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Daily Mail

## Dozen NATO oil tankers set alight in rocket attack on Afghanistan border

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Assailants torched more than 20 tankers in Pakistan carrying fuel for U.S. and NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan on Thursday.

It is the first reported attack since Islamabad closed the border to protest coalition airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani troops last month.

Several hundred trucks have been stranded at poorly guarded terminals around the country as they wait for Pakistan to reopen its two border crossings into Afghanistan.

Around 40 percent of the non-lethal supplies for U.S.-led troops in landlocked Afghanistan travel across Pakistani soil.

Islamabad closed both frontier crossings into Afghanistan on Nov. 26 hours after airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition killed 24 Pakistani troops on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. U.S. and NATO officials have said the incident was a mistake, and have pledged to investigate.

Police officer Hamid Shakil says unknown men fired rockets at a terminal for the tankers close to the southwestern city of Quetta.

He said at least 23 tankers were set ablaze. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Last year, Islamabad temporarily closed one of its Afghan crossings to NATO supplies after U.S. helicopters accidentally killed two Pakistani soldiers.

Suspected militants or criminals took advantage of the impasse to launch many attacks against stranded or rerouted trucks carrying NATO supplies.

The deadly airstrikes at the border sent already tense relations between Pakistan and the United States to new lows, threatening Islamabad's cooperation in helping negotiate an end to the Afghan war.

It came amid political tensions in Islamabad following the resignation of Pakistan's ambassador to the United States following an outcry from the country's powerful military establishment, which is in charge of Afghan and U.S. policy.

Envoy Husain Haqqani stepped down because of allegations he wrote a memo to Washington asking for its help to stop a supposed military coup.

President Asif Ali Zardari has been under pressure because of the scandal, and on Tuesday flew to Dubai for medical treatment related to a heart condition.

His trip led to rumors that the 56-year-old was losing his grip on power.

Earlier Thursday, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the U.S. expected Zardari, an American ally, 'will be able to return in full health in his duties' after receiving treatment.

A statement for the presidency said Zardari's health was improving.