

For \$1 billion, one dictator

By **Kevin Baron**
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Call him the billion-dollar man. One billion for one dictator.

According to the Pentagon, that was the cost to U.S. taxpayers for Muammar el-Qaddafi's head: \$1.1 billion through September, the latest figure just out of the Defense Department. And that's just for the Americans.

The final totals will take some time to add up, and still do not include the State Department, CIA, and other agencies involved or other NATO and participating countries. Vice President Joe Biden said that the U.S. "spent \$2 billion total and didn't lose a single life." NATO does not track the operational costs to each member country, but the funds directly taken from a common NATO account for Libya operations have totaled about \$7.4 million per month for electronic warfare capabilities and \$1.1 million per month for headquarters and command staff, a NATO spokesman said.

From the beginning of Operation Unified Protector in March, critics have questioned whether the U.S. could afford to open a third front. The Congressional Research Services estimate the Afghanistan war has cost nearly \$500 billion so far. With Iraq, the figure easily tops \$1 trillion.

In the first week of Libya operations, bombs were dropped from B-2 stealth planes flown from Missouri and roughly 200 missiles launched from submarines in the Mediterranean,

causing alarm that any extended campaign would quickly cost billions more.

But after the U.S. military ramped up the operation, other NATO countries shouldered most of the air burden. Americans took a supporting role: aerial refueling tankers, electronic jamming, and surveillance...

Since the operation began on March 31, getting to Qaddafi's final stand required 7,725 air sorties and 1,845 strike sorties, 397 of which dropped ordnance, and 145 Predator drone strikes. NATO aircraft, including those supplied by the U.S., totaled 26,089 sorties and 9,618 strike sorties through Wednesday. More than 70 U.S. aircraft have supported the operation, including Predator drones. NATO flew 67 sorties and 16 strikes sorties over Libya one day before Qaddafi was killed. The NATO mission also employed submarines, aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships, destroyers, frigates, and supply ships—as many as 21 vessels at one time. Additionally, as of one week ago, the U.S. had sold participating countries in the operation roughly \$250 million in ammunition, parts, fuel, technical assistance, and other support, according to the Pentagon...

ASK YOURSELF: WHY? WHY ARE U.S. TAXPAYERS FOOTING THE BILL FOR THESE ENDLESS WARS WHEN THERE IS NO MONEY FOR JOBS, EDUCATION OR HEALTHCARE?

*Distributed by the New Haven Sunday Vigilers October 23, 2011. Join our vigil for peace and justice every Sunday, 12-1 p.m., here at **Broadway, Park & Elm Streets. Information: newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com; ctpcnh@gmail.com***