

US military massacres 80 villagers in Afghanistan

Tom Carter
25 May 2006

In the latest atrocity in the US occupation of Afghanistan, US warplanes massacred at least 80 villagers in the southern province of Kandahar early Monday morning. As many as 350 people have been killed this past week in Afghanistan in an explosion of violence, the most severe since the US invasion in October 2001.

US military A-10 “Warthog” warplanes were called in to continuously strafe the village of Azizi, beginning Sunday night and ending early Monday morning. The A-10’s 30mm rounds, fired from the gunship’s colossal cannon at a rate of 4,200 per minute, were initially designed to penetrate tank armor. As such, they pass easily through all substances used in ordinary construction, as well as human bodies. The warplanes also dropped several bombs on the village.

Azizullah, an 18-year-old boy who was cut in the face and chest during the attack, described seeing “scores” of mutilated bodies as he fled the village. “One [bomb] hit my house. I was wounded and my two brothers were killed,” he told the AFP.

Attah Mohammad, also interviewed by the AFP, said that 24 members of his family were killed in the bombardment. Another man, Nasratullah, was sitting down to dinner with his in-laws when the attack suddenly began. “I managed to escape but I don’t know what happened to my in-laws,” he said.

After the planes strafed and bombed the area, Afghan security forces sealed off the area and prevented ambulances and doctors from entering the village. Because of the massive destructive power of the munitions used in the operation, an accurate casualty figure may never be ascertained.

Such was the carnage and subsequent popular outrage that even the president of the US puppet regime, Hamid Karzai, felt compelled to issue a statement calling for a

military investigation into the air strike. The popular anger over these air strikes undermines the already flimsy support for his regime.

Initially, the US military claimed that “80 Taliban” were killed in the operation. Later, they were forced to admit that some civilians may have been killed, but cynically blamed the deaths on “Taliban fighters” hiding amongst the civilians.

“The ultimate cause of why civilians were injured and killed,” US military spokesman Tom Collins declared, “is because the Taliban knowingly, willfully chose to occupy homes of these people.”

Paul Fitzpatrick, a lieutenant-colonel, released a statement insisting that those killed on Monday “were active members of the Taliban network who conducted attacks against coalition and Afghan forces as well as civilians.”

“The coalition only targeted armed resistance, compounds and buildings known to harbor extremists,” the statement claims.

The US military is now maintaining the position that US and Afghan troops in the area had come under fire from resistance fighters in or near the village. In the US military version of events, the ordinary men, women, and children dismembered in the air strikes are labeled “human shields,” the A-10 strafing runs are “self-defense,” and the operation itself is a “victory” against “hard-core Taliban fighters.”

In reality, the US puppet regime and its military forces face a population that is overwhelmingly hostile to the occupation. Faced with ever-dwindling popular support for the so-called “war on terror” in Afghanistan, as well as in America itself, the US military is resorting to increasingly brutal colonial methods. The atrocity carried out Monday morning is a form of indiscriminate collective punishment, designed

to terrorize and intimidate a hostile population.

This past week, the US military has reported coming under increasing attack from an armed resistance. Last Wednesday, there was an eight-hour struggle for control of the town of Musa Qala in Helmand, involving as many as 400 insurgents. On Tuesday, a six-hour battle raged in Tarin Kowt, a district of the Uruzgan province, in which dozens were killed. Certain areas of the southern provinces of Helmand, Uruzgan and Kandahar are in open rebellion.

The number of US troops in the country was recently increased from 19,000 to 23,000, bringing the total number of foreign troops to 30,000. Several thousand additional NATO soldiers, including 3,500 British troops, are to be moved into the rebellious southern provinces at the end of July.

Karzai, unable for political reasons to acknowledge that his regime and the US occupation are widely reviled, blamed the eruption in violence on “foreign fighters” entering the country from Pakistan. This all-too-familiar line provoked firm rebuttals from Islamabad.

Also on Monday, the new Afghan parliament rejected by a vote of 116 to 15 a budget proposal on the grounds that the salaries it stipulated for civil servants were too high, and would not be accepted by the international donors. Seventy-five percent of Afghanistan’s budget comes in the form of foreign donations.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact