

## AFGHANISTAN DID YOU KNOW

March 2011

Recent polls [suggest](#) that while a majority of Americans disapprove of the war in Afghanistan, many on grounds of its horrible economic cost, only 3 percent took the war into account when voting in the 2010 midterm elections. The issue of the economy weighed heavily on voters, but the war and its cost, though clear to them and clearly related to the economy in their thinking, was a far less pressing concern.

**(Stephen Zunes)**

Sadly, more and more of us in America are getting used to the idea of child poverty -- and even child labor -- as our own economy sinks further under the burden of our latest nine years of war, of two billion dollars per week we spend creating poverty abroad that we can then emulate at home. Things are getting bad here, but in Afghanistan, children are bombed. Their bodies are casually dismembered and strewn by machines already lost in the horizon as the limbs settle. They lie in pools of blood until family members realize, one by one, that their children are not late in returning home, but in fact never will. **(Stephen Zunes)**

In Afghanistan, a nation where 850 children die every day, about a quarter of the population goes hungry. The UN says that 7.4 million Afghans live with hunger and fear of starvation, while millions more rely on food help, and one in five children die before the age of five. **(Kathy Kelly)**

Although the U.S. military forbids soldiers to mutilate corpses and go on killing sprees that target civilians, the U.S. occupying forces in Afghanistan have bragged, in recent weeks, about increased capacities to kill with ever more invulnerable weapons. A company of 16 Abrams tanks was recently delivered to Afghanistan. "We've taken the gloves off," [said an unnamed U.S. military official](#), "and it has had huge impact." The 68 ton tanks fire high explosive, white phosphorus and anti-personnel shells that can destroy a house a mile away. Each tank costs 4.3 million dollars and uses 3 gallons of jet fuel per mile. **(Kathy Kelly)**

The Pentagon is also sending 12,500 XM25 Individual Air Burst Weapons to Afghanistan, one to each infantry squad and Special Forces team in Afghanistan. The XM25 gun can fire a projectile that will travel the length of eight football fields. "When fired, the projectile is designed to explode directly above a target," says the Army Times, "raining shrapnel down on an enemy crouched behind cover." **(Kathy Kelly)**