

# SAUDIS AND AMERICANS DISAGREE OVER WHETHER US IS INVOLVED IN TARGETING IN YEMEN

I noted earlier that Saudi Arabia had expressed concern about civilian casualties – when Russia caused them.

Which is why the conflict between these two statements is so interesting. Here's Saudi Foreign Minister (and former Ambassador to the US) Adel al-Jubeir on Wednesday.

"We are very careful in picking targets. We have very precise weapons," Adel al-Jubeir told CBS News' Norah O'Donnell. *"We work with our allies including the United States on these targets."*

Al-Jubeir said collateral damage is "extremely regrettable" and should be avoided.

"But can we prevent it 100 percent? I don't think you can. This is warfare," he said. [my emphasis]

Here's a statement from earlier today from NSC Spokesperson Ned Price.

We are deeply concerned about recent reports of civilians killed in Mokha, Yemen on September 28. We were also shocked and saddened by the deaths of the Yemen Red Crescent Society volunteers in Taiz on the same day. We take all credible accounts of civilian deaths very seriously and again call on all sides of the conflict in Yemen to do their utmost to avoid harm to civilians and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

*The United States has no role in targeting decisions made by the Coalition in Yemen. Nevertheless, we have consistently reinforced to members of the Coalition the imperative of precise targeting. We also have underscored the importance of thoroughly investigating all credible allegations of civilian casualties. We call for an investigation into these reported civilian casualties and for the findings to be reported publicly.*

More broadly, these incidents underscore the urgency of seeking a durable solution to the crisis in Yemen through a peaceful political dialogue as soon as possible. [my emphasis]

Whichever it is, it sure is hard to square either one of these comments with the joint statement earlier today expressions shock over Russian inflicted civilian casualties.

Update: I'm curious whether Jubeir's statement precedes the withdrawal of the Dutch proposal for an outside review in Yemen. The CBS article is time stamped 3:10 PM, which seems late in the day to have influenced the UN action, but the video it includes is timestamped 11:40, which may well have been early enough.

Update: Meanwhile, the US just bombed a Medecins sans Frontieres trauma center in Kunduz, killing at least 9 MSF staffers.