

Ten Years of War in Afghanistan: Costs and Consequences
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For The Congressional Progressive Caucus Peace & Security Task Force Panel:

Ten Years On: Why the War in Afghanistan Must End Now

6 October 2011 **Cannon Caucus Room**

I thank members of Congress, for the opportunity to outline some of the hidden or less visible costs and consequences of 10 years of war in Afghanistan.

I am a professor of Political Science at Boston University and a co-director of the Costs of War study based at Brown University. The testimony I give here is based on the research of the Costs of War project (www.costsofwar.org) and my more than 30 years as a scholar of war.

I will make 3 interrelated points which I will be able to elaborate on in response to questions:

First, the costs in blood and treasure in Afghanistan for the U.S. and its allies *and* for Afghans have been underestimated and undercounted. Further, a comprehensive accounting shows that the intensity of the war, from the perspective of both civilians and U.S. service members, is increasing, not decreasing.

Second, as Admiral Mike Mullen and General David Petraeus have repeatedly argued, the key element to U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is winning the trust of people of Afghanistan. Putting the best face on the effort, the results are mixed. Indeed, the hearts and mind strategy is arguably a failure. In many ways it has backfired.

Third, a consequence of the war in Afghanistan is the opening of a third major war zone in Pakistan. The tight linkages in U.S. strategy between the war in Afghanistan and U.S. operations in Pakistan have not helped the U.S. effort in Afghanistan and have led to instability and great loss of civilian life in Pakistan.

What has the war cost in treasure?

The Costs of War project estimate is that over the past 10 years the U.S. has spent more than \$2.3 trillion on the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and in other related operations such as in Yemen and in extra homeland security and so on.

Afghanistan's share of total war spending is about 35 percent of the total. The Congressional Research Service reported this year that Congressional appropriations for the DOD war in Afghanistan have totaled about \$416 billion. To that we can add appropriations for another \$25 billion in USAID and State Department and 2.1 billion in VA Medical expenses.

Thus, the total dollar appropriations for Operation Enduring Freedom, according the CRS is \$443.5 billion through this fiscal year.¹

An additional \$107 billion has been requested for next fiscal year, 2012. If Pentagon spending on Afghanistan remains at about \$100 billion for the years 2013-2014, Pentagon appropriations alone for Afghanistan will total approximately an additional \$300 billion through 2014.² There will of course be additional spending the State Department and US AID.

But if we just focus on what has already been spend or obligated over the last 10 years, the CRS figures are an undercount: it does not include several important categories of spending. For example:

- Interest on borrowing to pay for the wars, which will be tens of billions of dollars. Ryan Edwards of our project estimates that the U.S. has already paid about 185.4 billion in interest on just the Pentagon appropriations for all the wars. Interest paid on Pentagon appropriations for Afghanistan Operation Enduring Freedom is perhaps a third of that or about \$65 billion.
- Obligations to pay for Veterans medical and disability into the future. Work by Linda Bilmes for the Costs of War Project suggests that the total spent by the VA for medical and disability is more than what the CRS estimates and of course will grow for both Afghanistan and Iraq over the next 40 years will be between \$600 billion and a trillion dollars. As we know, the costs go up as Veterans age but they will also be higher because veterans of these wars, as a group are doing less well than veterans in previous wars. For example they are suffering higher rates of respiratory and cardiac illness.
- The expense of repairing or replacing all the bombs, bullets, aircraft and tanks that the U.S. has and will use in Afghanistan, the so-called reset costs. It does not include the increase to the Pentagon's base budget that can be attributed to the war. If we included the portion of the total increase in Pentagon base spending costs that we can attribute solely to the war in Afghanistan, that number would be an additional \$100 - 200 billion.
- It often does not include the total foreign aid and military assistance given to other countries who are part of the U.S. war effort such as Uzbekistan and Pakistan. War related aid to Pakistan alone since 2004 totals more than \$14 billion.

What has the war cost in blood?

The official DoD count is 1,685 U.S. service personnel have been killed in Afghanistan with more than 14,200 wounded since 2001. Another 200 US soldiers have been killed in other aspects of Operation Enduring Freedom, for example in Yemen, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan³

¹ Amy Belasco, "The Costs of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 2001," Congressional Research Service, March 2011.

² The Obama administration plans to turn control of security over to Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, 22 August 2011.

³ Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>. Accessed 1 October 2011.

The death and injury toll for private security and other contractors is often undercounted as well. Contractors are of course often performing roles that were traditionally assigned to the military. Since 2001, 887 contractors have been killed⁴ and 5,171 have been injured through June 30, 2011 in Afghanistan.⁵

The rates of suicide and PTSD are under-counted by the Pentagon. There have been 67 active duty suicides on OEF deployment. The number of suicides of those who served in OEF (active duty stateside or veterans) is unknown. More than 200,000 OEF/OIF Veterans have been seen for potential PTSD at VHA facilities following their return from Iraq or Afghanistan through May 2011.

Through 30 June 2011, 2.3 million people have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq war zones in Operation Enduring Freedom and the Iraq Operation Enduring Freedom and New Dawn. It is not possible to say how many of those Veterans have served in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, Tommy Franks early statement that "we don't do body counts" has unfortunately left a gap in our understanding of the number of Afghans killed and wounded in the war. For some years, there are no counts or estimates of civilians or insurgents killed in Afghanistan.

Using the best available evidence, I estimate that between 12,500 and 14,700 Afghan civilians have been directly killed by violence over the past ten years. This is a conservative estimate. To this toll we must add members of the 5-8,000 Afghan Police and Army and at least 10,000 insurgents killed.

Table 1. Estimated Direct Combat Related Civilian Death, Afghanistan, 2001- 2010⁶

YEAR	Low Average	High Average
2001	1537	2375
2002	200	400
2003	200	450
2004	214	214
2005	408	443
2006	939	961
2007	1455	1597
2008	1687	2153
2009	2041	2021
2010	2484	2777
total	10,961	13,293

⁴ United States Bureau of Labor. This is not equivalent to OEF deaths, which have occurred in other locations but the Labor Bureau only codes by country.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor. This total includes injuries serious enough for 4 or more days or work to be lost. It does not include 149 injury cases not coded for severity.

