metal detectors and first aid kits to help local partners find IEDs and unexploded ordnance and treat casualties. And, we have provided critical assistance to improve the lives of war-ravaged communities. In one example of this support, SoA provided a generator to restore power to one wing of a hospital in Syria so local doctors could provide lifesaving care.

Result: The lives and limbs of US troops, their partners, and local civilians have been saved. And, the basic needs of local communities have been addressed, both improving their quality of life and helping prevent an insurgency from developing.

Mali



Mali has been under attack by extremist groups for years, culminating in a full-scale rebellion in 2012. The country remains under threat from these groups, as the government strives to restore stability and security throughout Mali. The US team working in the country identified a key partner in this effort, and one that was also protecting a critical resource: the rangers protecting one of the few remaining herds of West African elephants, a herd whose tusks are prized by extremist groups seeking to sell them to fund their attacks.

Spirit of America provided the rangers with basic supplies to help them both protect the elephants as well as patrol a vast undergoverned space where extremist groups plagued the local population. We provided cameras, Camelbak hydration systems, GPS devices, and binoculars to support their critical work.

Result: The rangers are able to patrol their assigned territory longer and more effectively, helping them protect local communities and the elephant herd. This denied extremist groups funding for further attacks, made the vulnerable population safer, and supported a key conservation effort.

Colombia



The US and Colombian governments are partnering to stop criminal and drug trafficking organizations from destabilizing the country and providing funding to extremist groups that threaten peace and security in the Western Hemisphere. A US Army team identified a way to both address a critical public health emergency – the Zika virus – and increase stability in an isolated region of Colombia.

Spirit of America responded by providing mosquito netting and fumigation supplies, allowing the US team and their local partners to rid a vulnerable community of a threat to public health and helping develop relationships with key local leaders.

Result: Local families are protected against the terrible effects of the Zika virus, communities have greater faith in their government’s ability to care for their needs, and relationships between the United States and its Colombian partner are stronger.

Ukraine



The United States is helping its strategic partner, Ukraine, preserve its sovereignty and end a war with Russian-backed separatists. The US Embassy identified pervasive Russian propaganda in the eastern war zone as having a particularly destabilizing impact as it sapped the morale of Ukrainian soldiers fighting for their freedom.

Spirit of America responded to this need by providing start-up funding for Army FM, a Ukrainian radio station meeting the basic information and entertainment needs of Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines. We provided studio equipment and three transmitters in the war zone.

Result: Army FM drastically improved the morale of the Ukrainian troops and created a much closer connection between them, their leadership, and the rest of the country. Based on the results of Spirit of America's pilot program, the Ukrainian government allocated resources from their already strained budget to expand the program throughout the country.

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Thank you for joining us as we support the safety and success of deployed Americans and the local people and partners they seek to help. By leveraging resources from the private sector, Spirit of America fills an increasingly vital gap in our national security. As we look to the future, the need for this critical flexible, agile capability – and the whole of nation approach it represents – has never been clearer.

Our men and women on the frontlines of America's security and stability efforts deserve every resource our nation has to offer, and Spirit of America represents one important facet of that holistic approach. We truly value your partnership in this effort and look forward to continuing this work together in the years to come.

All the best,
The Spirit of America Team