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Bcc: All Legion Leadership

## **The American Legion: Taliban Agreement Cause for Skeptical Hope**

(INDIANAPOLIS, February 29, 2020) --The leader of the nation's largest veterans organization welcomed the prospect of peace in Afghanistan, while at the same time expressing distrust for the Taliban.

“We cannot forget that the Taliban comprised one of the most vicious and brutal regimes in history. Terrorists lie. At the same time, we are humane and deeply respect the sacrifices made by so many American families. Nobody hates war more than veterans, and The American Legion would like nothing more than seeing the nearly two decade conflict in Afghanistan end,” said American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford. “The Taliban no longer rule Afghanistan and have expressed a desire to engage the legitimate government. They have agreed to a cease fire and to take steps to ensure that Afghanistan will never again be used as a haven by terrorists who plot to harm the United States. In exchange, the U.S. government has agreed to reduce our forces there to 8,600 and then gradually to zero. We welcome this agreement. It is made possible by the 800,000 U.S. troops and our coalition allies who have served there since 2001. We will never forget the nearly 2,400 Americans who died in Afghanistan. Nor will we forget their wounded comrades. They made Afghanistan a better place. We have a right to expect the Taliban to abide by the agreement so that peace can finally come to this troubled region. The Taliban have violated agreements before and we maintain a healthy dose of skepticism, along with a commitment to never again ignore threats that could lead to another 9/11.”

With a current membership of nearly two million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, patriotic youth programs and Americanism. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 13,000 posts worldwide. From the drafting of the original GI Bill to the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), is the most influential voice for America's veterans.