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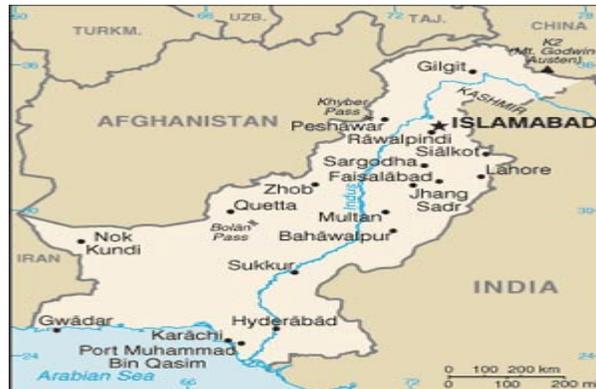
Border Clash: NATO Helicopters Attack Pakistani Border Troops

By Jason Ditz

May 17, 2011

The ever-rising tensions between the US and Pakistan have taken another major jump today, after two NATO helicopters, at least one of which was confirmed to be a US military helicopter, [crossed into the North Waziristan Agency of Pakistan from Afghanistan.](#)

The incursion was brief but sparked an exchange of fire with Pakistani border soldiers. [The US claimed that the helicopters were attacked while still inside Afghanistan's Khost Province,](#) while Pakistani officials say that the shooting began after they crossed into Waziristan. The exchange of fire left two Pakistani soldiers wounded.



It is not the first time that the border has seen incursions. [US helicopters launched a raid in September which killed more than 60 tribesmen](#) who they said fled across the border from Afghanistan. The incident sparked a warning from the Pakistani government.

The real tension, however, stems from the raid by US helicopters into Abbottabad earlier this month, which killed Osama bin Laden. The raid came without informing the Pakistani government prior to the attack, and the White House [has since claimed that it “reserves the right” to launch similar unilateral](#) raids into Pakistani territory whenever President Obama feels it is appropriate to do so.

The prospect of such raids becoming normal fueled a major upswell of anti-US sentiment within Pakistan, and demands from both opposition and ruling politicians for the military to prevent similar incursions. Since then Pakistan’s military has kept a close eye on the border for any potential US raids.

The US has been largely silent over the new incident, but it seems the relationship with Pakistan has moved into uncharted territory, and the US calls for Pakistan to escalate its military presence along the border is now working against them, with those troops now prepared to resist potential US invasions.