

COSTS OF WAR

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

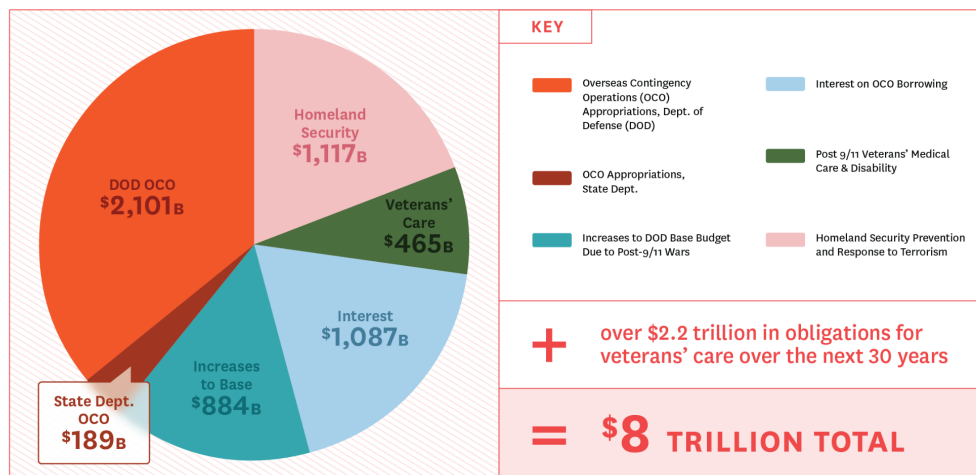
The Costs of War Project has created this resource drawn from our scholarly research as an overview of the true costs of U.S. post-9/11 wars. The “post-9/11 wars” refers to United States-led military operations and other government programs around the world that have grown out of President George W.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

About Us

The [Costs of War](#) Project, housed at Brown University's Watson Institute, 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.

The Budgetary Cost

Estimate of **U.S. Post-9/11 War Spending**, in \$ Billions FY2001–FY2022



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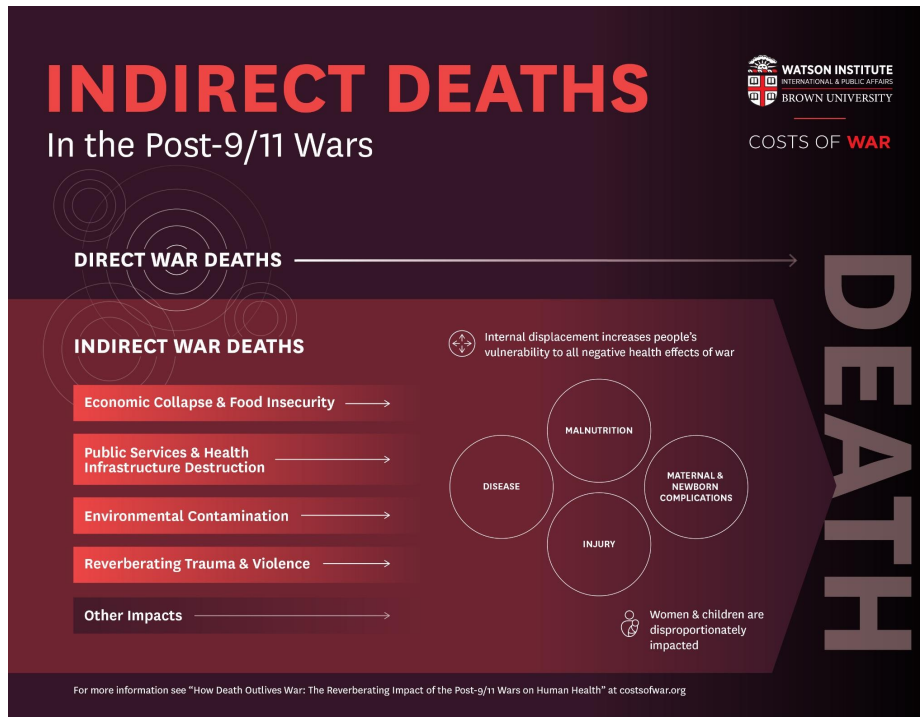
Post-9/11 wars have been extremely costly. Through 2021, the U.S. federal government has spent or been obligated to spend more than \$8 trillion on the post-9/11 wars. These are “credit card wars” that have largely been financed through borrowing.

