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## The Death Toll Does Not Lie -- Afghanistan Is Obama's War

575. That's how many U.S. soldiers have lost their lives in the Afghanistan war since Barack Obama became President at noon on January 20, 2009, according to the [icasualties.org](http://icasualties.org) website, which tracks U.S. soldiers' deaths using reports received from the Department of Defense -- and which is widely cited in the media as a source of information on U.S. deaths.

According to the same website, 575 is also the number of U.S. soldiers who lost their lives in the Afghanistan war during the Presidency of George W. Bush.

Therefore, total U.S. deaths in Afghanistan have doubled in Afghanistan under President Obama, and when the next U.S. soldier is reported dead, the majority of U.S. deaths in Afghanistan will have occurred under President Obama.

This grim landmark should be reported in the media, and White House reporters should ask Robert Gibbs to comment on it. It is quite relevant to Gibbs' implicit attempt to marginalize critics of the war in Afghanistan by claiming that they wouldn't be satisfied with anything less than the abolition of the Pentagon. The majority of Americans - including the overwhelming majority of Democrats, and at least 60% of House Democrats - are deeply skeptical of the Administration's Afghanistan policy not because they are knee-jerk pacifists - obviously they are not - but because the human and financial cost of the war is rising, we have nothing to show for the increased cost, and the Administration has not articulated a clear plan to reach the endgame; indeed, Administration officials, led by General Petraeus, have just launched a public relations

campaign to undermine the substantial drawdown in troops next summer that Democratic leaders in Congress, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have said that they expect.

This grim landmark is not reported directly by the icasualties.org website -- you have to have to go to the right places on the website to retrieve the data and then calculate it from the data given. The data retrieval and arithmetic is straightforward, but I will carefully explain it here so that any reader - and particular any reporter and news editor -- can easily reproduce it.

The top-level organization of the icasualties.org website is divided into two parts, according to the designations previously given to the "two wars" by the Department of Defense: "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and "Operation Enduring Freedom." The latter designation includes not just U.S. deaths in Afghanistan, but also non-Iraq U.S. deaths in the conflicts formerly known collectively as the "Global War on Terror"; for example, it includes deaths in the Philippines and Djibouti, far away from Afghanistan.

But you can find in the database U.S. deaths in Afghanistan since 2001 by year and month by first going to [this link](#), and then, underneath the table that initially appears under "Fatalities by Year and Month," choosing in the pop-up menus, "US" for nationality, "All Fatalities" for Fatality Type, and "Afghanistan Only" for Theatre.