

Beat: Miscellaneous

Afghan, Pakistani forces again clash on disputed border

-, 07.05.2013, 01:47 Time

USPA News - Afghan and Pakistani forces exchanged fire Monday along a disputed border that was drawn up by the British in the 19th century, officials said. It is the second time in less than a week that forces from the two countries have clashed along in the area.

The clashes began at around 8:20 a.m. local time on Monday near the Durand Line in Goshta district of Nangarhar province in northeast Afghanistan. At least two military check posts and one tank belonging to Pakistani forces were destroyed during the two-hour battle, which began when Pakistani forces tried to repair a check post that was destroyed in a clash last week. "Afghan Border Police strongly responded to the continuation of posts building near Goshta district by the Pakistani military," said Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi. Afghan officials said there were no casualties among Afghan forces as a result of Monday's clash, and there were no reports of casualties from the Pakistani side. The so-called Durand Line is a border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan that was drawn up by colonial Britain in 1893. Pakistan recognizes the line as the international border between the two countries, but the Afghan government has never officially recognized it as such. Following Monday's clashes, Azizuddin Ahmadzada, Director-General of the First Political Department of the Afghan Foreign Affairs Ministry, summoned Pakistani charge d'affaires Shah Nazar Afridi in Kabul to lodge a protest. Ahmadzada described the clashes as an "unprovoked attack" by Pakistani forces, saying they used both heavy and light weapons against Afghan forces. "Mr. Ahmadzada clarified to Mr. Afridi that in the case of Pakistani forces' continued refusal to remove all Pakistani installations in Goshta and other areas and any further unprovoked attacks by Pakistani forces, Pakistan will bear responsibility for any consequences," the foreign affairs ministry said in a statement. In its own statement on the issue, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected recent comments from Afghan President Hamid Karzai that the Durand Line is a settled issue. "Opening discussions on this issue is a distraction from the more pressing issues requiring the priority attention and cooperation of Pakistan and Afghanistan," Pakistan said. Last week, an Afghan police officer was killed and two Pakistani soldiers were injured when forces from both countries clashed near the Durand Line in Goshta district.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-931/afghan-pakistani-forces-again-clash-on-disputed-border.html>

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619