

Fact Sheet: The True Costs of the Post-9/11 Wars

The Costs of War Project has created this resource drawn from our scholarly research as an overview of the true costs of U.S. post-9/11 wars. The “post-9/11 wars” refers to United States-led military operations and other government programs around the world that have grown out of President George W. Bush's "Global War on Terror" and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

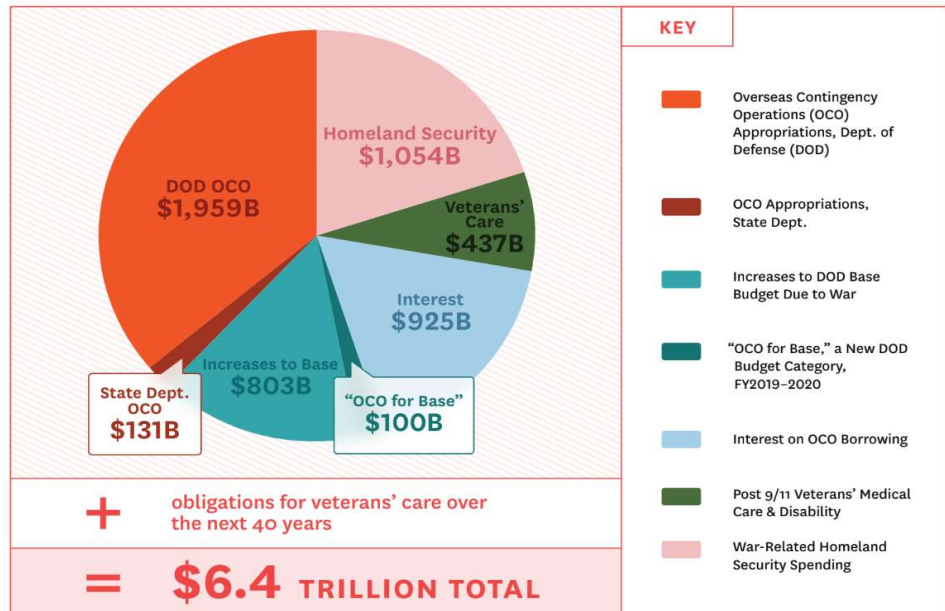
The Budgetary Cost

Post-9/11 wars have been extremely costly. Through 2019, the U.S. federal government has spent or been obligated to spend \$6.4 trillion on the post-9/11 wars.

These wars have largely been financed by borrowing. Unless the U.S. changes the way it pays for the post-9/11 wars, future interest will exceed \$8 trillion by the 2050s.

The opportunity costs are staggering. Many of these funds could have been spent on public health or in sectors that create far more jobs than the defense sector, like education or green energy.

Estimate of **U.S. War on Terror Spending**, in \$ Billions FY2001 – FY2020



The Human Cost

The body count continues to grow.

At least 801,000 people – including U.S. soldiers, allied security forces, civilians, and militants – have died due to war violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria (in the fight against the Islamic State), Yemen, and elsewhere.

Human Cost of Post-9/11 Wars:
Direct War Deaths in Major War Zones, Afghanistan and Pakistan (October 2001 – October 2019)
Iraq (March 2003 – October 2019); Syria (September 2014–October 2019);
Yemen (October 2002–October 2019); and Other¹
Neta C. Crawford and Catherine Lutz²
November 13, 2019

	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iraq	Syria/ISIS ³	Yemen ⁴	Other ⁵	Total
US Military ⁶	2,298 ⁷	— ⁸	4,572 ⁹	7 ¹⁰	1 ¹¹	136	7,014
US DOD Civilian ¹²	6		15	1	—	—	22
US Contractors ¹³	3,814	90	3,588	17 ¹⁴	2	439 ¹⁵	7,950
National Military and Police ¹⁶	64,124 ¹⁷	9,129 ¹⁸	48,337- 52,337 ¹⁹	51,483 ²⁰	— ²¹		173,073- 177,073
Other Allied Troops ²²	1,145	—	323	11,000 ²³			12,468
Civilians	43,074 ²⁴	23,925 ²⁵	184,382- 207,156 ²⁶	49,591 ²⁷	12,000 ²⁸		312,971- 335,745
Opposition Fighters	42,100 ²⁹	32,737 ³⁰	34,806- 39,881 ³¹	67,065 ³²	78,000 ³³		254,708- 259,783
Journalists and Media Workers ³⁴	67	86	277	75	31		536
Humanitarian/NGO workers ³⁵	424	97	63	185	38		807
TOTAL	157,052	66,063	276,363- 308,212	179,424	90,072	575	769,549- 801,398
TOTAL (rounded to nearest 1,000)	157,000	66,000	276,000- 308,000	179,000	90,000	600	770,000- 801,000

