

“Identical Effects of U.S. ‘Precision’ Bombing: Then and Now (Afghanistan and Iraq)”

by

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**Afghanistan
October 2001**



**Iraq
September 2004**

At 3 A.M. during the night of October 13/14, 2001, a U.S. carrier-based F/A-18 fighter jet dropped a 2,000 lb Mark 84 (GBU-15) bomb upon a residential area south of Kabul airport.¹ The “precision” strike upon a series of mud brick homes in the Qala Mir Abas neighborhood of northeastern Kabul killed four sleeping family members and injured another eight, leaving a huge crater (top photo above by Reuters). The bomb killed a 14-year old girl and injured 12-year old Nagina. The bomb also destroyed a bakery for Afghan widows run by the United Nations.²

On September 2, 2004, a U.S. overnight air strike against Falluja resulted in the huge crater shown above – very similar to the one in Qala Mir Abas (top photo). The attack was probably carried out by a USAF F-16 using a GPS-guided 2,000 lb GBU-31 bomb. The U.S. military claimed it had carried out a “precision” attack upon a safe house (consisting of two buildings) in the Jebel residential neighborhood of Falluja allegedly used by Al Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Iraqi doctors at Falluja’s main hospital said 17 bodies had been brought in including three children, one woman, and one elderly man, and at least 6 people had been wounded.³ Doctor Seifeddin Taha from the Falluja general hospital said to Agence France-Presse,

“we have received 17 dead people and six wounded in serious condition. All the wounded are families. Among the dead, there could be 2 or 3 children but the bodies are torn to pieces and it’s difficult to tell.”

The blast uprooted palm trees and smashed-up furniture and TV sets could be seen the following morning in the wreckage.

In the first case, the U.S. precision weapon missed its target – allegedly a military helicopter parked at Kabul airport over a mile away⁴ - and in the second case, the U.S. “precision” strike obviously hit a house misidentified as being a safe house for the Zarqawi group.

In both cases, the results are the same: huge craters, dead and injured civilians, destroyed homes of simple people trying to survive, and no dead Zarqawi or Taliban associates. In both cases, the bombs dropped used a BLU-109 penetrator unit made out of depleted uranium.⁵

Precision in the eye of whom? The word “precision” is very important in the muting of public concern over civilian casualties. It hence plays an important role in marketing the U.S. air wars in Afghanistan and Iraq by the Pentagon to the public.

¹ on the 2,000 lb bomb, see David Wood, “New Workhorse of U.S. Military: A Bomb With Devastating Effects,” Newhouse News Service (March 13, 2003) at: <http://www.newhousenews.com/archive/wood031303.html>

² For data and sources, see my day-by-day casualty/incident data base at <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mwherold> for the day of October 13, 2001.

³ From “At Least 17 Die in Falluja Raid,” [BBC News](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3619858.stm) (September 2, 2004 at 20:50 GMT), at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3619858.stm and “Medics say U.S Falluja airstrike kills 17,” [Reuters](http://www.reuters.com) (September 2, 2004 at 01:32 PM).

⁴ Though it makes no sense to drop a 2,000 lb bomb upon a helicopter!

⁵ see my essay, “Uranium Wars: The Pentagon Steps Up Its Use of Radioactive Material,” at: <http://www.cursor.org/stories/uranium.htm>