## The Cost of War

**The Iraq war’s 500th amputee was airlifted back to the U.S. last week. Of the 22,700 U.S. soldiers wounded in the war, 2.2 percent have lost one or more limbs. *(Time.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 2, 2007)***

**Muslim views of the United States turned to outright animosity after the Iraq war, leading to increased support for Osama bin Laden, according to a poll of 16,000 people in 20 nations. “The bottom has fallen out of support for America in the Muslim world, and antagonism has deepened and widened," said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in Washington, which conducted the poll after the heavy fighting had ended. Kohut said the polls found the Muslim world not only dislikes U.S. policy, but increasingly dislikes Americans and are showing that by boycotting American products and technology. He said one trend that will be worrisome for American diplomats is that popular support for Osama bin Laden is swelling in cities of predominantly Muslim countries like Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and Pakistan as well as in the Palestinian Authority. Half of those polled in those countries said they had confidence that bin Laden would do the right thing in world affairs. *(Lance Gay, Scripps Howard News Service, in Rocky Mountain News, June 4, 2003)***

**In World War I, almost eight million men fought for Austria-Hungary, and 90 percent of them were either wounded or killed. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The U.S. is going the way of all empires, said Anwar Kemal. Empires are not always conquered militarily. They sometimes collapse from within, once their economic supremacy is challenged. And that seems to happen when they can’t afford to pay for their wars. The British Empire, for example, petered out at least partly “on account of the staggering financial expenditures that it incurred during two world wars.” And the Soviet Union bankrupted itself on the war in Afghanistan. Similarly, the U.S. is now experiencing an economic meltdown because of its unsustainable wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There’s still time for it to salvage some of its international standing and influence. It just has to “extricate the country from the unnecessary war in Iraq” and bring stability to Afghanistan. Once it has retrenched militarily, it should “balance its books by reverting to the old American values of financial discipline, investment in knowledge, and hard work.” If the U. S. fails to take these steps, it will become history’s latest example of “imperial overreach.” *(The Week magazine, October 17, 2008)***

**The U.N. estimates that 40 percent of the bomblets that Israel dropped on Lebanon during the war with Hezbollah failed to explode. In the seven weeks since the conflict ended, many of these shells have detonated, killing 18 civilians and wounding more than 100. *(The Boston Globe, as it appeared in The Week magazine on October 27, 2006)***

**In 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt sent to Congress a budget of $109 billion, $100 billion of which was for the war in Europe and the Pacific. *(Ben Franklin’s Almanac)***

**The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a shortage of bullets, affecting police departments across the nation, which are cutting back on live-fire training. U. S. soldiers are now firing 1 billion bullets per year. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine on September 7, 2007)***

**Tucked away in last year’s military spending bill was a lump sum of $20 million to fund a national celebration “for commemoration of success” in Iraq and Afghanistan. Left unspent, the money has been rolled over into this year’s budget. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 20, 2006)***

**Children of veterans of the first Persian Gulf War are more likely to have three specific birth defects than those of soldiers who never served in the gulf, a government study has found. Researchers found the infants born to male veterans of the 1991 war had higher rates of two types of heart valve defects. They also found a higher rate of a genital urinary defect in boys conceived after the war to Gulf War veteran mothers. In addition, Gulf War veterans' children born after the war had a certain kidney defect that was not found in Gulf War veterans' children born before the war. *(Associated Press, printed in Rocky Mountain News on June 4, 2003)***

**U.S. authorities last year doled out $19.7 million to Iraqis in “condolence payments” for civilian injuries and deaths due to American military actions – up from $5 million the year before. Officials said the increase reflects more urban combat, as well as a greater willingness among Iraqis to come forward to claim compensation. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine on June 23, 2006)***

**About 4 million people – half of them children under 5 – have died as a result of fighting between Congo’s army and rebel militias since 1998. Every six months, the toll of Congolese who die of malnutrition, disease, or violence equals that of 2004’s deadly Indian Ocean tsunami. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine on August 11, 2006)***