⁶ See Appendix 1 of Neta C. Crawford, "Civilian Death and Injury in Afghanistan, 2001-2011" September 2011 www.costsofwar.org.

The number of Afghans killed is greater this year than in previous years. If we focus on the first six months of the last several years, intensity of the war is growing. The number of insurgent attacks is also increasing.

Table 2. Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan in the First Six months of 2011, Compared to Previous Years⁷

Jan-June Civilian Casualties	Total
2007	684
2008	818
2009	1054
2010	1267
2011	1462

The toll on civilians is more than death. Many Afghans are amputees. In 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health cited statistics that 66 percent of Afghans suffer mental health problems.⁸ According to a recent survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross, almost all Afghans – 96 percent – have been affected either directly or indirectly by warfare; almost half (45 percent) indicated that a family member had been killed.⁹

It is a dirty little secret of this war that when the US military is told to protect civilians and changes its rules of engagement to do so, U.S. casualties increase. When the U.S. emphasizes force protection, and for example, calls in close air support airstrikes, civilian casualties increase. We might call this the inverse law of civilian casualties. It is commonly known that when states emphasize protecting their own forces, civilian deaths increase. What is less commonly known is that when the military emphasizes protecting civilians, military casualties go up.

This toll in human life is related to my second point, the fact that the US is arguably losing the battle for hearts and minds in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a rural country, with 80 percent of the population engaged in Agriculture. About half the population are children.

Most Afghans do not know about the 9/11 attacks. Indeed, a survey of 1000 men in Helmand and Kandahar province found that 92 percent did not know about the 9/11

⁷ UNAMA, *Mid Year Report 2011, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, (Kabul: UNAMA July 2011).

⁸ Martin Patience, "Coping with a Traumatized Nation," *BBC News*, 20 January 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7838270.stm.

⁹ ICRC/IPSOS, *Our World: Views from the Field: Afghanistan*, Opinion survey and in-depth research, (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2009), pp. 11 and 12.

attacks.¹⁰ Most Afghans want the U.S. and NATO ISAF troops to leave. Many see US and NATO ISAF troops as abusive, and the police and army trained by the US and NATO ISAF as abusive.

U.S. credibility is also at issue. In incident after incident, where the U.S. or its allies later admits to and apologizes for killing civilians, the pattern has been to say that either no civilians were killed or few were killed. After investigations, the U.S. may admit that it killed civilians but it may continue to dispute the numbers. Condolence payments may even be given to the families of those killed, but the numbers are sometimes not included.

Specifically, though the US still does not release its figures, the NATO ISAF numbers for civilian casualties have been released for the first time early this year. By comparing their figures to others, it is clear that the NATO/ISAF Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell has undercounted civilian casualties by as much as 50 percent.

Some major incidents are not even recorded. For example, the Germans paid condolences for calling in an airstrike on civilians gathered around a tanker in Kunduz in September 2009 that killed about 100 Afghan civilians. The event is not recorded in the public release of NATO ISAF civilian casualty data even though Germans apologized and paid \$5 million to the families of those killed.

There have been significant human rights violations. Abuse at Bagram Airbase may rival that at Abu Ghraib. And it has also become clear, through important reporting by the *New York Times* and an investigation by Physicians for Human Rights that the massacre of Taliban POWs in December 2001 by the Northern Alliance was known by the U.S. fairly early on and covered up. PHR estimates "as many as 2,000" were killed and buried.¹¹

Over the past 10 years Afghans have felt what Civil War General William Sherman the "hard hand" of war from all sides — insurgents, government forces and international forces. The destruction of infrastructure — roads, hospitals, clinics, and farmlands as well as the bulldozing of homes has itself led to death as people are displaced, malnourished, and lacking access to safe drinking water and health care. The number of amputees and others maimed by war is also growing. So, the US and the UN and NGOs build and war takes away. We have no estimate for the indirect death caused by displacement and destruction of infrastructure.

¹⁰ Yaroslav Trofinov, "Many Afghans Shrug at 'This Event Foreigners Call 9/11,'" *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 2011.

¹¹ Specifically, Physicians for Human Rights uncovered a mass grave in 2002 which contained the remains of Taliban soldiers who had surrendered to US Special Forces and Northern Alliance Troops in 2001. Estimates of the number of those killed vary from the hundreds to several thousand but one source gave the U.S. State Department an estimate that about 1,500 prisoners were killed. PHR estimated that about 2000 were killed. Physicians for Human Rights, "Investigation Timeline," <http://afghanistan.phrblog.org/get-the-facts/chronology/>. James Risen, "U.S. Inaction Seen After Taliban P.O.W.'s Died," *The New York Times*, 10 July 2009, p. 1.

Finally, the war in Pakistan that is a direct outcome of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. The armed conflicts in Pakistan escalated in recent years for two basic reasons. First, the U.S. war in Afghanistan pushed some Afghanistan Taliban and al Qaeda into Pakistan after 2001. Taliban and al Qaeda have then used Pakistan as a base to plan and conduct insurgency in Afghanistan. Second, NATO ISAF has used Pakistan as a route to bring weapons and equipment into Afghanistan.

