

# Meet the ‘Mother Of All Bombs’: Six Facts About the Bomb Trump Dropped on Afghanistan

By [RT News](#)

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*US forces in Afghanistan have dropped America’s biggest non-nuclear weapon on Islamic State positions on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border – the first time this particular bomb has been used in combat. What’s so special about it?*

## 1. What’s in a name?

The weapon’s official designation is: Guided Bomb Unit, Massive Ordnance Air Blast. The acronym MOAB has also been rendered as the “*Mother Of All Bombs.*” The name is likely a reference to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s threat of the “*mother of all battles*” over Kuwait in 1991.



## 2. 14 years old and Vietnam-era Daisy Cutter’s daughter

The weapon was first tested in March 2003, just before the US invasion of Iraq. The MOAB is descended from the BLU-82B 'Daisy Cutter,' a Vietnam-era bomb that weighed 15,000 pounds (6,800 kg) and was used to clear jungle and desert minefields. The weapon was used with devastating effect against Iraqi troops in 1991. The last of the 225 BLU-82s were expended by 2008 and officially replaced by the MOAB.



### 3. It is HUGE!

The GBU-43/B MOAB is the *"monster truck of American ordnance,"* wrote self-described 'war nerd' columnist Gary Brecher in 2003. The MOAB weighs about 22,000 pounds, or just over 10,000 kg, and is the most powerful non-nuclear weapon in the US arsenal.

It is packed with H6 explosive, which is about 1.35 times more powerful than pure TNT for a 11-ton yield over a 1-mile (1.6 km) radius. The bomb itself is 30 feet long (almost 10 meters) and 40 inches (over 1 meter) in diameter and can only be dropped from specially modified C-130 transport planes.

## MOAB BLAST RADIUS

To provide context to the largest non-nuclear bomb's destructive power.



- 15 psi** Complete destruction of reinforced concrete structures, such as skyscrapers, will occur within this ring. Between 7 psi and 15 psi, there will be severe to total damage to these types of structures.
- 7 psi** Severe damage to complete destruction of reinforced concrete structures, such as skyscrapers.
- 5 psi** Complete destruction of ordinary houses, and moderate to severe damage to reinforced concrete structures.
- 2 psi** Severe damage to ordinary houses, and light to moderate damage to reinforced concrete structures.
- 1 psi** Light damage to all structures, and light to moderate damage to ordinary houses.
- 0.25 psi** Most glass surfaces, such as windows, will shatter within this ring, some with enough force to cause injury.

Source: HYDESim: High-Yield Detonation Effects Simulator

Michael Campbell / IndyStar



**Michael Campbell** ✓  
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Breaking news graphic I did to provide context to the destructive force of the MOAB that was used in Afghanistan today. via

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4. It is scary

The MOAB's function is primarily "*shock and awe*": it is an air-burst weapon, creating pressure intended to collapse tunnels or bunkers and obliterate any enemy personnel caught in the blast radius.



5. It is expensive, reportedly costing \$16 million a piece

The MOAB was built by the Alabama-based company Dynetics in cooperation with the US Air Force. The Pentagon has reportedly commissioned only 20 bombs. The widely-reported cost-per-unit of the weapon is \$16 million, with the entire program estimated at \$314 million.

There are, however, some reports that the figures [may be inaccurate](#) and that the DoD never gave a public estimate of the weapon's cost because it was developed in-house and the military didn't keep track of the expenses the way private companies do.

6. And, there's a Russian daddy

After the US tested the MOAB in 2003, Russia developed its own thermobaric weapon, nicknamed the "*Father of All Bombs*" and tested it in 2007. Very little is known about this weapon, but the Russian military says it is four times more powerful and has twice the blast radius of the American mega-bomb.

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A group of US lawmakers wrote to the presidential administration asking for more information about a potential sale of smart bombs, aka [rt.com](https://rt.com)

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