

# Since 9/11, US Has Spent \$21 Trillion on Militarism at Home and Abroad

"Our \$21 trillion investment in militarism has cost far more than dollars."

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*In the 20 years since the September 11 attacks, the United States government has spent more than \$21 trillion at home and overseas on militaristic policies that led to the creation of a vast surveillance apparatus, worsened mass incarceration, intensified the war on immigrant communities, and caused incalculable human suffering in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and elsewhere.*

According to [State of Insecurity: The Cost of Militarization Since 9/11](#) (pdf), a report released Wednesday by the National Priorities Project, the U.S. government's so-called "War on Terror" has "remade the U.S. into a more militarized actor both around the world and at home" by pouring vast resources into the Pentagon, federal law enforcement, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), an agency established in response to the September 11 attacks.

Released in the wake of the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan after two decades of devastating war and occupation, the new report argues that the Taliban's rapid takeover of the country "raises deep questions about our military investments to date."

"Twenty years ago, we were promised a vision of the War on Terror that did not come to pass: that Afghanistan would not become a quagmire, or that the Iraq War would be over in 'five weeks or five days or five months' and cost a mere \$60 billion," the report notes. "As the country went to war and refocused domestic security spending on terrorism, few had any inkling of the far-reaching ramifications for the military, veterans, immigration, or domestic law enforcement."

The National Priorities Project (NPP), an initiative of the Institute for Policy Studies, estimates that of the \$21 trillion the U.S. invested in "foreign and domestic militarization" in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, \$16 trillion went to the military, \$3 trillion to veterans' programs, \$949 billion to DHS, and \$732 billion to federal law enforcement.

In addition to fueling death and destruction overseas, the new report stresses that spending on overseas wars heightened domestic militarization, making police [crackdowns on dissent](#) at home even more violent.

“There is evidence that the War on Terror drove transfers of military equipment to police, as surges ended and the Pentagon looked to divest from surplus equipment,” the analysis notes. “Transfers in 2010, when the military was still deeply engaged in the War on Terror, totaled \$30 million. Over the next few years, the U.S. pulled forces out of Iraq, and military equipment transfers skyrocketed, peaking at \$386 million in 2014. Today, transfers are still far higher than they were early in the War on Terror, totaling \$152 million in 2020 and \$101 million in just the first half of 2021.”

Lindsay Koshgarian, program director of NPP and lead author of the new report, said in a [statement](#) Wednesday that “our \$21 trillion investment in militarism has cost far more than dollars.”

“It has cost the lives of civilians and troops lost in war, and the lives ended or torn apart by our brutal and punitive immigration, policing, and mass incarceration systems,” said Koshgarian. “Meanwhile, we’ve neglected so much of what we really need. Militarism hasn’t protected us from a pandemic that at its worst took the toll of a 9/11 every day, from poverty and instability driven by staggering inequality, or from hurricanes and wildfires made worse by climate change.”

According to the new report, it would have cost far less than \$21 trillion for the U.S. to make major investments in climate action and other key global and domestic priorities. As the analysis notes:

- \$4.5 trillion could fully decarbonize the U.S. electric grid;
- \$2.3 trillion could create five million \$15-per-hour jobs with benefits and cost-of-living adjustments for 10 years;
- \$1.7 trillion could erase student debt;
- \$449 billion could continue the extended Child Tax Credit for another 10 years;
- \$200 billion could guarantee free preschool for every 3-and-4-year old for 10 years, and raise teacher pay; and
- \$25 billion could provide Covid vaccines for the population of low-income countries.

The NPP report was published on same day that Brown University’s Costs of War Project released a new [analysis](#) estimating that U.S.-led post-9/11 wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have killed at least 929,000 people—a figure deemed likely to be a “vast undercount”—and cost more than \$8 trillion.

“The end of the war in Afghanistan represents a chance to reinvest in our real needs,” Koshgarian said Wednesday. “Twenty years from now, we could live in a world made safer by investments in infrastructure, job creation, support for families, public health, and new energy systems, if we are willing to take a hard look at our priorities.”

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*Featured image: Members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard transfer Capt. David A. Wisniewski's casket to a caisson while HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters fly overhead during his funeral at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Aug. 23, 2010. Wisniewski died July 2, 2010, from injuries suffered during a helicopter crash in Afghanistan. (Credit: SSgt Gina Chiaverotti-Paige/Public Domain)*

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## [America's "War on Terrorism"](#)

 by Michel Chossudovsky

ISBN Number: 9780973714715

List Price: \$24.95

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Special Price: \$18.00

In this new and expanded edition of Michel Chossudovsky's 2002 best seller, the author blows away the smokescreen put up by the mainstream media, that 9/11 was an attack on America by "Islamic terrorists". Through meticulous research, the author uncovers a military-intelligence ploy behind the September 11 attacks, and the cover-up and complicity of key members of the Bush Administration.

The expanded edition, which includes twelve new chapters focuses on the use of 9/11 as a pretext for the invasion and illegal occupation of Iraq, the militarisation of justice and law enforcement and the repeal of democracy.

According to Chossudovsky, the "war on terrorism" is a complete fabrication based on the illusion that one man, Osama bin Laden, outwitted the \$40 billion-a-year American intelligence apparatus. The "war on terrorism" is a war of conquest. Globalisation is the final march to the "New World Order", dominated by Wall Street and the U.S. military-industrial complex.

September 11, 2001 provides a justification for waging a war without borders. Washington's agenda consists in extending the frontiers of the American Empire to facilitate complete U.S. corporate control, while installing within America the institutions of the Homeland Security State.

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