Iraqi civilian bombing casualties

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There is an interesting article in the *Washington Post* reporting on the fact that American aerial bombing attacks on Iraq are killing civilians. It is qualified and excused up the wazoo, but still leaves the clear impression that civilians are dying as a result of American bombings. A few comments:

1. Despite the enormous number of bombing runs, this is the first time of which I am aware that the deaths of civilians from aerial bombardment has even been mentioned in the mainstream media (the unmainstream media does cover it). The fact that American and British planes have been bombing civilians for years, even before the latest attack on Iraq, is one of the biggest underreported matters in American journalism.
2. Publishing on Christmas Eve is a good way to blunt the PR impact. You can't pick a better day to announce something if you wish to cover yourself by having it officially publicized while ensuring that the absolute minimum number of people see it. It is much better to have info like this come out in a controlled way.
3. The *Washington Post* article is tied to its own and a slightly earlier analysis of daily news briefs from Central Command Air Forces Forward Public Affairs (e. g., here).
4. It is possible that making this issue 'news' now is part of a new Pentagon propaganda campaign to begin to sell the advantages of turning the ground war into an air war. The *Washington Post* article is the type of thing used to inure Americans to the fact that 'collateral damage' will unavoidably mean the death of a few civilians, regrettable but necessary in the fight of the 'war on terror'.

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