How Many US Soldiers Are Dying in the Middle East and Why?

The US administration and military leadership have been desperately trying to keep the number of the US Army’s battlefield casualties, as well as the flag-draped coffins of American soldiers, from the eye of the press.

There are many reasons for such secrecy. One of the main ones is the USA’s unwillingness to acknowledge its losses due to its provocative and aggressive policies in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, so as not to cause a wave of protest among American citizens. Moreover, the actual number of losses would serve as evidence of the quality and preparedness of the US Army and the efficiency of its weaponry, which may shake confidence in the power and alleged invincibility promoted by the US government. In addition, such figures are always utilized in information warfare. The knowledge of the US Army’s military losses would not only impact the army itself, but also existing opinions on the country’s foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the attention this matter garnered from both politicians and the international community is quite justified. It is enough to recall the past information wars in the US and Arab media, sparked by the number of American soldiers killed as a result of military operations carried out by the US and its allies against Iraq. The operations in question were Desert Storm, started in January 1991, as well Desert Fox, which took place on December 17-20, 1998. The latter evolved into a combined operation of the U.S. and the members of the anti-Iraq coalition, dubbed Shock and Awe and later Iraqi Freedom. Back then, the U.S. claimed that the number of military casualties was within the limits of 5-6 thousand, while American and international non-governmental human rights organizations cited numbers as high as 10 thousand. The members of the Iraqi Resistance, in turn, reported that about 30-40 thousand American occupants were eliminated.

But the military conflict in Iraq is not over to this day. In August 2014, the US Armed Forces and their allies launched a new military operation in the region, titled Inherent Resolve and aimed at battling the international terrorist organization DAESH (banned in the Russian Federation).
In January 2013, the US Department of Veterans Affairs declassified data about the losses of the US coalition in the Gulf Wars and reported 73 thousand casualties by that point in time.

Those numbers were even higher than the losses in the Vietnam War!

In fact, the casualties in Vietnam were quite difficult to conceal at that time. If a soldier died during a military mission, it was considered a military loss. The names of 58,195 people who died in Vietnam are carved on a memorial in Washington, D.C.

But something strange happened during the war in Iraq: the Bush administration made a very cunning move, opting to report losses only if a soldier was killed directly on a battlefield on Iraqi soil. This ploy is still in effect today, and quite often, the deaths of soldiers are passed off as non-military casualties. This allows the current US Administration to hide the whole picture and the true value of the lives of the US soldiers involved in Washington’s military ventures in different parts of the world.

More evidence of the USA’s harmful policy of hiding true number of losses in their current military operations has surfaced. The US issued an official statement on the number of American soldiers killed during the retaliatory strikes on the American military bases in Iraq, carried out by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in response to the murder of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani earlier this year. At first, the Pentagon remained silent, but then announced that 11 people had been injured and urgently taken to Kuwait and Germany ‘for treatment.’ That number later climbed to 34, then on January 28, the Pentagon admitted to 50 soldiers injured. However, this is still much less than Iran’s figures: 80 Americans dead and 200 injured.

In this regard, the official statistics on US casualties reported by representatives of the Pentagon draws much attention. According to the latest official report, since the beginning of operation Inherent Resolve and up to January 20 of this year, the US has lost 89 soldiers. That is surprising, however, as the military operation in Iraq has led to several thousands military losses for the US since its initiation. So why are there so few losses reported today?

Undoubtedly, the true figures of military losses will make the American public question why US citizens have to sacrifice themselves in foreign lands in the first place and who will be held responsible for this.

Similar misinformation of the public is also taking place with regard to the US military losses in Afghanistan. In the past ten years, the American administration spoke out about just a dozen American soldiers killed in Afghanistan, but news outlets came forward with another figure based on their sources, revealing that casualties were as high as 3000.

Then again, this isn’t the first time the US administration distorted the number of military losses for the sake of effective propaganda and the false historical glorification of the role of their armed forces. Thus, Vice-President Michael Pence recently alleged that the USA lost about two million soldiers during World War II, though everybody is aware of different figures from official sources, and a while ago, Washington itself claimed only 400 thousand WWII casualties.

However, regardless of official US reports on that or the other information about American casualties in the most recent hot spots, the aggressive US policy in the Middle East and other regions of the world has recently been stirring anti-American sentiments. More frequent calls for US Army to leave the Middle East are voiced by politicians and the local population, in particular, those in Syria and Iraq. This wave of protest against the USA’s military presence is bound to increase further.

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