

WHO WILL BE THE LAST 31 AMERICANS TO DIE IN EFFORT TO KILL THE LAST 31 AL QAEDA MEMBERS IN AFGHANISTAN?

There are early reports out that the Taliban shot down a NATO helicopter with a rocket propelled grenade. Hamid Karzai has said the casualties include 31 Americans and 7 Afghans. And while President Obama has not put a number on the deaths, he has put out a statement mourning the loss.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of the Americans who were lost earlier today in Afghanistan. Their deaths are a reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by the men and women of our military and their families, including all who have served in Afghanistan. We will draw inspiration from their lives, and continue the work of securing our country and standing up for the values that they embodied. We also mourn the Afghans who died alongside our troops in pursuit of a more peaceful and hopeful future for their country. At this difficult hour, all Americans are united in support of our men and women in uniform who serve so that we can live in freedom and security.

So it seems America has suffered around 31 deaths in one incident, in a war ostensibly being fought to destroy al Qaeda.

Yet David Petraeus has said there are fewer than 100 al Qaeda members in Afghanistan, and fewer than 10-20 al Qaeda leaders remain alive

anywhere.

In this one incident, we lost roughly as many Americans as remaining members of our purported enemies exist.

That's not the way to win the war on terror.

Update: Yochi Dreazen's thoughts on significance of this incident.

Update: Reports now say that at least 20 of the men killed in the crash were SEAL Team 6, the same unit (though not necessarily the same men) that killed OBL.