

Blood and Treasure: United States Budgetary Costs and Human Costs of 20 Years of War in Iraq and Syria, 2003-2023

550,000-580,000 people have been killed in Iraq and Syria. The Total costs of the War are 2.9 Trillion Dollars

By [Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs](#)

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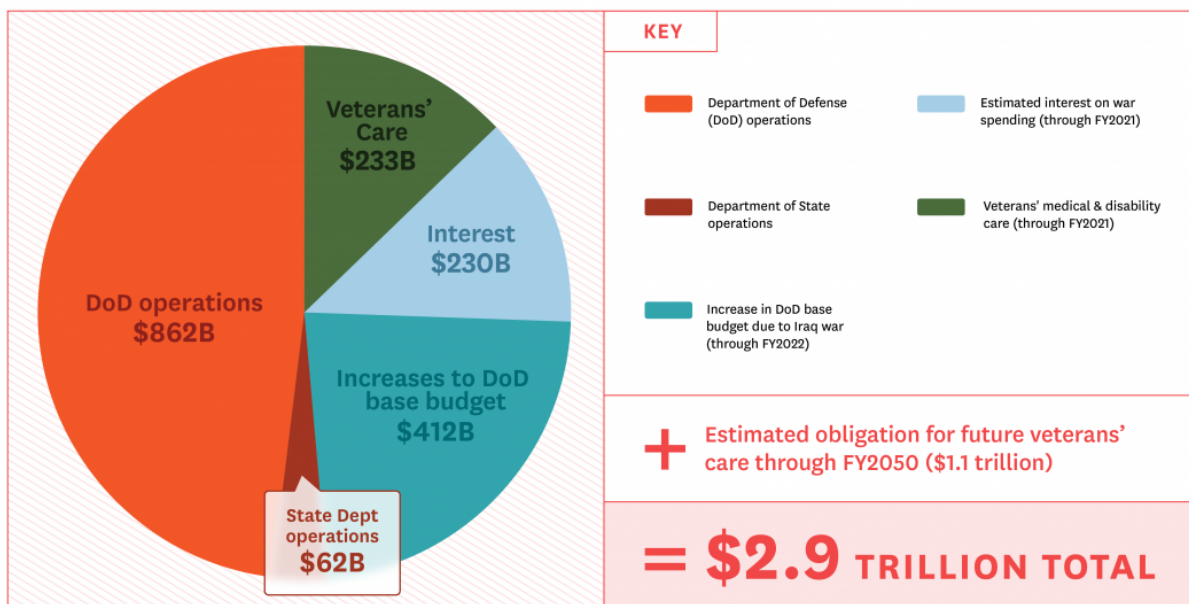
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This paper examines the total costs of the war in Iraq and Syria, which are expected to exceed half a million human lives and \$2.89 trillion. This budgetary figure includes costs to date, estimated at about \$1.79 trillion, and the costs of veterans' care through 2050. Since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, between 550,000-580,000 people have been killed in Iraq and Syria — the current locations of the United States' Operation Inherent Resolve — and several times as many may have died due to indirect causes such as preventable diseases. More than 7 million people from Iraq and Syria are currently refugees, and nearly 8 million people are internally displaced in the two countries.

Estimated U.S. Costs of War in Iraq and Syria, in \$ Billions FY2001–FY2023



Source: [Brown University](#)

This report also estimates that 98 to 122 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMTCO₂e) were emitted from U.S. military operations between 2003 and 2021 in the war zone, calculated as 12 to 15 percent of the DOD's total operational greenhouse gas emissions.

The U.S. war in Iraq began on March 19-20, 2003. Most allied and U.S. forces left Iraq in 2011, but the U.S. returned to significant military operations in Iraq and Syria in late 2014 in fighting that was undertaken to remove Islamic State from territory it had seized in those two countries. The war continues, with a nearly \$400 million budget request from the Biden Administration this month to counter ISIS.

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