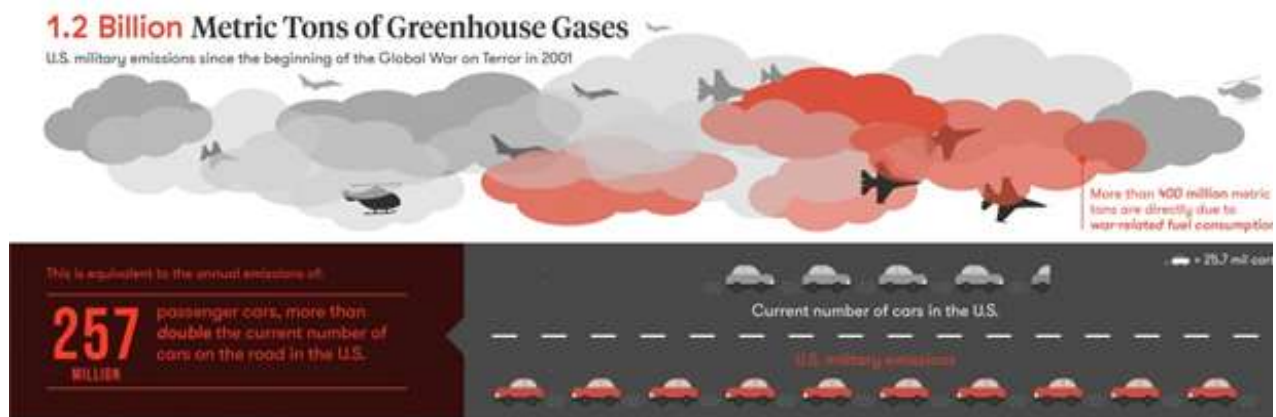
U.S. service

members represent fewer than 1 percent of direct war deaths. More than 7,000 of the total casualties are from U.S. service members. A plurality of those who have died as a direct result of the counterterror wars are civilians.

Many other people have died indirectly as a result of the wars. Because of war-related consequences including displacement and disease, many more people have died as a result of U.S. post-9/11 military activities.

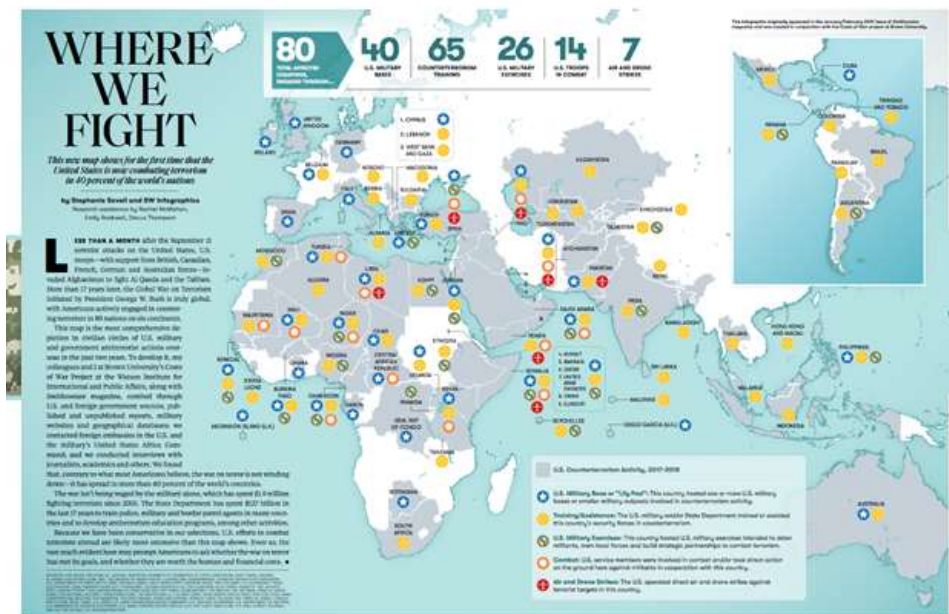
The Environmental Cost

The Pentagon is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world. It emits more greenhouse gases than whole countries, like Morocco and Switzerland. The post 9/11 wars are thus key contributors to climate change.



The Expanding Scope

The United States has post-9/11 military operations and programs run out of civilian departments for military purposes in at least 80 countries. Under the auspices of counterterrorism, U.S. operations stretch not only to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, but also to Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Mali, and many more countries than most Americans realize.



About Us

The [Costs of War](http://www.costsofwar.org) Project, housed at Brown University, was launched by a group of scholars and experts to document the unacknowledged costs of the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Please see www.costsofwar.org and don't hesitate to reach out to us at costsofwar@brown.edu.