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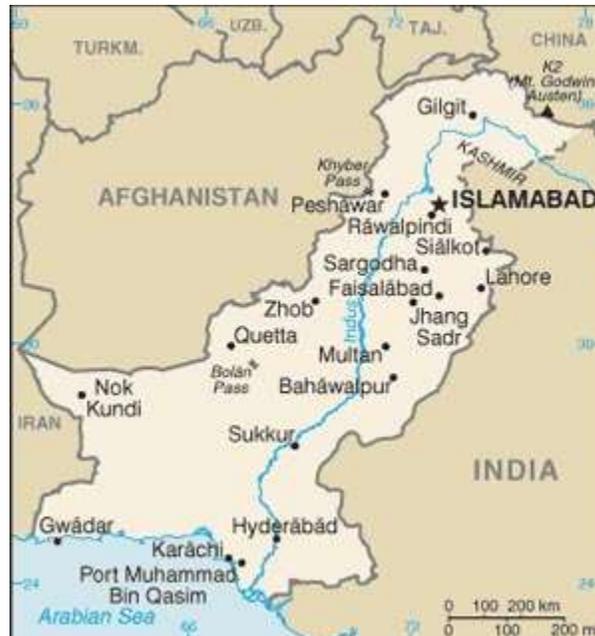
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Pakistan, Afghanistan Fail to Reach Border Deal After Deadly Clashes

By Jason Ditz
June 20, 2016



The ceasefire between Afghanistan and Pakistan is holding at the Khyber Pass border, after deadly gunfights last week that killed at least four, and which continue to leave thousands of people stranded on either side of the disputed border.

Negotiations don't seem to be making much progress either, with the two nations ending a full day of talks today without anything resembling an agreement resulting from them. Pakistani officials came out of the talks, however, reiterating their intention to build the border fence.

Afghanistan and the US occupation forces there have been pressuring Pakistan for years to "control" the border, and Pakistani officials believe that fence and gates will improve their control over traffic back and forth. Pakistani officials even tried to be amicable about it, building the fencing some 30 meters into Pakistani territory.

At least by Pakistani reckoning, and that's the problem. The 1893 deal between Afghanistan and Britain, which defines the de facto border, is roundly rejected by Afghan officials, who insist that the "real" border is dramatically further south, at the Indus River, and that Afghanistan actually spans a large portion of Pakistan as well.

So when Pakistani government forces came to build the fencing, the Afghans started shooting, and the border patrols quickly got into open combat. With nothing resolved, it remains to be seen what happens when the construction crews return.