

# COSTS OF WAR



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Government War Spending Since 9/11 Exceeds \$5.9 Trillion

*New Study Details Massive Expenditures, Poor Accountability and Transparency,  
and No Strategy for Ending War Spending*

Washington, D.C. – Today, officials from the Costs of War Project held a press briefing at the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing room and released its 2018 Report detailing how the U.S. government has spent and obligated over \$5.9 trillion for wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other places around the world following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The Report, *United States Budgetary Costs of the Post-9/11 Wars Through FY2019*, by Boston University Professor of Political Science, Dr. Neta Crawford, is part of the Costs of War Project at the Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs at Brown University. Also participating in the briefing was Steven Aftergood, a Director at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), who discussed obstacles within the government that prevented greater understanding of the federal budget process.

The Report summarizes the direct war costs—all Department of Defense Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding and State Department war expenditures—war-related costs including increases in military spending, care for veterans, Department of Homeland Security spending, and interest payments on borrowing for these wars. The estimate for total U.S. war-related spending through FY2019 is \$4.9 trillion. Additionally, because the U.S. is contractually and morally obligated to pay for health care for post-9/11 veterans through their lifetimes, it is imperative to estimate costs for veterans for the next several decades at \$1 trillion, bringing the total expenditures to \$5.9 trillion.

During the briefing, Dr. Crawford discussed how the Report was compiled and which cost categories were included in the overall figure. “The Costs of War Report includes more information than the occasionally-released summaries from the Pentagon,” stated Dr. Crawford. “This Report goes beyond the Pentagon’s numbers because war costs are more than what we

spend in any one year on what's called the 'tip of the spear.' There are many other cost categories behind the spear that need to be included in the overall calculation," she continued.

Researchers working on the 2018 Report confronted an increased lack of transparency and clarity from resources within the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, Veterans Affairs, and the White House. FAS Director Aftergood commented on the national security classification system and the recent 'over-classification' of defense budget documents and a hindrance to public access. He stated, "the ability of the public to 'follow the money' expended by its government is understood to be an essential prerequisite to self-rule. Budget data that are secret, unreliable, or otherwise unavailable are incompatible with constitutional democracy." Mr. Aftergood cited recent instances where the Pentagon over-classified materials they didn't want the public to see and withheld the numbers of US troops deployed in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq, thus obscuring and diminishing public awareness of current military operations. To obtain a copy of the Costs of War Project Report for 2018, go to: <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2018/united-states-budgetary-costs-post-911-wars-through-fy2019-59-trillion-spent-and>

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*The Costs of War Project, housed at Brown University, was launched by a group of scholars from around the US to document the hidden or unacknowledged costs of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and related violence elsewhere in the "war on terror." The project has issued, among other reports, the most comprehensive recent estimates of the human toll and US budgetary costs of these wars.*