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Current spending on Operation Iraqi Freedom (The Iraq War) and the Global War on terror are a fraction of what they were at their peak. Current statistics for the War on Terror show about 90 billion dollars were spent in 2017, as for Operation Iraqi Freedom the numbers are miniscule as the operation is all but discontinued.

Ninety billion dollars is no small sum of money to be spending on a war with no clear enemy, but in 2008 at the peak of spending the War on Terror cost a staggering 2.4 trillion dollars and the war in Iraq cost an equally surprising 1.9 trillion, while the war on drugs was just under 22 billion dollars.

While the spending for the War on Drugs between 2003 and 2013 rose at a slight but constant level, the cost of both the Iraq and WOT moved sporadically, soaring in just two years from 1.1 trillion to 1.9 trillion, and 1.3 trillion to 2.4 trillion respectively.

The costs of these two wars would not remain at its peak level as they both immediately dropped significantly in 2009, each by more than 32 billion dollars in just one year. These drop offs can mostly be attributed to this being the period of withdrawal from Iraq. The end of 2008 saw troops leaving cities and by 2011 troops were out of Iraq leaving behind only private contractors.

The war in Iraq was a large chunk of spending for the WOT and in 2012, with no more troops on the ground the cost of the WOT dropped, alongside the cost of operation Iraqi Freedom as now all that was being funded were training programs for the Iraqi Army. At this point the cost of the Iraq war dropped so low that it was around the same level as the War on Drugs, about 24 billion dollars. The price of the WOT continued to drop heavily as well, but was more than 4 times the cost of the Iraq war in 2012, and still double the cost in 2013.

The drop off from their respective peaks shows a change of over 1.5 trillion dollars in just 5 years. This staggering drop in spending is a very good thing, saving the US and its citizens billions of dollars.

Additional data gathered shows the amount of “boots on the ground” over these 10 years in both the War on Terror and in the Iraq War. The number of troops in each conflict goes parallel to how much was being spent. It peaks around 2008 and then begins to decline. The decline for the Iraq War is far more dramatic because by 2011 the last troops were leaving. The number of soldiers active in the war on terror also drops but does not reach zero, although it is significantly lower in 2013 than it was in 2003. As of right now the Iraq war is over, and the number of troops on the ground in the global War on Terror continues to drop, being just 12,457 soldiers in 2016.

As for the War on Drugs. The cost of the War on Drugs is of course significantly lower than either Iraq or the WOT, but the issues with the War on Drugs is that it is not going down. While both the other conflicts rise and fall, ending the period from 2003-2013 costing significantly less than they did at the beginning, the War on Drugs continuously goes up. The increase over the entire period of a mere 7 billion dollars does not seem like a lot, but shows a more troubling trend that it is not working, just costing more. This is shown to be true by todays statistic that in 2017 the War on Drugs will cost about 31 billion dollars, again 8 billion more dollars than it cost 4 years ago in 2013.

Considering for a moment though that the War on Drugs is an entirely different sort of war than either Iraq or the WOT, maybe it makes sense that the cost will remain level, only rising slightly every year. The WOT and the Iraq War both were wars that were and are fought with soldiers and to defeat some sort of opponent. The War on Drugs is, sadly, an ongoing conflict involving government agencies and our own citizens just as much as any foreign forces. It is set to be more of a steady deterrent to rampant drug trafficking and use, both domestically and foreign.

All that is totally clear is that conventional wars, such as Iraq and the WOT are extremely pricey, but have their ups and downs depending on the conflict and situation. On the other hand, a very unconventional “war” like the War on Drugs keeps its cost for the most part completely constant.