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December 8, 2009 - Hundreds of angry residents took to the streets against what they called the killing of 15 civilians by US forces in eastern Laghman province Tuesday morning. Mehtarlam dwellers claimed US forces killed 15 ordinary people including women and children during an overnight operation in the Armal village on the outskirts of the provincial capital...

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### Civilian deaths touch off anti-US protest in Laghman - Afghanistan

#### **Mehtarlam dwellers claimed US forces killed 15 ordinary people including women and children during an overnight operation in the Armal village**

Abdul Moeed Hashmi



MEHTARLAM, Dec 8, 2009: Residents carry the dead bodies of civilians killed in a US air strike here on Tuesday.

December 8, 2009

MEHTARLAM: Hundreds of angry residents took to the streets against what they called the killing of 15 civilians by US forces in eastern Laghman province Tuesday morning.

Mehtarlam dwellers claimed US forces killed 15 ordinary people including women and children during an overnight operation in the Armal village on the outskirts of the provincial capital.

Hundreds of protesters from nearby villages brought the bodies to the city and placed them in front of the governor's house at 9am. Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers fired into the air as the demonstrators neared the entrance to the governor's house.

Eyewitnesses alleged a man was killed and a child seriously wounded in the soldiers' firing. Shamshad TV reporter Tahir Safi alleged he and his photographer covering the protest were thrashed by soldiers.

City resident Rahimullah said US forces killed civilians during the overnight operation. A former reporter for Laghman Radio Television, Ihsanullah Shahidzai, was among those killed, he added.

The protesters, chanting "Death to American, Death to Obama and Death to



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Karzai," demanded an immediate end to the killing of innocent people.

But the provincial police chief, Brig. Gen. Abdul Karim Omaryar, insisted several Taliban fighters were killed in the operation. He told Pajhwok Afghan News the incident was under investigation.

In Kabul, the press office of the International Joint Command (IJC) said Afghan and international security forces killed several enemy militants and detained a handful of others in the province.

The joint force was pursuing a Taliban IED facilitator, responsible for several suicide attacks in the region, the IJC said in response to an emailed query regarding the incident from this news agency.

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L'Impero si è fermato a Baghdad, by Valeria Poletti

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