

Crediting Obama for Bringing Troops Home-Without Noting He Sent Them Abroad

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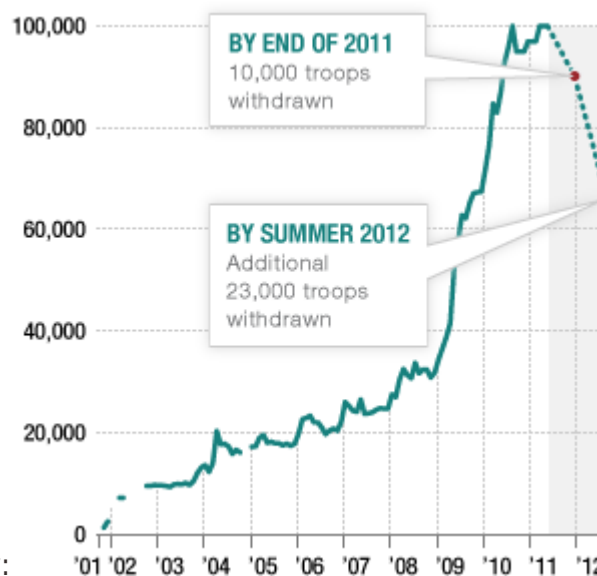
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With [news](#) that the US is planning to keep almost 10,000 troops in Afghanistan—a day after seeing some [headlines](#) about the war’s “end”—you might wonder if journalists can get the troop counting right in the first place.

On **NPR’s Morning Edition** ([5/26/14](#)), [Scott Horsley](#) told listeners:

Some 32,000 Americans are currently serving in Afghanistan, a war the president is determined to wind down by year’s end.



Moments later, he added this history:

This is Obama’s fourth visit to Afghanistan as president and his first since 2012. Since that time, US troop levels here have been cut by about two-thirds.

This is incomplete—and misleading.

Hearing that “US troop levels here have been cut by about two-thirds” shortly after you hear that Obama is determined to end the war gives a very distorted picture of the war under Obama’s watch.

In reality, current US troop levels—about 32,000—are actually about what they were when Obama took office (**Think Progress**, [6/22/11](#)). A graph that accompanied an **NPR** story ([6/29/11](#)) shows this pretty clearly.

Late last year the **New York Times** offered similarly misleading spin (**FAIR Blog**,[11/25/13](#)), reporting that Obama “has reduced the forces in Afghanistan from about 100,000 in 2010 to about 47,000 today.” That’s technically true, but ignores the fact that the troop levels had only gotten that high as a result of Obama’s policy of massive escalation.

It’s often said that Afghanistan is America’s forgotten war. But when the war is remembered, the barest facts about US involvement manage to disappear, too.

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