The supply lines traverse the country and insurgents have attacked the convoys. NATO convoys cross the border into Afghanistan from Waziristan and Balochistan Pakistan, making them targets for insurgents both near the border and as the convoys travel through the rest of the country. One attack on an ISAF convoy occurred just six miles from Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, in June 2010; some 20 trucks carrying supplies to Afghanistan were burned in the attack.¹² In these incidents, it was not uncommon for a number of civilians to be attacked or injured. In a recent case, South Asia Terrorism Portal reports that on 20 May 2011, "16 persons, including 8 members of a family, were killed when NATO oil tankers were set ablaze in two separate incidents" in the FATA area of northwestern Pakistan. More than 250 tankers carrying fuel intended for use by NATO ISAF forces were attacked in Pakistan *en route* to Afghanistan in 2010.¹³

US security assistance has totaled more than \$14 billion to Pakistan since 2001. This includes about \$8.8 billion to Pakistan in Coalition Support Funds (CSF) to reimburse Pakistan for its support of U.S. operations there; \$1.9 billion for the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund/Counterinsurgency Capability Fund, and another \$2.1 billion in Foreign Military Financing. Figure 1 illustrates the growth of both Pakistan's military budget and the overt U.S. security related funding for Pakistan.

The U.S. also trains the Pakistani military which is killing a large number of civilians in its war against militants who are opposed to the regime. Pakistan also receives military equipment from the U.S. For instance, since 2001 Pakistan has been granted more than 2,000 TOW missiles, 121 TOW missile launchers and 12 (of 20 promised) Cobra attack helicopters; 550 armored personnel carriers and 14 F-16 A/B attack helicopters. Pakistan's purchases from the U.S. include: 115 M-109 Howitzers; 18 new F-16C/D combat aircraft and 1,450 2,000 lb bombs to equip F-16 aircraft. Pakistan has also received other helicopters and surveillance aircraft as well.¹⁴

Civilians also die when the United States and other International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) operating in southern Afghanistan pursue militants across the border into Pakistan. U.S. Special Forces raids into Pakistan likely began in 2003. There were 10 clashes at the border between Pakistani security forces and NATO ISAF in 2008 and 15 clashes in 2009. The Pak Institute for Peace Studies counts of these incidents along the

¹² BBC, "Gunmen Kill seven in Attack On NATO Convoy in Pakistan," BBC, 9 June 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10196364>.

¹³ South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), "NATO Related Attacks in Pakistan," <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/natoattack.htm>. Accessed 6 June 2011.

¹⁴ Susan B. Epstein and K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance," Congressional Research Service, 7 June 2011, pp. 12-14.

Afghanistan-Pakistan border found that between 2007 and 2010, nearly 500 have been killed and 353 have been injured in these raids, many of whom are civilians.¹⁵

Pakistani military forces have been killed in these cross border strikes as well. For instance, in September 2010 when NATO helicopters crossed the border from Afghanistan into northwest Pakistan in pursuit of insurgents, NATO forces killed three Pakistani soldiers. The incident caused Pakistan to close the border for more than a week, leading immediately to the backup of fuel tankers and trucks attempting to move supplies and fuel into Afghanistan. More than 150 trucks were then destroyed when they were forced to sit on the roads or in parking lots.¹⁶ In May 2011, two Pakistani soldiers were injured in a firefight with ISAF forces that had crossed the border.¹⁷

Finally, the Central Intelligence Agency controls important U.S. operations in Pakistan besides operating the drone surveillance and drone strikes. The Navy Seals who attacked the Bin Laden compound were under CIA command. Further, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has, according to a November 2009 report in the *Los Angeles Times*, "funneled hundreds of millions of dollars" since the September 11, 2001 attacks to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency for help in tracking, capturing or killing militants in Pakistan, accounting for as much as a third of ISI's annual budget."¹⁸

But as we have seen the relationship is not easy. Outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told U.S. troops in Afghanistan on 6 June 2011. "Well, the relationship with Pakistan is a complicated one. I mean, the fact is, we need each other. . . . But there's no question that the sanctuaries in Pakistan are a big problem for us, for you. And we just -- it's one of these relationships you just have to keep working at. It's kind of like a troubled marriage; you just kind of keep working at it."¹⁹

¹⁵ Pak Institute for Peace Studies reports, 2008, 2009, 2010.

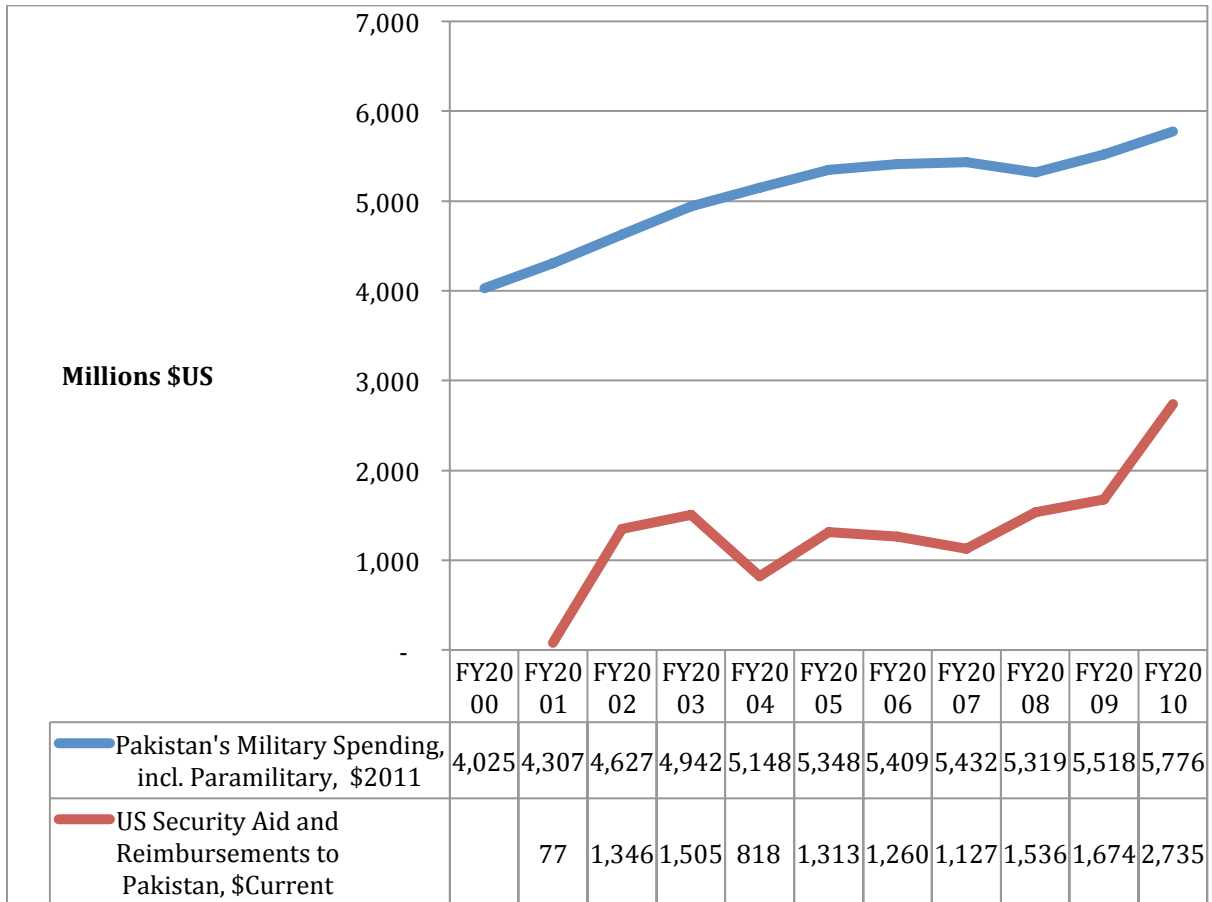
¹⁶ Chris Brummit and Deb Riechman, "Pakistan Cuts NATO Supply Line After Border Firing," *The Washington Post*, 30 September 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/30/AR2010093000491.html>. Associated Press, "Pakistan Reopens Key Afghan Border Crossing to NATO Convoys," *Guardian*, 10 October 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/10/pakistan-reopens-key-border-crossing-to-nato>.

