



# A VOTE FOR MORE WAR

## THE COST TO BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

July 2007

With Congress' recent vote for an additional \$100 billion in war spending, the total spent or allocated for the Iraq War alone rises to nearly half a trillion dollars. The cost to taxpayers of Washington now totals \$10.4 billion.<sup>1</sup>

In the lead up to the war, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget stated that the Iraq War would cost only between \$50-\$60 billion. The White House discounted its own economic advisor when he suggested that the war could cost between \$100-\$200 billion.

### The human costs<sup>2</sup>

- ◆ 3,643 U.S. soldiers dead
  - 75 from Washington
- ◆ 26,953 U.S. soldiers wounded
  - 799 from Washington
- ◆ Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead
- ◆ 1.7 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq
- ◆ 2 million Iraqi refugees in other countries

The half a trillion dollar price tag does not even begin to cover future costs. The war is deficit-financed, and future spending on veterans' health care and disability payments will be substantial. One estimate that included the future budgetary and economic costs exceeded \$2 trillion.<sup>3</sup>

### The cost to the taxpayers of Bellingham is \$83.9 million so far. If that money were spent locally, the following could have been provided.<sup>4</sup>

- ▶ 2,800 people could have been provided with health care coverage each year since the war began; AND
- ▶ 100 affordable housing units could have been built; AND
- ▶ 100 school teachers could have been hired since the war began; AND
- ▶ 900 students could have received tuition and fees for four years at a state university.

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>NPP's estimate of the cost of the Iraq War includes only incremental *budgetary* costs, not interest costs or future costs. The number is based on the analysis of legislation appropriating funding for the Iraq War and Congressional Research Service reports and includes \$78 billion of the \$100 billion in additional war spending. State breakdowns are based on the share of taxes paid by each state into the federal funds budget according to IRS data. <sup>2</sup>Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, Dept. of Defense Directorate of Information Operations and Reports, *The Lancet*, and UNHCR. <sup>3</sup>L. Bilmes and J. Stiglitz, 'Encore,' *The Milken Institute Review*, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2006; includes economic and future budgetary costs. <sup>4</sup>City breakdowns are based on population and relative income and state breakdowns; trade-offs are based on state averages.

# For every day the war continues, more lives lost, more dollars wasted

▶ **More dead:** May was the deadliest month in 2007 for U.S. soldiers with 128 killed.

▶ **More dollars:** Congress is already debating another \$142 billion in war spending for next fiscal year, most of which will be for the Iraq War. The military budget is already higher than at any point since World War II.

## Nearly half a trillion dollars? On average:

- \$275 million every day
- \$11 million each hour
- \$191,000 each minute
- \$3,180 each second
- \$4,100 for every household in the U.S.

▶ **Permanent scars:** Apart from the tens of thousands of reported U.S. casualties, nearly one in five returning veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>5</sup> The human and financial costs of this war will haunt future generations to come.

▶ **Americans know:** A poll released in late May showed that 61 percent of Americans now believe we should have stayed out of Iraq altogether. Three-quarters of Americans perceive the war as going very badly.<sup>6</sup>

▶ **U.S. not wanted:** More than 60 percent of Iraqis approve of attacking US-led forces and almost 80 percent of Iraqis believe that the U.S. military presence is provoking more conflict than it is preventing. Moreover, a poll in four Muslim countries showed that very large majorities believe that the U.S. seeks to undermine Islam, and that preventing terrorism is not the primary goal of the “war on terrorism.”<sup>7</sup>

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**Notes:** <sup>5</sup>A National Center for PTSD study indicated that 18% of veterans returning from Iraq had PTSD. <sup>6</sup>Poll shows view of Iraq War is most negative since start, *New York Times*, May 27, 2007. <sup>7</sup>Program on International Policy Attitudes, ‘The Iraqi public on the U.S. presence and the future of Iraq,’ September 27, 2006; PIPA, ‘Muslim public opinion on U.S. policy, attacks on civilians and Al Qaeda,’ April 24, 2007.

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