

Iranian, Chinese arms seized in Afghanistan

AFP, Heart

Afghan authorities said they had seized dozens of Iranian and Chinese-made weapons after a brief battle yesterday with Taliban fighters near the border with Iran.

The weapons found in the western province of Herat included about 40 mines and rocket-propelled grenades, the government's intelligence agency said in a statement.

They were found in a vehicle that Taliban fighters abandoned following an exchange of fire in the province's Ghoryan district on the Iranian border, it said.

"The weapons were seized after Taliban escaped and left one of their vehicles behind with the weapons," it said.

An intelligence official told AFP separately and on condition of anonymity that the arms appeared to have been manufactured in Iran and China.

Some of the rockets showed to reporters carried Persian writing and the coat of arms of Iran, which reads "Allah."

US and British officials have alleged that the Taliban are being supplied by weapons that arrive from Iran, although not necessarily from Tehran, which denies involvement.

A sizeable convoy carrying explosives was seized early this month by NATO troops in the western province of Farah, which also borders Iran, the top Nato general here, General Dan McNeill, said last week.

"The geographic origin of that convoy was clearly Iran but take note that I did not say it's the Iranian government," the US general told AFP.

Officials with Nato's International Security Assistance Force told the Washington Post the weapons stash included armour-piercing bombs, which have been especially deadly when used against foreign troops in Iraq.

The Nato-led force interdicted two smaller shipments of similar weapons from Iran into southern Helmand province on April 11 and May 3, the Post said.

US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte reiterated last week concern about weapons from Iran supplying the Taliban and said Washington was also discouraging China from selling arms to that country.



SUPRO Chairperson Abdul Awal speaks at a national seminar titled "Development, evaluation and review of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" at the National Press Club yesterday. On his left is Dr Hamida Hossain and on his right are Rashed Al Titumir and Ahmed Swapan Mahmud. Shushashoner Jonno Procharavijan (SUPRO) organised the seminar.

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