

Obama Puts his Spin on Afghan War

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US President Barack Obama says US-led forces in Afghanistan are facing huge challenges but progress is being made toward important security goals.

“We face huge challenges in Afghanistan but it’s important that the American people know that we are making progress and we’re focused on goals that are clear and achievable,” AFP quoted the US president as saying on Monday.

He made the remarks in a speech to US military veterans at the Disabled Veterans of America Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Over the past few months, public opinion has been turning against the war in the United States and other countries, and thus Obama’s upbeat assessment about progress in the Afghan war will probably not go down well at home or abroad.

The death toll for US service members stationed in Afghanistan reached 66 for the month of July 2010, making it the deadliest month for US troops deployed in the Central Asian nation since the conflict began in October 2001.

Civilian casualties also rose dramatically in July, with 270 civilians killed and about 560 injured, Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said on Sunday.

On Monday, Obama also pledged to fulfill his promise to bring the war in Iraq to a “responsible end.”

There are approximately 65,000 US soldiers currently stationed in Iraq, 15,000 of whom are to leave Iraq by the end of August.

A security pact between Baghdad and Washington requires the United States to withdraw all its troops from Iraqi territory by the end of 2011.

Obama said the US troops remaining in the country after September 1, 2010 would only carry out support functions for the Iraqi military and US diplomats until their withdrawal.

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