

# Ron Paul Recommends Cutting Military Budget by 75% After Pentagon Fails Audit. U.S. Has Spent \$6 Trillion on Wars



A new study from Brown University estimates that the US has spent \$5.93 trillion on multiple wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, and other places since 9/11. This figure is much higher than official estimates because it factored in the cost of medical and disability care for soldiers, and future costs, interest on the extra money borrowed for the wars, and other unseen expenditures.

The Pentagon spent nearly a billion dollars for an audit to determine where it has spent trillions of dollars, but failed. Ron Paul says that the lost trillions have nothing to do with defense, as the money is instead used to prop up the high lifestyles of those connected to the military industrial complex. Paul says that the real problem is not waste and fraud, but the belief that the US must maintain a global military empire. He further stated that military spending could be reduced by 75% if we returned to a well-defended republic.

A new report from Brown University is aiming to provide a close estimate of the cost of the overall cost to the US government of its myriad post-9/11 wars and assorted global wars on terror. The estimate is that \$5.933 trillion has been spent through fiscal year 2019.

This is, of course, vastly higher than official figures, owing to the Pentagon trying to oversimplify the costs into simply overseas contingency operations. It is only when one considers the cost of medical and disability care for soldiers, and future such costs, along with things like the interest on the extra money borrowed for the wars, that the true cost becomes clear.

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The Pentagon has finally completed its first ever audit and the results are as many of us expected. After spending nearly a billion dollars to find out what has happened to trillions in unaccounted-for spending, the long look through the books has concluded that only ten percent of all Pentagon agencies pass muster. I am surprised any of them did.

Even the Pentagon is not surprised by the failure of the audit. "We failed the audit. But we never expected to pass it," said Deputy Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan. Can we imagine any large US company subject to the prying eyes of the IRS being so unfazed by the discovery that its books have been so mis-handled?

As with all government programs, but especially when it comes to military spending, the failure of a program never leads to calls for funding reductions. The Pentagon's failure to properly account for the trillions of taxpayer dollars shoveled in year after year only means, they say, that we need to send more money! Already they are claiming that with more resources – meaning money – they can fix some of the problems identified by the audit.

If you subsidize something you get much more of it, and in this case we are subsidizing Pentagon incompetence. Expect much more of it.

Outgoing chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Mac Thornberry, warned against concluding that this mishandling trillions of dollars should make us hesitant to continue sending trillions more to the Pentagon. The failed audit "should not be used as an excuse for arbitrary cuts that reverse the progress we have begun on rebuilding our strength and readiness," he said.

The neocons concur. Writing in the Free Beacon, editor Matthew Continetti (who happens to be Bill Kristol's son-in-law) warns that now is "the wrong time to cut defense."

But I agree with the young neoconservative Continetti. I would never support cutting a penny of defense. However the Pentagon's lost trillions have nothing to do with defense. That is money propping up the high lifestyles of those connected to the military-industrial complex.

Continetti and the neocons love to throw out bogeymen like China and Russia as excuses for more military spending, but in fact they are hardly objective observers. Look at how much the military contractors spend funding the neocon publications and neocon think tanks telling us that we need more military spending! All this money is stolen from the productive economy and diverted to enrich neocon cheerleaders at our expense.

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