‘INFERNAL MACHINES’

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With the addition of various prefixes, the term IED covers an extremely wide range of explosive devices, from letter bombs to suicide vests, as well as trucks and boats laden with explosives. IEDs have become the principal weapon for insurgents who are fighting superior military forces. They have also become a significant cause of civilian casualties, a major limiter of access for the international community and NGOs, and they have a serious impact on communities’ access to health care, education, and governance.
A TYPOLGY OF IEDS

Development of IEDs does not always mean a move towards more technical devices. To try to evade counter measures deployed by military forces insurgents may resort to using extremely basic devices, such as pressure plates.

Pressure plate initiator:

Pictured is a pressure plate recovered in Farah province in 2009. It is constructed from wood, two thin strips of metal and a bicycle inner tube.

Pressure plate initiator:

Taken in 2012, this device looks extremely basic, but carbon rods from batteries are used to conduct the current and close the circuit to complete the contact when pressure is applied. It would be difficult to detect with a metal detector, which are widely used by both international and Afghan military forces.
A TYPOLOGY OF IEDS

IEDs in Afghanistan by switch type:
- Victim Operated IEDs – 47.8%
- Command operated – 21.58%
- Suicide Bomber – 1.16%
- Time delay – 0.21%
- Vehicle borne – 0.99%
- Unknown – 28.25%

Civilian casualties, by switch type:
- Suicide Bomber – 35.25%
- Victim Operated IEDs – 11.67%
- Command operated – 10.32%
- Vehicle borne – 9.52%
- Time delay – 0.15%
- Unknown – 32.94%
SVBIED ATTACKS
Attacks Against Non-Military Facilities and Disregard for Non Combatants

Failure to minimise weapons effects:

• SVBIEDs were the main killers of civilians in Afghanistan in 2011, due to the attacks often being carried out in public areas.
• Taliban often do not claim SVBIED attacks in public areas, or put out propaganda claiming only military personnel were killed.
• Local people report avoiding government facilities because of the threat of suicide attacks.

An SVBIED strike against the district centre (a government facility) in Mandozai, Khost Province, on 28 December 2008. This attack was carried out in the Haqqani Network area of operations.

Sixteen Afghans were killed, including 14 children. Another 58 people were injured, including at least 40 civilians.
**ATTACKS AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS IN CIVILIAN AREAS**

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**The Emirate – Taliban:**

*A Martyrdom-Seeking Attack Destroys Two American Vehicles in Jalalabad*

_In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious and Merciful_

_Zabihallah (Mujahid) – 1/3/2009_

**Moments after noon today, one of the heroes of the Islamic Emirate, the mujahid, Abdul Rahman, a resident of Khost province, carried out a martyrdom-seeking attack on an American military convoy near the center of the army command within the city of Jalalabad, the center of Nangarhar province. It resulted in the destruction of two enemy military vehicles.**

**Reports indicated that the attack was carried out by means of a car bomb, resulting in the complete destruction of the two vehicles and the killing of soldiers onboard both.**

**A number of Afghan soldiers were injured who stood before the army command center, where the powerful explosion took place.**

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Picture: Joanna Wright
Sixty per cent of the 20,866 IEDs encountered in Afghanistan in 2011 were in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar.¹

- The chances of survival are reduced for victims of multiple-casualty incidents as health care facilities are overwhelmed by both the number of wounded and the serious nature of their injuries.

- IEDs can have a devastating impact on Afghan families, especially if multiple family members are killed or injured in a single incident.

- Locals said that moving from rural areas to district centres or provincial capitals placed them at the greatest risk of triggering an IED. Facilities in villages are often non-existent, so the associated reluctance of rural people to travel restricts their access to health care, education, and government.

- A tribal elder underscored that residents were afraid to demonstrate against IED usage as this would imply that they were protesting against the Taliban and cooperating with the government.

¹ Declassified military statistics.
Military munitions:
- Looting arsenals.
- State sponsorship.
- Harvesting Explosive Remnants of War.

Commercial explosives:
- Theft.
- Diversion.

Home Made Explosives (HME):
- Fertiliser, notably ammonium nitrate.
- Industrial compounds, notably potassium chlorate (e.g., match factories).
- Illicit manufacture of high explosives (such as PETN).
“It is possible to increase the logistical burden on bomb makers by forcing them to shift to materials that are harder, riskier, and more expensive to acquire, or that have to be transported over longer distances and in smaller batches, that require more complex processing, or that are less powerful when they are turned into explosives.”
SOURCES OF IED COMPONENTS AND CONTROLS

Packaging recovered from an IED in the P2K (Paktia, Paktika, Khost).

Stills from an Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) suicide car bomb video.

Blasting caps, recovered in Khost province