

Counting the cost of US military bases around the world

How much does the US spend on its military bases around the world?

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The [assassination](#) of Iran's second-most powerful figure, Qassem Soleimani by a US drone strike has led to the deployment of more troops to Iraq. And while Iran hit back and tensions appeared to ease, a US-Iran [shadow war](#) goes on.

Counting the Cost takes a look at the trillions spent on wars and the billions spent on maintaining US military bases.

There are 200,000 US troops stationed at hundreds of bases in countries and territories outside of the US. Despite President Donald Trump's promises to remove US troops from the Middle East, the number of troops in the region has increased.

Since 9/11, American taxpayers have spent \$6.4 trillion on wars and military action in the Middle East and Asia, according to the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University. And according to US central command, there are between 60,000 and 70,000 US troops in the Middle East.

Glenn Carle, former CIA deputy national intelligence officer and assistant professor at Boston College, explains that some host countries pay substantial amounts to maintain a US military

presence while other countries do not necessarily make the same kinds of formal contributions.

"In Iraq, I'm not so clear that they are actually making a formal contribution to hosting us as much as they are happy to have us, I'm sure. So there will be ancillary or secondary indirect costs that the host country is paying certainly. But I don't think that they are paying some sort of a fee to host 6,000 American soldiers now in several bases," Carle says.

On how the latest US-Iran tensions may play out, Carle notes that the US political system is largely paralysed so that any "coherent, decisive action" in international relations is difficult to carry out.

"There has been strong inclination on the part of half the country to remove the American presence from Iraq, which is viewed as a disaster, and yet most professional national security officials or individuals think that it is necessary for the US to have some sort of a presence there, which is independent of whether we are the ones who broke the crockery or try to put it together, but that to leave now would be a problem," says Carle.

"So I don't see us leaving anytime soon, unless the incoherent and capricious man in the Oval Office actually manages to act upon his compulsions."