¹⁷ Haris Anwar and James Rupert, "NATO Helicopters Cross Into Pakistan, Spark Firefight with Border Guards," *Bloomberg*, 17 May 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-17/pakistan-troops-clash-with-nato-helicopters-in-afghanistan-border-region.html>.

¹⁸ Greg Miller, "CIA pays for Support in Pakistan: It has Spent Millions Funding the ISI Spy Agency Despite Fears of Corruption. But Some Say it is Worth It," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 November 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/nov/15/world/fg-cia-pakistan15>.

¹⁹ Defense Secretary Robert Gates, "Remarks by Secretary Gates During Troop Visit with Task Force Ramrod, 2-2 Infantry, Anbar Province, Afghanistan," 06 Jun 2011, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4836>.

Figure 1. Pakistan's Military Spending and U.S. Security Assistance to Pakistan, FY2000-2010²⁰



The Pakistani forces make war against insurgents but by all accounts kill many thousands of Pakistanis — more than 10,000 civilians in the past three years — and cause their displacement so that hundreds of thousands are on the move at any one time due to government offensives. Pakistan has attacked Afghans across the border, killing Afghan civilians and causing them to be displaced.

The U.S. has encouraged and supported the Pakistani military to attack militants. The Pakistani military and intelligence services are waging war against several insurgent organizations in the northwestern region of Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban, al Qaeda, Haqqani, the Pakistani Taliban, and local sectarian militias. In addition, an insurgency in

²⁰ Sources: SIPRI and CRS. (See Appendix A). Pakistan's Defense spending is in 2011 Constant \$US; Aid and Reimbursement Figures are as given by the CRS (in current dollars). All figures are Rounded to the nearest millions of dollars. It is important to note that Figure 1 should be taken as illustrative of the trends and orders of magnitude of spending. The sources are not exactly comparable. Specifically SIPRI calculated from current Pakistani Rupees and converted to \$2009 constant which I converted to \$2011 constant; CRS reports are made in current dollars. If CRS current dollars were converted to constant \$2011, the figures for U.S. spending would, of course, appear greater.

Balochistan, in the southwest of the country, has become increasingly deadly to Pakistani civilians, as the Pakistani security forces have attempted to crush the insurgents. The security forces have launched several major offensives in recent years. These operations are displacing hundreds of thousands and killing thousands of Pakistani civilians.

The Pakistani security forces' operations have included significant military force using F-16 strikes, mortar attacks, and raids on militant camps. Further, a new 400 person paramilitary commando unit, part of the Frontier Corps, was trained by U.S. Special Forces to operate in the tribal areas.²¹ It was the Frontier Corp in May 2011 that killed 5 unarmed people in Quetta, Balochistan. The Pakistani Army has also enlisted or coerced, depending perhaps on perspective, some local tribesmen in Khyber to fight the Taliban; they were told to fight or leave the area in April 2011. Some chose to stay and fight, but thousands left the region, becoming internally displaced.

Most civilians killed and injured by Pakistani military forces are harmed by artillery and mortar fire. Others are killed when fixed wing aircraft and helicopters use bombs or open fire with heavy guns. The Pak Institute for Peace Studies notes that in 2008 and 2009 more people were killed and injured by Pakistani security forces than by what they categorize as terrorist attacks by insurgents.

Table 3. Civilians Killed and Injured by Pakistani Security Force Operational Attacks, 2008-2010²²

	Killed	Injured
2008	3,182	2,267
2009	6,329	3,181
2010	2,631	1,495

Further, the government of Pakistan which, as mentioned above, governs the northwest region of Pakistan under British colonial era law, has been accused of collective punishment and extrajudicial killings of suspected militants, their relatives, and potential supporters of militants. Human Right Watch reported that, "Since September 2009, when the Pakistani military re-established control over the [Swat] valley, Human Rights Watch has received numerous credible reports of collective punishment, including arbitrary detention, forced evictions, and house demolitions by the military and police. Human Rights Watch has investigated these allegations on the ground in Swat since February 2010, and documented scores of abuses."²³ Further, Human Rights Watch investigated reports of extrajudicial killing in the Swat Valley in February 2010. They researched "alleged human rights violations in Swat based on an initial list of 238 suspicious killings

²¹ See Eric Schmitt and Jane Perlez, "U.S. Secretly in Pakistan Lends Ally Support," *The New York Times*, 22 February 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/23/world/asia/23terror.html>.

