

War Costing \$720 Million Each Day, Group Says

By [Kari Lydersen](#)
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, September 22, 2007; Page A11

CHICAGO, Sept. 21 -- The money spent on one day of the [Iraq](#) war could buy homes for almost 6,500 families or health care for 423,529 children, or could outfit 1.27 million homes with renewable electricity, according to the American Friends Service Committee, which displayed those statistics on large banners in cities nationwide Thursday and Friday.

The war is costing \$720 million a day or \$500,000 a minute, according to the group's analysis of the work of Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz and [Harvard](#) public finance lecturer Linda J. Bilmes.

The estimates made by the group, which opposes the conflict, include not only the immediate costs of war but also ongoing factors such as long-term health care for veterans, interest on debt and replacement of military hardware.

"The wounded are coming home, and many of them have severe brain and spinal injuries, which will require round-the-clock care for the rest of their lives," said [Michael McConnell](#), Great Lakes regional director of the AFSC, a peace group affiliated with the Quaker church.

The \$720 million figure breaks down into \$280 million a day from Iraq war supplementary funding bills passed by Congress, plus \$440 million daily in incurred, but unpaid, long-term costs.

But some supporters of the Bush administration's policy in Iraq say that even if the war is costly, that fact is essentially immaterial.

"Either you think the war in Iraq supports America's national security, or not," said Frederick W. Kagan, a resident scholar at the [American Enterprise Institute](#). "If you think national security won't be harmed by withdrawing from Iraq, of course you would want to see that money spent elsewhere. I myself think that belief, on a certain level, is absurd, so the question of focusing on how much money we are spending there is irrelevant."

Advertisement
%7B%22ResponseBatch%22%3A%7B%22Message

The war's unpaid long-term costs do not include "macro-economic consequences" described by Bilmes and Stiglitz, including higher oil prices, loss of trade because of anti-American sentiments and lost productivity of killed or injured U.S. soldiers.

In 2006, Bilmes, who was an assistant secretary of commerce under President [Bill Clinton](#), and Stiglitz, a former chief economist at the [World Bank](#), placed the total cost of the Iraq war at more than \$2.2 trillion, not counting interest. The American Friends group used cost breakdowns and interest projections from the [Congressional Budget Office](#) to

calculate the daily cost of war emblazoned on the banners flown in [Boston](#), [San Francisco](#), [Philadelphia](#), [Chicago](#) and other cities.

Advertisement

Advertisement
Advertisement
Advertisement

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

[Invest with Fidelity Total Retirement Advantage](#)

[Be Prepared. Fight Identity Theft! Equifax.com.](#)

[Asbestos, Celebrex, Mesothelioma, Lung Cancer, Evra](#)

[T-Shirts, Custom Hats, Custom Koozies, Wedding Favors](#)

[Circuit City PC setup & home theater installation](#)

[T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Cingular/AT&T Phones](#)

[Banish the Aches and Pains That Come with Aging](#)

[Earn 4.30% APY at ING DIRECT. No Fees and No Minimums.](#)

TOOLBOX

[Resize](#)
[Text](#) [Save/Share +](#)
[Print This](#) [E-mail This](#)

COMMENT

washingtonpost.com readers have posted **85 comments** about this item.
[View All Comments »](#)

Comments are closed for this article.

[+ Discussion Policy](#)

The banners show what this could buy in terms of health care, Head Start programs, new elementary schools, free school lunches, renewable energy and hiring new teachers. Protest organizers say they hope to turn more people against the war by laying out its true financial impact.

"I think people are becoming more aware of these guns or butter questions," said Gary Gillespie, director of the group's Baltimore Urban Peace Program, which displayed the banners in the [Baltimore](#) suburb of [Bel Air](#) on Friday. "But when you talk about \$720 million a day, even people who work on this issue are shocked by the number and shocked by what could have been done with that money. War has no return -- you're not producing a product."

More on washingtonpost.com

[Charges Against Snipers Stir Debate on 'Baiting'](#)

[Democrat Barack Obama Speaks in Maine](#)

[U.S. Military Deaths in Iraq at 3,799](#)

[Rice: Late Terror Commander 'brilliant'](#)

» **Related Topics & Web Content**

powered by **Inform**

Most Viewed World Articles

[Blackwater Faced Bedlam, Embassy Finds](#)

[U.S. Kills a Leader Of Al-Qaeda in Iraq](#)

[After 50 Years, Passions Persist Over the Publication of 'Doctor Zhivago'](#)

[Junta Restricts Protesters, Communications in Burma](#)

» **Top 35 Most Viewed**

Iraq News to Your Site

Track casualties and key Washington Post coverage of U.S. strategy in Iraq with these widgets. Information automatically updates several times each week.

» [Get more widgets from washingtonpost.com](#)

© 2007 The Washington Post Company

Ads by Google

[The Global War for Oil](#)

The Last Domino Is Set To Fall. Why Oil's Prognosis=Terminal. New Rpt.
[EnergyAndCapital.com/Oil_War_Rpt](#)

[Pros & Cons of Iraq War](#)

Should the U.S. have attacked Iraq? Credible pros & cons in the debate
[www.USIraqProCon.org](#)

[Iraq war](#)

Is the Iraq war slowing terrorism or encouraging it? Vote Now!
[www.PollingPoint.com](#)

SEARCH:  [washingtonpost.com](#) Web:  Results by **Google**

[Search Archives](#)

[NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [LOCAL](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [CITY GUIDE](#)

[JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [RENTALS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[washingtonpost.com: Help](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#) | [mywashingtonpost.com](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS](#) | [Widgets](#) | [Archives](#)
[The Washington Post: Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Electronic Edition](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Post](#) | [National Weekly](#)
[The Washington Post Company: Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996-2007 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)