Impact Of The War On Terror

The war on terror began on September 11th, 2001, and has recently passed its 18th birthday and has shaped our country quite a bit. We've seen our defense budget surpass every other country, from 316 billion to 686 billion. We've passed some questionable legislation, and have set some dangerous precedents along the way. With no one able to answer when these wars will stop and what defines a victory. Leads many to believe that our governments' intentions in the middle east are not altruistic at heart.

Debatably the Military-Industrial Complex has shaped our country the most since 9/11. A term originating from Dwight D Eisenhour. Describes, the process of how people monetize war, mainly defense contractors. Lobbyists from companies like Lockheed Martin, and Boeing, have a stranglehold over much of our government. These companies donate huge sums of money to politicians and of course in return give them a new defense contract, making both parties very rich in the process. While all this is going on we continue to increase our military's budget. seemingly to increase profits while having to cut programs like social security, Medicare and, Medicaid.

The united states has been in Afghanistan since 2001 to originally to kill Osama bin laden, we have since done that. Efforts then focused on getting rid of Al Qaeda there are an estimated couple hundred members as of today in Afghanistan. Now they are "moving the goal posts" so to speak again and stating we need to stop the Taliban. in the future the US has no room to talk when other counties illegally attack another country. The precedent that we have set for the rules of engagement for war is scary. No longer does the president have to go through congress to attack another country. this has led to us now bombing eight different countries and starting a shadow war in Africa. While polling on these wars are now at an all-time low.

The patriot act was a bill passed in congress that got bipartisan support that was meant to prevent another terrorist attack like we saw on 9/11 by increasing national security efforts. It allows unwarranted spying on every civilian by the NSA, it started the TSA and increased security at airports and our borders. it eventually led to the creation of Homeland Security and later ICE. Some are for the creation of these programs and welcome more security. others feel it's a violation of their fourth amendment rights like the ACLU that often protects citizens from the governments' abuse of power and state NSA spying should be deemed unconstitutional. Recently ICE has been held under scrutiny (although not new to the current administration) migrant children were seen held in cages at the border. In ICE detention camps. There are civil cases happening right now accusing the program of slavery. Detainees have accused ICE of forced unpaid labor. Some come to their defense and sate that we already allow unmatched payed labor in prisons making it justifiable. but those people have been convicted of a crime (felony) compared to detained migrants that are civilly contained.

Using a tablet many think it looks like a video game. No longer is "boots on the ground" fighting considered the norm. we now use drones for missions that previously would've put our soldiers' lives at risk. Many say that this could be dangerous taking the realism out of taking another person's life. Many critics point to the civilian deaths caused by these drone strikes. a report in 2015 found that 90% of these strikes hit "unintentional targets" and with Trump

increasing these strikes by 432% these numbers will increase.

Julian Assange reported on a video of US soldiers intentionally targeting civilians and then shooting the first responders. That video came from a soldier named Chelsea manning. (Previously Bradley Manning). Both have since endured a witch-hunt. Some say Chelsea needs to be charged for releasing confidential information but others state the people need to know if our tax dollars are going towards the death of innocent civilians. Julian Assange (founder of WikiLeaks who also revealed that the civilian death rate caused by the war on terror is a lot higher than previously believed). has been in untested waters never before has a journalist been prosecuted for reporting on leaked news. Under the Obama administration, they did not want to charge Assange. But Trump sees things differently and if he's charged could start a dangerous presentient for journalists and civilians alike rolling back our first amendment rights. Trump also hasn't helped much in the name of transparency rolling back Obama-era policy demanding civilian deaths caused by drone strikes to be reported on.

It appears now that we are consciously aiding the opposition in the war on terror. One of our biggest allies is Saudi Arabia a theocratic fascist country. We give them billions of dollars' worth of military equipment every year. That equipment is what is used to aid a genocide in Yemen and it is now not unheard of for ISIS soldiers to be using our weapons. This past week President Trump using his executive powers decided to bypass congress to give Saudi Arabia 8.1 billion worth of military equipment.

While the war on terror has certainly impacted our country, it doesn't hold a candle to how it has shaped the middle east the war hasn't only not worked, it has made things worse. The smallest figures show a minimum of 200,000 civilian deaths the larger figures estimate it to be around a couple million caused by the wars90% of Afghanistan's infrastructure has been destroyed. and 62% of the population does not have access to running water. With that being said the middle east is still primarily under the control of terrorist regimes. It seems every time we have defeated one insurgency group another comes and fills the void.

The change was seen in this country since 9/11 is monumental. After trillions were spent, millions were displaced, and thousands losing their lives. The war on terror has been an utter failure and a disgrace to human rights. These wars will not age well and our generation will not be judged lightly on these events. The war on terror recently passed its 18th birthday with little attention from the mainstream media. They seem to be pushing for more conflict in countries like Venezuela and Iran. Hopefully as a country, we can the similarities between these conflicts and the build-up to the Iraq war. But as it looks today we seem to be on track to continue our illegal offense wars across the world.