²² Pak Institute for Peace Studies, 2008, 2009, 2010.

²³ Human Rights Watch, "Pakistan: End Collective Punishment in Swat," 22 July 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/07/21/pakistan-end-collective-punishment-swat>.

provided by local sources and the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Human Rights Watch has corroborated about 50 of these cases."²⁴

And while great care is now taken to prevent civilian casualties in Afghanistan, the U.S. drone war, which has escalated under the Obama administration, has caused about 2,400 deaths. As many as 20 percent of those deaths are likely to be civilians.²⁵ Pakistan Body Count suggests that 80 percent of those killed in the drone strikes may be civilians.²⁶

So, risks to U.S. forces in the drone war are low — essentially non-existent — but the risk and the death toll to Pakistani civilians is high. By most accounts, few high level Al Qaeda, Taliban or Haqqani network leaders have been killed.

Meanwhile, because the CIA oversees the drone strikes, and neither the Bush nor the Obama administrations have specified the rules of engagement there, nor even fully acknowledged the program, the accountability of the executive for escalation in the drone war has been limited and a full explication and evaluation of the strategy has not occurred.

Finally, the drone war in Pakistan is arguably a violation of international law and U.S. domestic law in the sense that it is an assassination program. The administration asserts the legality of the strikes, and that the loss of civilian life is low, but the lack of transparency means that these are just that, assertions without evidence and the benefit of argument. Congress has not challenged the Bush and Obama administrations to make the costs, risks, possible benefits and political and legal consequences of this semi-covert program transparent.

Appendix: The Drone War Civilian Casualty Controversy

The Obama administration has dramatically increased the use of drones to kill insurgents. It also assures the public, to the extent that the administration discusses the program, that the drone strikes kill few civilians.

The proportion of civilians killed by U.S. drone strikes, of course, has implications for Pakistan's domestic politics as well as for the image of the U.S. in the region. Under international law, combatants must take care to distinguish between combatants and non-

²⁴ "In no case examined by Human Rights Watch was a killing falsely reported, suggesting that the total number of killings is as high as or greater than those reported. The information for each case includes names or numbers of victims, place names, and dates. To date, the Pakistani military has not held any of the perpetrators accountable for these killings." Human Rights Watch, "Pakistan: Extrajudicial Executions by Army in Swat," 16 July 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/07/16/pakistan-extrajudicial-executions-army-swat>.

²⁵ New America Foundation, <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/drones>. More conservative is the Long War Journal, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php>.

²⁶ Pakistan Body Count, <http://www.pakistanbodycount.org/>.

combatants and attempt to minimize civilian death; these are the principles of distinction and non-combatant immunity. The question then becomes defining a civilian versus a combatant. Under the relevant international law, a civilian is defined as any person who is not a combatant; in case of doubt, a person shall be regarded as a civilian.²⁷

If the drone strikes kill relatively few civilians in comparison to the number of combatants, then the U.S. can argue that its drone strike program is legal, at least under the principle of distinction (leaving aside the question of whether these are illegal assassinations).²⁸

Over the last several years there has been a quiet debate about both the legality and effectiveness of the drone strikes. Because of its clandestine nature, much, perhaps too much energy has been spent on arguing about the basic facts of the strikes themselves.

While many observer organizations are in general agreement about the number of drone strikes, and about the total numbers of people killed by drone strikes, but dramatically disagree about the number and proportion of those killed who are civilians. Table 4 shows the counts of the total number of drone strikes for the period 2004- early June 2011 recorded by several sources. The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) records far fewer drone strikes than the other sources. Pakistan Body Count (PBC) and SATP update their internet based reports less frequently than LWJ and NAF.

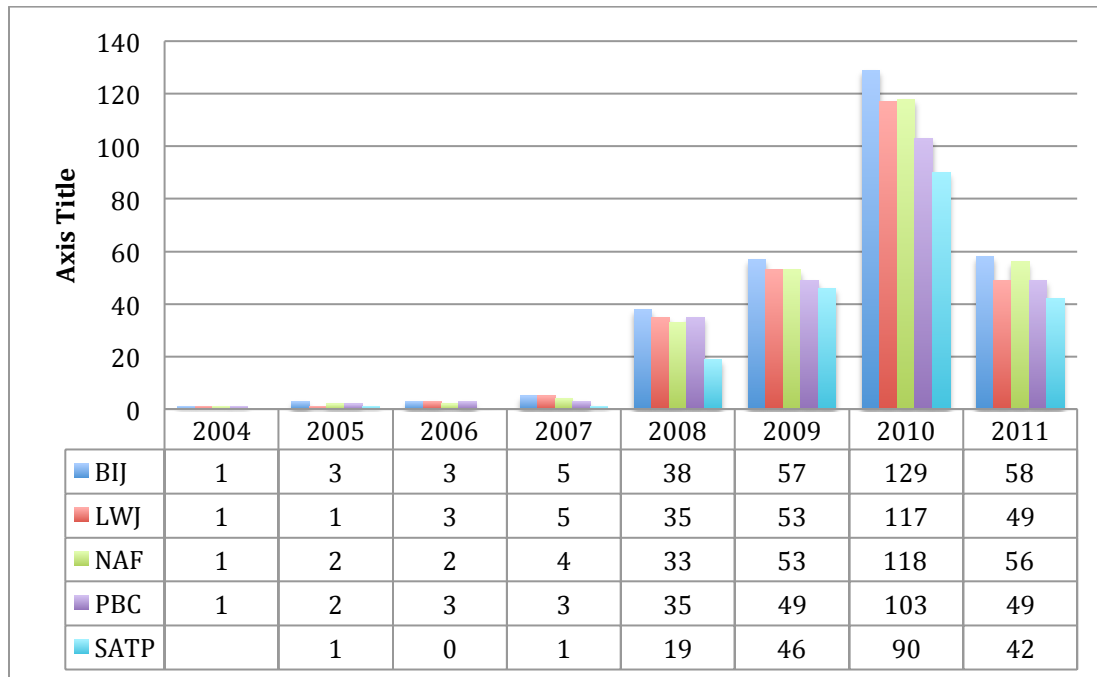
Table 4. Estimates of the Total Number of Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004 – 1 September 2011

Source	Number Drone Strikes
BIJ	294
LWJ	264
NAF	269
PBC	245
SATP	199

²⁷Geneva Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) and Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Convention (1977) .

²⁸ The idea that these strikes target the leadership of militant organizations is still, however, subject to the criticism that they violate the law against assassination.

Figure 2. Estimated Number of Drone Strikes in Pakistan 2004- 1 September 2011²⁹



The key question — from the perspective of understanding the contribution of U.S. drone strikes to the human toll of war in Pakistan — is estimating the death toll of the drone strikes. U.S. officials aim to kill militant leaders, but there is a range of estimates about the numbers killed and there are disputes about the identity of those killed. Figure 3 illustrates the sources' estimates for the total number killed, militants and civilians.³⁰

²⁹ Sources: BIJ: Bureau of Investigative Journalism; LWJ: Long War Journal; NAF: New America Foundation; PBC: Pakistan Body Count; SATP: South Asia Terrorism Portal.

³⁰ Pakistan Body Count has another category, "foreigners" killed. PBC also notes that when news sources are imprecise, it translates the word "many", to 8 casualties, and "several" to 4 casualties. <http://www.pakistanbodycount.org/dattacks.php>.

Figure 3. Estimates of Persons (Combatants and Non-Combatants) Killed by US Drone Strikes, 2004- 1 September 2011³¹

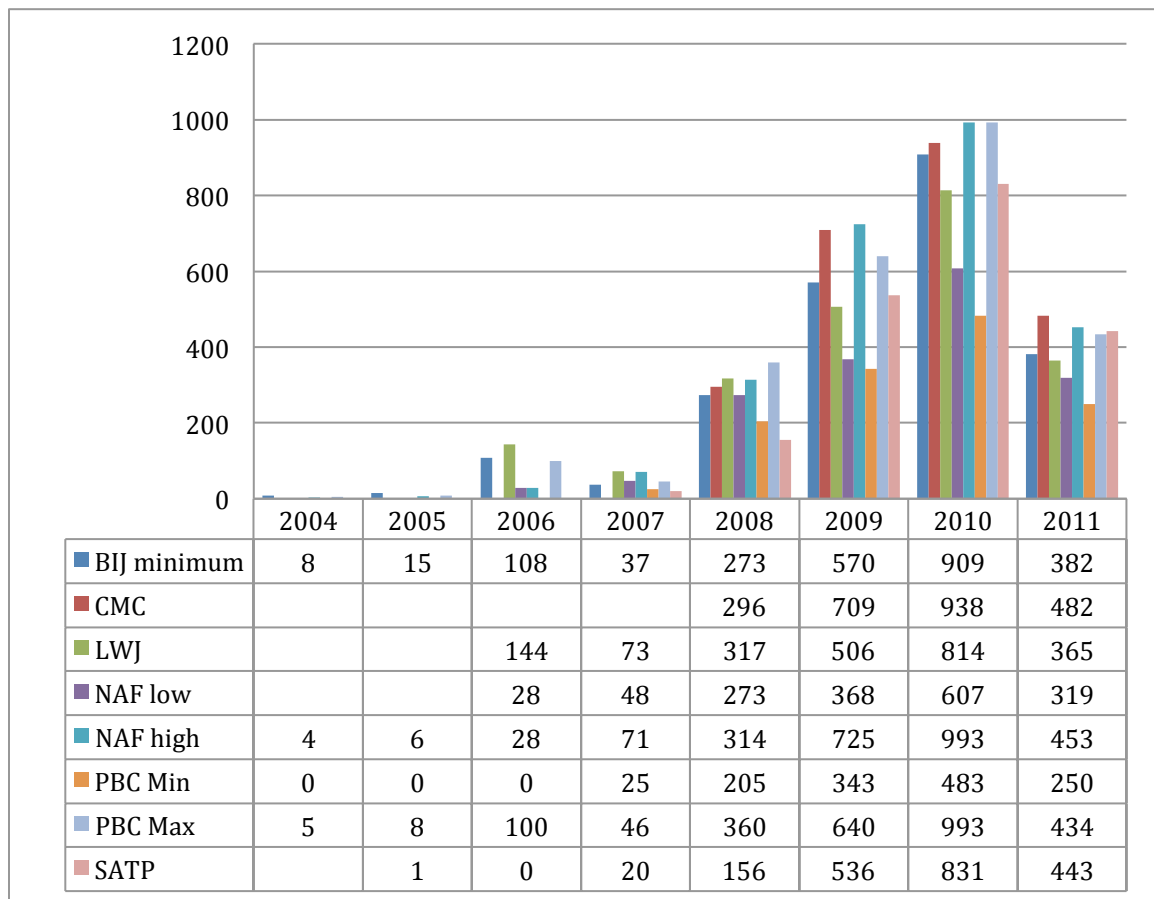
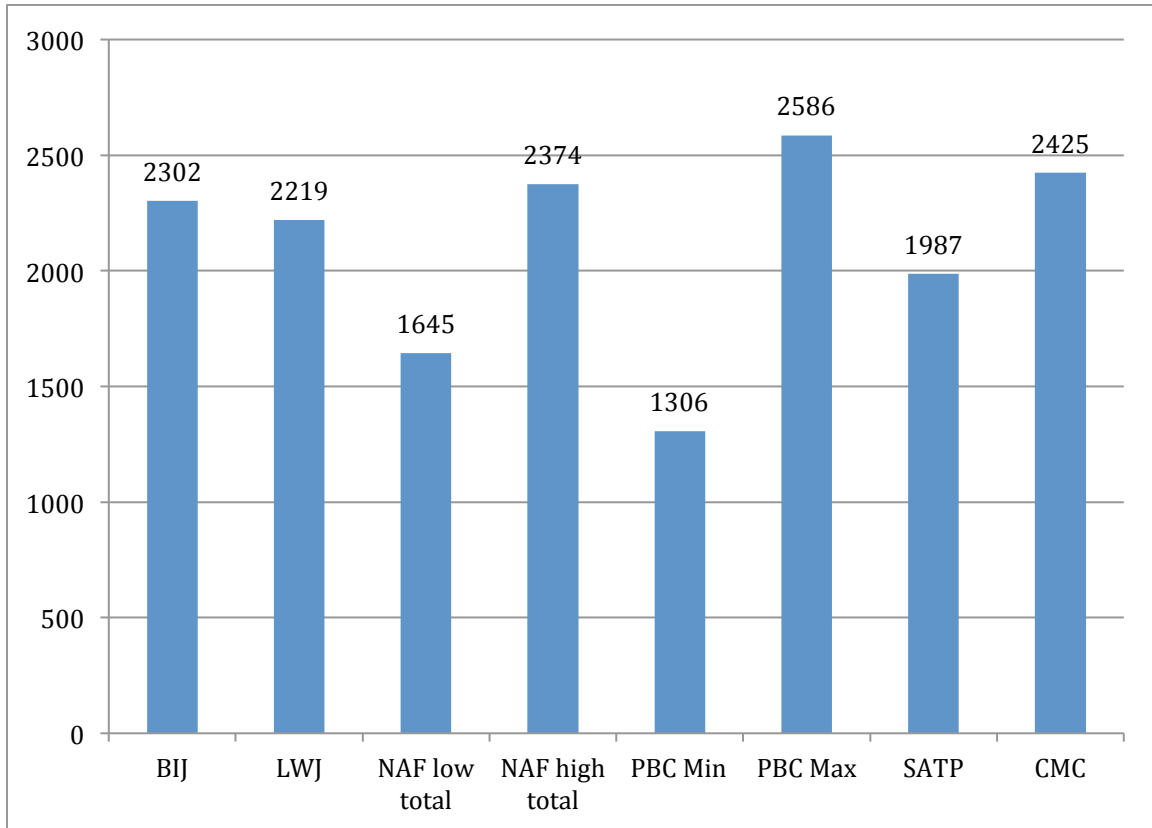


