
AFGHANISTAN REACTS ANGRILY TO PAKISTAN'S FENCING OF BORDER

- 06.04.2017

VOA (April 05, 2017)

Afghanistan is calling on Pakistan to stop fencing off the border between the two countries, suggesting that Kabul might resort to military action if diplomacy fails to resolve the issue.

The Pakistani military launched the fencing project last month after the fortification of regular border crossings and construction of new security installations along portions of the 2,600-kilometer, largely porous frontier, known as the Durand Line.

Islamabad says the measures will help address mutual terrorism concerns and prevent illegal crossings as well as terrorist infiltration in both directions.

The border security project, however, has outraged Afghan political circles and media commentators. The turmoil-hit nation historically has disputed portions of the 1893 demarcation undertaken under then-British rulers of the Indian subcontinent.

Days of heated debate on the issue in the Afghan parliament prompted the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday to issue a formal government response.

We have clearly stated that any type of unilateral actions taken along the Durand Line without the agreement of the government of Afghanistan [are] going to be ineffective, impractical and impossible, ministry spokesman Ahmed Shakib Mostaghani told a news conference in Kabul. Afghanistan has long referred to the border with Pakistan as an imaginary boundary.

Mostaghani again dismissed as mere excuses Islamabads assertions that militants are entering Pakistan from the Afghan side to launch terrorist attacks in the neighboring country. Mostaghani added that his government has taken up the issue with Pakistani authorities to resolve it through diplomatic channels.

If this is not going to result in prevention of the unilateral actions taken by the Pakistani side along the Durand Line, and if the violations continue, the government of Afghanistan and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are ready to defend the countrys territorial integrity and national sovereignty, he responded when asked whether Kabul might consider using force to stop the fencing.

The spokesman also said that instead of indulging in "unjustified" steps like fencing the border and shutting legal crossings, Islamabad should move against insurgents and sanctuaries on Pakistani soil who are being used against Afghanistan.

There was no immediate reaction from Pakistan to the assertions made by the Afghan side on

Wednesday.

During this weeks debate in the Afghan parliament, angry lawmakers even called for a fellow member to be stoned to death for publicly stating that the Durand Line is an international border.

Pakistani officials, however, maintain that the fencing is being undertaken well within their territory and once completed, will address mutual security concerns and improve understanding between the two countries.

Islamabad has also dismissed Afghan objections over the international status of the Durand Line, saying Pakistan inherited it when the country gained independence from Britain in 1947.

Afghanistan and Pakistan blame each other for supporting anti-state militants and sponsoring cross-border terrorist attacks, a major source of tensions and deterioration in bilateral relations. Pakistan says anti-state militants sheltering in "ungoverned" Afghan areas are behind a recent wave of terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

Kaynak/Source: