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Massive US Air Strike Damages Claim of ‘New’ Strategy

Posted By Jason Ditz

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Recent administration claims about the US 'starting over' in Afghanistan and adopting a "[new](#)" strategy which shouldn't be judged by the last eight years of failures came to a screeching halt this morning when a [US jet attacked a pair of hijacked fuel tankers](#) that were surrounded by civilians, [killing at least 95](#).



Despite General Stanley McChrystal's claims that the military would stop emphasizing attacks on the Taliban in favor of improving the lives of the nation's civilians and protecting them from harm, the temptation to lob a missile into a village, even knowing it would cause a massive fireball when it hit the fuel tankers, was too great to resist.

NATO [confirmed the strike but insisted steps were taken to ensure that no civilians](#) were in the area before the attack. Yet local officials say [mostly civilians were slain in the strike](#), and NATO is promising an investigation into the incident. Likewise, the White House failed to concede anything about the strike, [but express "regret" in the event civilians had been killed](#).

Such events are all too common in Afghanistan, and from the blanket denials to the promises of investigations (which invariably take weeks and resolve little) to the "regrets" it seems little has changed. Materially the same incident [happened in Farah in May](#) (shortly after the last Obama Administration announced "new" strategy), and in [August of 2008 in Herat](#) (just before the Bush Administration's "new" strategy announcement).

The only thing that's changed is that there are far more soldiers on the ground, the Taliban has a far greater presence, and the number of people getting killed in the average day is much higher. Though Defense Secretary Robert Gates insists the newest strategy is "[working](#)," all it seems to be accomplishing is killing more civilians. If that's all it took to win in Afghanistan, the US would've won years ago.