Figure 4 shows the total number of people reported killed from 2004- early June 2011 by each source. Note that for at least the total killed, the Long War Journal, New America Foundation, Body Count and Conflict Monitoring Center estimate, at the high end, that more than 2,000 people have been killed in this period.

³¹ Sources: BIJ: Bureau of Investigative Journalism; LWJ: Long War Journal; NAF: New America Foundation; PBC: Pakistan Body Count; SATP: South Asia Terrorism Portal; CMC: Conflict Monitoring Center; PIPS: Pak Institute for Peace Studies. Updated 4 September 2011. See Appendix A.

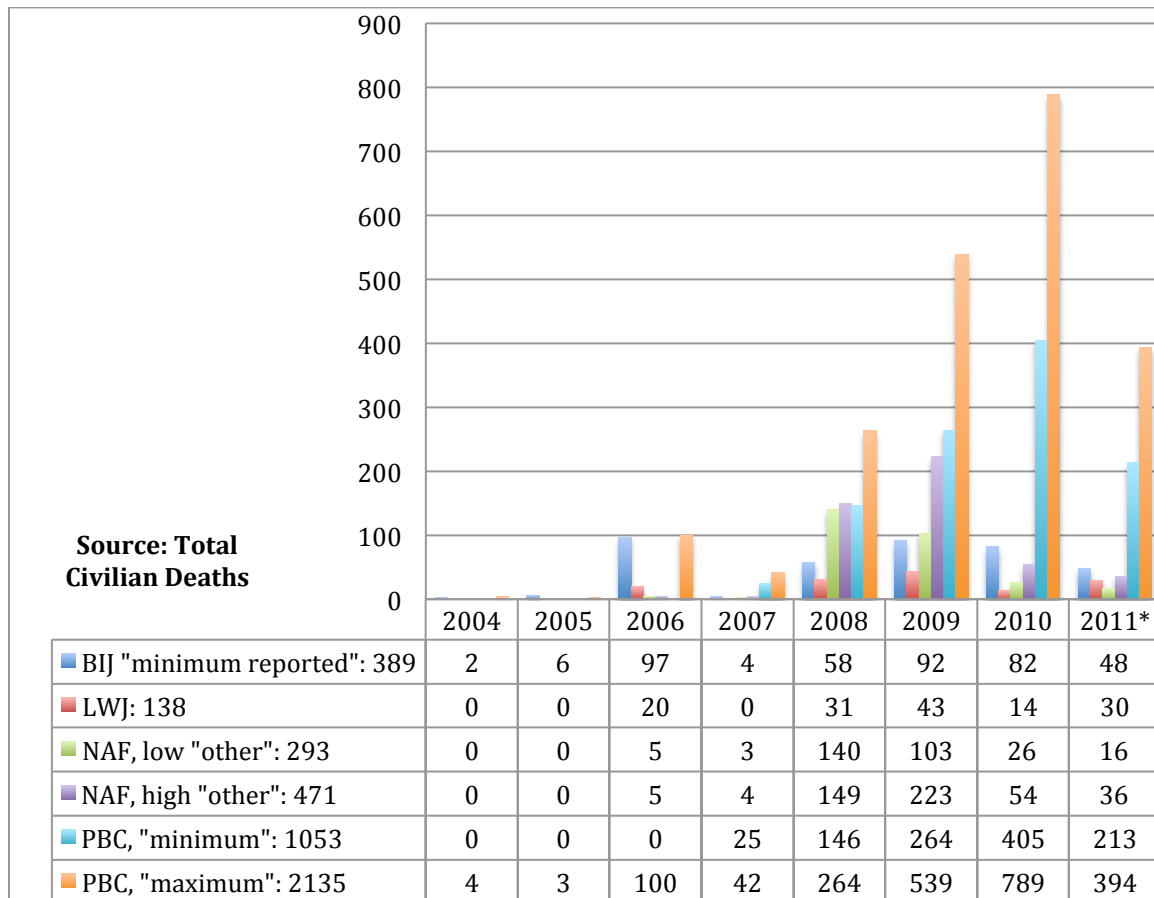
Figure 4. Estimate of Total Killed by U.S. Drone Strikes, 2004 - 1 September 2011³²