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**The real cost of endless war: I hate to spoil “the charming romance of war,” said Steve Chapman, but the official cost of trying to transform Iraq and Afghanistan into democracies just surpassed $1 trillion. In the age of “TARP, Obamacare, and LeBron James,” that may not sound like much, but it’s actually more than we’ve spent on any war except World War II. In fact, Afghanistan and Iraq “have cost more in real dollars than the Korean and Vietnam wars combined.” And $1 trillion doesn’t even come close to covering their true costs, which include future veterans’ benefits and the interest on the massive debt we’ve accumulated in getting China to finance our foreign adventures. In 2008, scholars Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes pegged the long-run cost of the two wars at $5 trillion to $7 trillion, nearly twice this year’s federal budget. But Bilmes now says costs are actually outpacing those estimates, and could eventually read $8 trillion. That, of course, is in addition to the 34,000 Americans killed or wounded, and the tens of thousands who’ve returned with invisible damage to their psyches. What a price to pay for learning that even the U.S. cannot afford “to redesign the world to suit us.” *(The Week magazine, August 20, 2010)***

**The actual cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is $1.6 trillion, about double the administration’s funding requests, according to a report by congressional Democrats. The study attempted to measure the “hidden” costs of the wars, including interest on money borrowed to fight them, lost investment, and the expense of long-term care for wounded veterans. The price tag works out to $20,900 per American family, the study said. The White House dismissed the report as “partisan and political.” *(The Week magazine, November 23, 2007)***

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**About 300,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – 18 percent of those who have served – are suffering from depression or post-traumatic stress syndrome, according to a comprehensive new Rand Corp. analysis. More than half of those affected are not receiving adequate treatment, and the study warned of “long-term consequences” for the vets and for the nation. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 2, 2008)***

**The number of disabled veterans has jumped by 25 percent since 2001, to 2.9 million. With tens of thousands of Iraq war veterans coming home with such injuries as multiple amputations, brain damage, and burns, the federal government expects to be spending $59 billion a year to compensate injured vets in 25 years, up from $29 billion this year. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 23, 2008)***

**On April 6, 1917, the United States formally entered the First World War. By the time the war ended on November 11, 1918, more than 2 million American soldiers had served on the battlefields of Western Europe, and some 50,000 of them had lost their lives. *(Moments In Time – The History Channel)***

**The war in Afghanistan is on track to become the nation's most expensive combat operation since Vietnam -- if it hasn't reached that milestone already. Although the Pentagon hasn't released a breakdown of costs of Operation Enduring Freedom, White House budget director Mitchell Daniels has estimated the price at about $1 billion a month. *(Lisa Hoffman, Scripps Howard News Service, printed in Rocky Mountain News, January 23, 2002)***

**In his last two budgets, President Bush made no provisions for funding a possible war with Iraq. Now the probable costs of that venture are becoming clearer. The administration is preparing to ask Congress for supplemental appropriations -- unbudgeted additional spending -- of at least $60 billion to fund fighting and reconstruction in Iraq over the next six months. Meanwhile, loose estimates of the cost of maintaining an occupation force in Iraq run anywhere from $6 billion to $20 billion a year. *(Rocky Mountain News, March 3, 2003)***

**$600 million is what the Army and Marine Corps together paid during the past year in bonuses and other incentives to attract volunteers. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, January 13, 2009)***

**After eight years of war, bombings, and brutal sectarian violence, Iraq’s civilian population is now suffering an epidemic of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental illnesses, health officials there say. But there are only 100 psychiatrists to serve a population of 30 million. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 2-9, 2010)***

**Tens of thousands of people die every month in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Lancet reports, from easily preventable diarrhea, malaria, respiratory infections, and malnutrition – a legacy of war. *(Discover magazine, March, 2006)***

**So far, the U.S. has spent $750 million on the war in Libya. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 27, 2011)***

**About 46,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have already gone to Veterans Affairs centers seeking treatment for mental health problems. *(Newsday, as it appeared in The Week magazine March 31, 2006)***

