

# British Army deploys new weapon based on mass-killing technology

Parliament not told, minister says

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Global Research, August 26, 2007

[Raw Story](#) 26 August 2007

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A new 'super-weapon' being supplied to British soldiers in Afghanistan employs technology based on the "thermobaric" principle which uses heat and pressure to kill people targeted across a wide air by sucking the air out of lungs and rupturing internal organs.

The so-called "enhanced blast" weapon uses similar technology used in the US "bunker busting" bombs and the devastating bombs dropped by the Russians to destroy the Chechen capital, Grozny.

Such weapons are brutally effective because they first disperse a gas or chemical agent which is lit at a second stage, allowing the blast to fill the spaces of a building or the crevices of a cave. When the US military deployed a version of these weapons in 2005, DefenseTech wrote an article titled, "Marines Quiet About Brutal New Weapon."

According to the US Defense Intelligence Agency, which released a study on thermobaric weapons in 1993, "The [blast] kill mechanism against living targets is unique-and unpleasant.... What kills is the pressure wave, and more importantly, the subsequent rarefaction [vacuum], which ruptures the lungs. If the fuel deflagrates but does not detonate, victims will be severely burned and will probably also inhale the burning fuel. Since the most common FAE fuels, ethylene oxide and propylene oxide, are highly toxic, undetonated FAE should prove as lethal to personnel caught within the cloud as most chemical agents."

A second DIA study said, "shock and pressure waves cause minimal damage to brain tissue... it is possible that victims of FAEs are not rendered unconscious by the blast, but instead suffer for several seconds or minutes while they suffocate."

"The effect of an FAE explosion within confined spaces is immense," said a CIA study of the weapons. "Those near the ignition point are obliterated. Those at the fringe are likely to suffer many internal, and thus invisible injuries, including burst eardrums and crushed inner ear organs, severe concussions, ruptured lungs and internal organs, and possibly blindness."

British defense officials told the UK Guardian that British bombs were "different."

"They are optimized to create blast [rather than heat]", one said, speaking on the standard

condition of anonymity in Britain. The official added that it would be misleading to call them “thermobaric.”

Officials told the Guardian the new weapon was classified as a soldier launched “light anti-structure munition” and that the bombs would be more effective because “even when they hit the damage is limited to a confined area.”

“The continuing issue of civilian casualties in Afghanistan has enormous importance in the battle for hearts and minds,” said Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell in the article. “If these weapons contribute to the deaths of civilians then a primary purpose of the British deployment is going to be made yet more difficult.”

According to Campbell, the deployment of the weapons was not announced to Parliament.

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