

What we could have bought with the \$4 trillion we spent on Iraq and Afghanistan



by Christopher Mims 30 Jun 2011 1:28 PM

Americans like us some war, but to the tune of \$4 trillion? In adjusted dollars, that's just short of what it cost us to whup the Nazis.

Here's a look at what we could have done with that money, had we spent it on something besides stoking Americans' confusion over whether or not the world's 1.5 billion 'Muslims' are in fact a monolithic group whose every member is a terrorist.

- Provide 280 million people with 100 percent renewable energy (based on this study of moving the entire planet to renewables).
- Pay for America's entire high-speed rail system eight times over -- and that's according to a deliberately high, rail-hostile estimate from the CATO institute.
- Pay for a comprehensive preschool system for every child in America 40 times over. Preschool has been shown to be one of the single most effective interventions for disadvantaged children. (Universal preschool would cost \$100 billion, according to NPR's Planet Money.)
- Wipe out our entire yearly trade imbalance with China 14 times over -- if we gave the money to China, and we could force its citizens to use the money to buy our stuff, anyway.
- Pay off almost half the mortgages in the U.S. If we spent this money on ourselves instead of our overseas escapades, it would mean something like 18 million households could start living rent-free. (Total U.S. mortgage debt is around \$10 trillion.)

straight to the source

- Wars to Leave \$4 Trillion Hole in US Budget: Study, *The Wall Street Journal*

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