Some sources, namely the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the Long War Journal, the New America Foundation, and Pakistan Body Count, attempt to distinguish between combatant and non-combatant death due to drone strikes. Figure 6 gives those sources' estimates for the number of civilians (also described as "other" or "non-militant" by some sources) killed by the drone attacks in Pakistan. Both the New America Foundation (NAF) and Pakistan Body Count (PBC) also suggest low and high totals for non-combatant (civilian) deaths due to drone strikes. Although the counts vary widely from each other, Figure 6 suggests an overall trend of increased numbers of civilians killed by drone attacks from 2004 to the present as the number of strikes has increased. But Figure 5 also shows that observers do not agree about the total number of civilians killed by U.S. drone strikes.

³² Sources: BIJ: Bureau of Investigative Journalism; LWJ: Long War Journal; NAF: New America Foundation; PBC: Pakistan Body Count; SATP: South Asia Terrorism Portal; CMC: Conflict Monitoring Center. See Appendix A.

Figure 5. Civilians Killed by Drone Strikes, 2004 – 1 September 2011³³



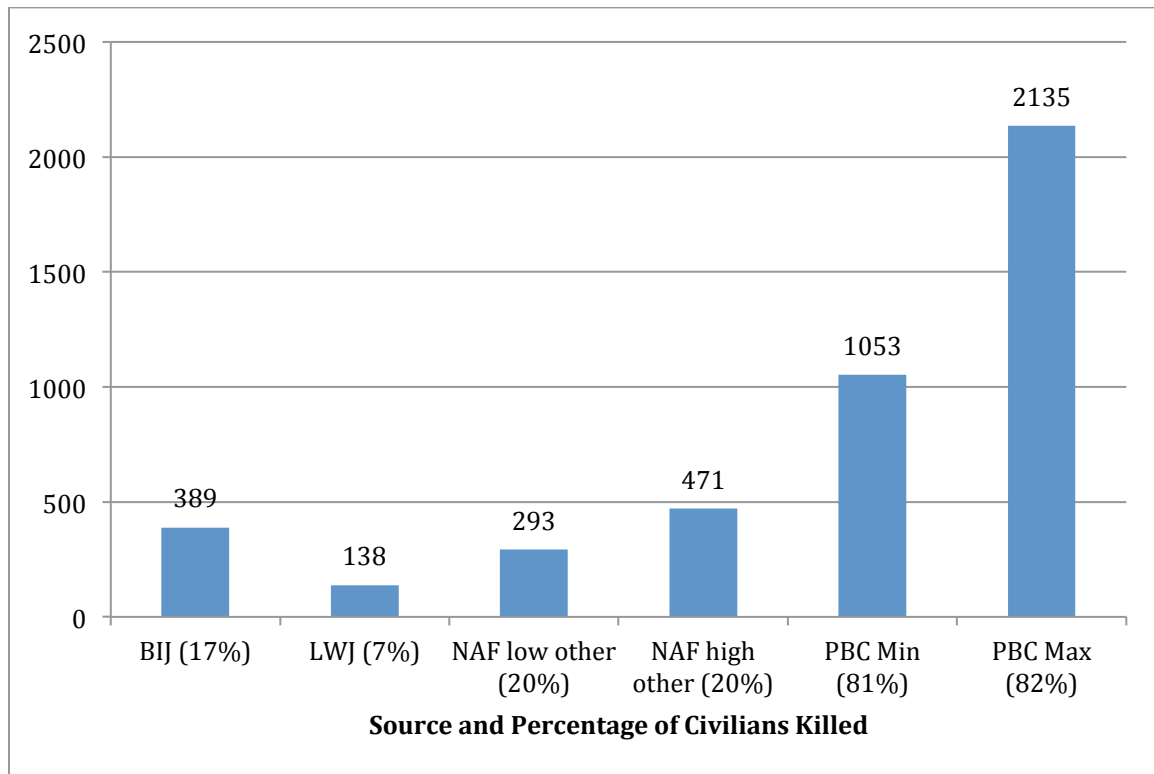
* Through 1 September 2011

There is a significant divergence among the counts of the total number of civilians killed in the drone strikes, as opposed to militants killed. Figure 7, which illustrates the total number of civilians/others killed due to drone attacks from 2004 to May 2011, shows that the Long War Journal counts civilians as about 7 percent of the total victims of drone attacks, while Pakistan Body Count finds that more than 80 percent of the victims are civilians. The difficulty in determining the identity of those killed is illustrated by the fact that the Pak Institute for Peace Studies has stopped making public estimates of the number of civilians killed by U.S. drone strike.³⁴

³³ See sources for Figure 4.

³⁴ The Pak Institute for Peace Studies did estimate that 84 civilians were killed in 2008 by U.S. drone strikes. PIPS, *Pakistan Security Report*, 2008, p. 9.

Figure 6. Counts and Percentage of Civilians/Killed in Strikes from 2004 - 1 September 2011³⁵



The arguments about the number and proportion of civilians killed should not distract us from the main fact of the drone strike program — its questionable legality, its lack of transparency, and its toll in civilian lives. Most Pakistanis blame the U.S. for the civilians who die in the strikes.

³⁵ Sources: BIJ: Bureau of Investigative Journalism; LWJ, Long War Journal; NAF, New America Foundation, PBC, Pakistan Body Count. Last accessed 4 September 2011.