

What's Worse? Trump Dropping 'Mother of All Bombs' or That 70% of Americans Approve

Widespread support comes despite the lack of information from the Pentagon about damage from the "Mother of All Bombs" in Afghanistan

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Global Research, April 26, 2017

[Common Dreams](#) 20 April 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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*Despite the lack of information from the Pentagon about **President Donald Trump's deployment** on April 13 of the "Mother of All Bombs" in Afghanistan—or its aftermath—close to 70 percent of American voters say they "strongly" or "somewhat" support the bombing, according to a new poll.*

Defense Secretary James Mattis said Thursday that

"he does not intend to discuss damage estimates from last week's use of the military's most powerful non-nuclear bomb on an Islamic State stronghold in Afghanistan," the Associated Press [reported](#).

An Afghan official said this week that the bombing killed 96 Islamic State [ISIS] militants, though

"the official provided no proof of the deaths or information on how officials reached the number of 96," as the New York Times [notes](#). There have been no confirmed reports of civilian casualties.

The *Times* further reported on Tuesday:

It was unclear whether any Afghan or coalition forces have made it to the bombing site five days after the attack. The senior Afghan security official said the day after the bombing that Afghan commandos had done so and, after clearing the site, had handed it over to American military forensic teams.

[Zabihullah] Zmarai, the provincial council member, said local officials in Achin told him that neither Afghan nor American forces had arrived at the site.

A spokesman for the Afghan commandos, **Jawid Salim**, agreed. "It is not true that the members of U.S. forensic are at the scene of bombing—no one is there," he said. "We are in the area and we see everything."

[According to](#) *Agence France-Presse* on Wednesday, security forces are blocking both journalists and local residents from accessing the site. The outlet reported:

The blast triggered shockwaves which residents said they felt miles away. It was said by the Afghan defence ministry to have killed at least 95 militants, including some IS commanders and foreign fighters, but no civilians.

The statement could not be independently verified, with reporters including AFP correspondents turned away from the site again Wednesday even though there was no sign of fighting in the immediate area.

Ahmad Jan, a resident of Achin who fled IS fighting and moved with his family to the provincial capital Jalalabad long before the bomb was dropped, told AFP he had no idea whether his house or relatives survived the attack.

“No one can go there, they have completely blocked the area. I don’t know if my house is destroyed. They have not even shown any dead bodies to anyone,” he said.

Ali M. Latifi, a writer based in Kabul, Afghanistan, [offered this first-hand account](#) in Thursday’s *New York Times*:

Two hills obstructed view of the bombed area. American helicopters flew overhead. Three hours passed but we weren’t allowed to proceed further. Officials spoke cheerfully of resounding success and precision of the operation.

Yet every time we sought permission to visit the bombed area, they found excuses to keep us away: “The operation is ongoing!” “There are still Daesh”—Islamic State—“fighters on the loose!” “There are land mines!” and finally, “The area is being cleared!” “No civilians were hurt!”

“In the end, ‘Madar-e Bamb-Ha’ [the Dari translation for ‘Mother of All Bombs’] became the star of a grotesque reality television show,” she wrote. “We know how much it weighs, what it costs, its impact, its model number, and its code name. We know nothing about the people it killed except they are supposed to be nameless, faceless, cave-dwelling Islamic State fighters. It was a loud blast, followed by a loud silence. It is yet another bomb to fall on Afghan soil, and the future of my homeland remains as uncertain as ever.”

But that uncertainty is not reflected in the United States, where respondents to a Politico/Morning Consult survey seem to have been swayed by Trump and the military’s latest display of “shock and awe.”

“As you may know, the United States recently dropped the military’s largest non-nuclear bomb on a cave complex suspected to be controlled by ISIS, in Afghanistan, according to the U.S. Department of Defense,” the 1,992 registered voters were asked. “Knowing this, do you support or oppose the military dropping the largest non-nuclear bomb on an ISIS cave complex in Afghanistan?”

Forty-three percent said they strongly supported the action, while 26 percent said they were “somewhat” behind the bombing. Just eight percent said they strongly opposed it.

The results lend credence to author and analyst **Phyllis Bennis’** call, [published](#) this week,

“to integrate opposition to these wars into the very core of the movements already rising so powerfully against racism, for women’s and LGBTQ rights, for

climate and economic justice, for Native rights, for immigrant rights and refugee protections, for Palestinian rights, and much more.”

“We’ll need new strategies, new tactics,” she wrote, “but we continue to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Our country is waging war against peoples across the globe, indeed waging war against the earth itself. But we are still here, challenging those wars alongside those who guard the earth, who protect the water, who defend the rights of those most at risk.”

Indeed, [wrote Seelai Popal, Ali A. Olomi, and Laila Rashidie](#) on Thursday, it is time

“for people of conscience in the U.S. to step forward and demand an end to the murder of the Afghan people and the poisoning of our land. The terrorism waged by the U.S. and its allies in the name of the ‘war on terror’ far outstrips the violence of those they claim to fight. It is time for the global community to demand that all militaries stop using our people and our lands as the testing grounds for war and weaponry. It is time to end the occupation of Afghanistan.”

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