

Study shows U.S. has waged 400 wars -- a quarter in West Asia and Africa

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A U.S. soldier stands by as a local woman and child look on during a US military patrol in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh Province. (Photo by AFP)

Washington, August 15 (RHC)-- A new research study has revealed that more than a quarter of the worldwide U.S. military offensives in the American history have taken place in the West Asia region and Africa.

The survey, titled "Introducing the Military Intervention Project: A New Dataset on U.S. Military Interventions," said the U.S. had undertaken almost 400 military interventions since its founding in 1776 until 2019, with more than a quarter occurring in the post-Cold War period.

Stressing that U.S. military interventions "increasingly" targeted the Middle East and Africa, the study also found that the post-9/11 era had resulted in "higher hostility levels," with US military adventures becoming "overwhelmingly commonplace."

"The cumulative impact of what we discovered from our data collection effort was indeed surprising," said Sidita Kushi, an assistant professor at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, and one of the study's authors said in an interview with the Middle East Eye.

"We hadn't expected both the quantity and quality of U.S. military interventions to be as large as revealed in the data." Underlining the U.S. "decades-long hyper-interventionist stance," Kushi said America's global military footprints "might be surprising to Americans. But, they are hardly surprising to the rest of the world."

The report pointed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, saying the U.S. emerged as the dominant military power across the world after the collapse, however, it did not result in a decrease in Washington's military interventions.

"The post-Cold War era has produced fewer great power conflicts and instances in which to defend vital U.S. interests, yet U.S. military interventions continue at high rates and higher hostilities," the report said. "This militaristic pattern persists during a time of relative peace, one of arguably fewer direct threats to the U.S. homeland and security."

The study said the end of the Cold War unchained Washington's military global ambitions, adding that even as U.S. rivals reduced their military intervention, Washington "began to escalate its hostilities," resulting in a "widening gap between U.S. actions relative to its opponents."

The study cited the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute as saying that the cost of the U.S. military stands at more than \$800 billion annually, accounting for almost 40 percent of global military spending.

"The U.S. continues to dramatically prioritize funding of its Department of Defense while limiting funding and roles for its Department of State," said Professor Monica Duffy Toft, co-author of the study, adding that "currently, the United States has US special forces deployed in more countries than it does ambassadors."

Stressing that the U.S. chooses to use military force to "solve its problems," the report said, "Gone are the days when Washington threw the full might of its army into a conflict, as it did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, remote military bases, such as the \$110 million Agadez airfield in Niger, conduct drone strikes away from the public eye across much of the Sahel."

The study said the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden had earlier in the year expanded Washington's military footprint in Africa by reversing a previous decision to withdraw troops out of Somalia, establishing a permanent military base in the country.

"Given the current landscape of interventions, and inertia, we expect to see a continuing upward trend on U.S. interventions in both Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Sub-Saharan Africa," Toft warned.

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