WHERE WE FIGHT

This new map shows for the first time that the United States is now combating terrorism in 40 percent of the world’s nations

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LESS THAN A MONTH after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, U.S. troops—with support from British, Canadian, French, German and Australian forces—invasion Afghanistan to fight Al Qaeda and the Taliban. More than 17 years later, the Global War on Terrorism initiated by President George W. Bush is truly global, with Americans actively engaged in counterterrorism in 80 nations on six continents.

This war is the most comprehensive depiction in civilian circles of U.S. military and government antiterrorist actions overseas in the past two years. To develop it, my colleagues and I at Brown University’s Costs of War Project at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, along with Smithsonian magazine, combed through U.S. and foreign government sources, published and unpublished reports, military websites and geographical databases; we contacted foreign embassies in the U.S. and the military’s United States Africa Command, and we conducted interviews with journalists, academics and others. We found that, contrary to what most Americans believe, the war on terror is not winding down—it has spread to more than 40 percent of the world’s countries.

The war isn’t being waged by the military alone, which has spent $1.9 trillion fighting terrorism since 2001. The State Department has spent $127 billion in 40 percent of the world’s nations.

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