

COSTS OF WAR



COSTS OF WAR PROJECT

OVERVIEW

The United States war on terrorism, launched by the Bush administration in Afghanistan in 2001, is ongoing and has been extremely costly. The U.S. has appropriated and is obligated to spend an estimated \$5.9 trillion on the war on terror through Fiscal Year 2019, including care for post-9/11 veterans over their lifetimes. According to the Costs of War Project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, most Americans may not be aware of these and other costs of the war on terrorism. Key costs include:

HUMAN TOLL

Direct Violence—Over 480,000 people – including US soldiers, civilians, and militants – have died due to war violence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan since 2001.

Indirect Violence—Several times as many people have died indirectly because of the wars and accompanying displacement due to, for example, damage to healthcare, sewage, and other infrastructure, and war-related disease.

BUDGETARY COSTS

Direct Costs—Through 2019, the US federal government has spent and is obligated to spend \$5.9 trillion on the war on terrorism, including care for post-9/11 veterans over their lifetimes. In the coming several years, this figure will increase by an estimated \$200 billion annually.

Massive Debt—This spending has largely been financed by borrowing. Unless the U.S. changes how it finances its wars, the interest on the debt alone will exceed \$8 trillion by 2050.

BROADER ECONOMIC COSTS

Contrary to the popular belief that military spending is good for the U.S. economy because it generates jobs, in fact, far more jobs are created by spending in other sectors of the economy, such as education, healthcare, or green energy. The choice for war has thus cost the U.S. the opportunity to create between one and three million jobs.

A VAST OVERSEAS WAR

The U.S. war on terrorism is taking place not just in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, but in 80 countries. In 2017-2018, militants in 7 countries were targeted by U.S. air strikes; 14 countries saw direct ground combat by American service members against militants; 26 countries hosted U.S. military exercises aimed at counterterrorism; 40 countries hosted U.S. bases involved in this war; and in 65 nations, local military and security forces received “training and assistance.”

For More Information: www.costsofwar.org

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