

U.S Bombing of Afghanistan

Why in news?

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United States dropped one of the largest non-nuclear devices ever unleashed in combat over Afghanistan, killing 90 suspected Islamic State militants.

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What is the reason for the attack?

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- The bomb was dropped in the Achin district of the eastern province that borders Pakistan.

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- The strike was part of a joint operation by Afghan and international troops.

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- It targeted a network of caves, tunnels and ammunition caches.

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- The deaths have not been independently verified, but the Afghan Defence Ministry said no civilians were harmed in it.

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- The strike came as U.S. President dispatches his first high-level delegation to Kabul to decide the future of nearly 9,000 American troops stationed in Afghanistan.

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What is the significance of the bomb?

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- The 9,797-kg GBU-43 bomb or Massive Ordnance Air Blast Weapon (MOAB) was dropped from an MC-130 aircraft.

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- It unleashes 11 tons of explosives.
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- The device, also known as the “mother of all bombs,” is a GPS-guided ammunition that had never before been used in combat before.
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- The bomb's destructive power, equivalent to 11 tonnes of TNT.
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- Atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II had blasts equivalent to between 15,000 and 20,000 tonnes of TNT.
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- The Israel-manufactured SPICE (smart precise impact and cost effective) bomb is the biggest conventional bomb that can be delivered by the Indian Air Force via Mirage 2000 fighters.
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What was the reaction?

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- American lawmakers have applauded by saying that “it sends a clear message” to terror groups in the region.
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- Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Taliban condemned the use of the bomb in Afghan soil.
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- The United States has steadily intensified its air campaign against Islamic State and Taliban militants in Afghanistan.
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- The United Nations has raised concerns that the American air campaign is swelling civilian casualties in Afghanistan.
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- Last year air strikes by the military coalition caused at least 127 civilian deaths and 108 injuries, up from 103 deaths and 67 injuries in 2015, the U.N. says.
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- U.S Air Force deployed nearly 500 weapons in the first three months of 2017.
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Source: The Hindu

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