**Erecting a missile defense system to give the nation limited protection from ballistic missile attack would cost nearly $60 billion through the year 2015, according to a congressional report released Tuesday. The Congressional Budget Office said that if successfully engaged a national defense system would defend the entire country against several tens of missiles. It cautioned, however, that many believe that a country just developing long-range missiles could use simple countermeasures rendering a missile defense system impotent. *(Jim Abrams, Associated Press, printed in Rocky Mountain News, April 26, 2000)***

**War: Not necessarily depressing: Some soldiers are traumatized by war, but many come home in better mental shape than when they left, says the British Journal of Psychiatry. Researchers at King’s College London questioned 421 members of the 16 Air Assault Brigade of Colchester before and after taking part in operations in Iraq for about four months, and concluded that they underwent “a highly significant relative improvement in mental health.” But these were not typical soldiers: They were all in an elite unit which maintained high morale while in Iraq, and they all saw positive results from their service. Nonetheless, said researcher Dr. Jamie Hacker Hughes, the findings challenge the stereotype of the traumatized and depressed veteran. Participating in a war, he said, “may not be as deleterious to psychological well-being as previously thought.” *(The Week magazine, June 24, 2005)***

**The price tag for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will soon surpass that of the decade-long Vietnam War. By next year, the cost of ongoing U.S. military operations since 9/11 is expected to approach $600 billion. The Vietnam War, in today’s dollars, cost $536 billion. (*USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 1, 2006)***

**Congress has approved $18.6 billion in taxpayer funds for reconstruction in Iraq. Here is the breakdown of how some of it might be spent: $5 billion for new electricity generation and transmission. $4 billion each for water projects and security. $1 billion for oil sector repairs. $100 million each for gas turbine electricity plants at the northern town of Badoosh, and three in Baghdad. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 23, 2003)***

**U.S. military commanders say foreign fighters are being actively recruited by loyalists to Saddam Hussein to join the resistance against U.S. forces in Iraq, posing a new challenge to efforts to stabilize the country. Military officials say U.S. troops in Iraq have had to contend with Syrians, Saudis, Yemenis, Algerians, Lebanese, and Chechens. Many of these fighters took up arms against the United States during the U.S. thrust to Baghdad. But a significant number remain, and a new effort is underway to lure more to Iraq to join the fight against the Americans, officials say. *(Michael R. Gordon with Douglas Jehl, in The New York Times as printed in The Denver Post on June 22, 2003)***

**Reimbursement: $2,500 – Largest sum the Pentagon allows as payment to families of Iraqi civilians killed by actions of U.S. and coalition forces during combat. $100.000 – The “death gratuity payment” issued by the Department of Defense to families of U.S. service members who are killed in a combat zone or operation*. (Department of Defense, as it appeared in Time magazine, July 2, 2007)***

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**Congress approved $82 billion in emergency spending to cover military costs in Iraq and Afghanistan. The measure brought the total bill for the wars to $290 billion, with Iraq accounting for two-thirds. The measure was intended to cover costs through September, but some analysts say the Bush administration will need to request more money in a few months. *(The Week magazine, May 20, 2005)***

**Defense spending, even with the war in Iraq, is less than you think. The Fiscal Year 2007 budget called for $572 billion for defense, 20 percent of total federal spending. Iraq accounts for about a fifth of that. During the Vietnam War, defense spending ate up about 45 percent of the budget and, in 1943, 70 percent of federal spending was devoted to the world war. *(Mike Rosen, in Rocky Mountain News, October 5, 2007)***

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**$900.000 is how much the Pentagon is paying a contractor to destroy old F-14s rather than sell the spares at the risk of their falling into the wrong hands, including Iran’s. The Tomcat was a strike fighter with a price tag of roughly $38 million. By the 1980s it was a movie star with a leading role in the Tom Cruise classic Top Gun. The Pentagon retired its F-14s last fall. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News on September 3, 2007)***

**Price of victory: $138 billion (in today's dollars): Cost of the Marshall Plan, the plan to rebuild Europe after World War II by Secretary of State George Marshall. The price was $13.3 billion in 1940s dollars. $30 billion to $105 billion – The American Academy of Arts and Sciences' estimated cost for rebuilding Iraq in the next decade. *(Rocky Mountain News, March 26, 2003)***

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