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.

The Human Cost

	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iraq	Syria/ISIS	Yemen	Other	Total
U.S. Military	2,324	-	4,599	-	-	130	7,053
U.S. DOD Civilian	6	-	15		-	-	21
U.S. Contractors	3,917	90	3,650	19	2	511	8,189
National Military and Police	69,095	9,431	48,337- 52,337	51,483	-	N/A	178,346- 182,346
Other Allied Troops	1,144	-	324	11,000		-	12,468
Civilians	46,319	24,099	186,694- 210,038	138,947	12,690	N/A	408,749- 432,093
Opposition Fighters	52,893	32,838	36,806- 43,881	67,065	99,321	N/A	288,923- 295,998
Journalists/ Media Workers	74	87	282	75	33	129	680
Humanitarian/NGO Workers	446	105	64	227	46	8	896
TOTAL	176,218	66,650	280,771- 315,190	268,816	112,092	778	905,325- 939,744
TOTAL (Rounded to Nearest 1,000)	176,000	67,000	281,000- 315,000	269,000	112,000	1,000	905,000- 940,000

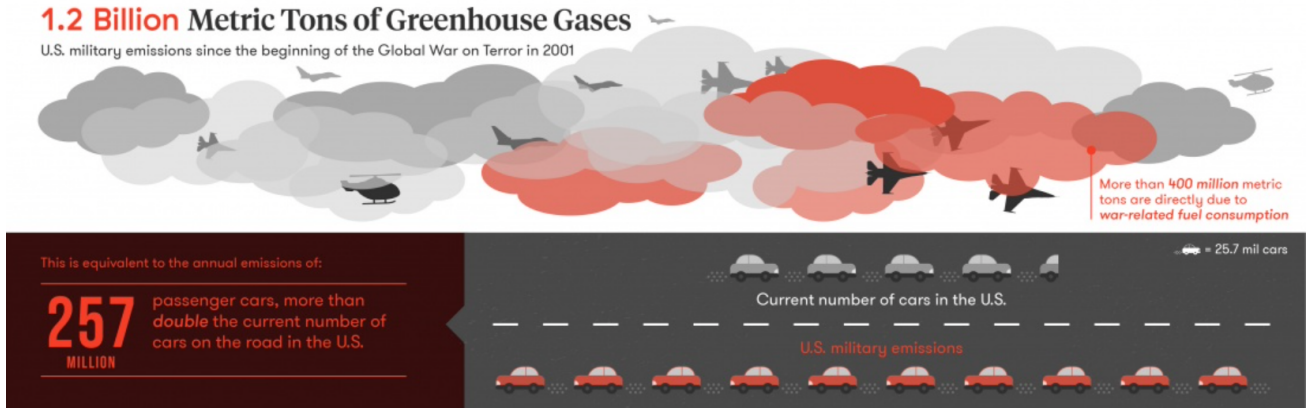
The body count continues to grow. An estimated 905,000 - 940,000 people – including U.S. soldiers, allied security forces, civilians, and militants – have died due to war violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria (in the fight against the Islamic State), Yemen, and elsewhere. At least 408,749 - 432,093 of those who have died were civilians.



Many other people have died indirectly as a result of the wars. An estimated 3.6-3.8 million indirect deaths have occurred in post-9/11 war zones, including in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, as of 2023. The total death toll in these war zones could be at least 4.5-4.7 million and counting, though the precise mortality figure remains unknown. Some people were killed in the fighting, but far more, especially children, have been killed by the reverberating effects of war, such as the spread of disease and malnutrition.

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 85 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.

