

U.S. Drone Crashes in Western Afghanistan



Kabul, January 13 (RHC)-- An unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the U.S. military in Afghanistan has crashed in the country's western province of Herat, according to local security officials.

Afghan officials said over the weekend that the drone went down in the town of Shindand, but a Taliban spokesman claimed that the militants shot down the aircraft during an airstrike against their stronghold. The unnamed spokesman added that militants have collected the wreckage of the drone and took it to an unknown location. The U.S. military is yet to comment on the incident.

Taliban militants have increased their attacks against U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, targeting NATO helicopters and drones. They say that their militants have shot down several aircraft and choppers belonging to U.S.-led forces in different parts of Afghanistan over the past few months.

The United States regularly uses drones for airstrikes and spying missions in Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan's northwestern tribal belt near the Afghan border. The airstrikes were initiated under former U.S. President George W. Bush, but have escalated under incumbent President Barack Obama, who has defended the use of the controversial drones as "self-defense."

The United Nations says the US assassination drone attacks are "targeted killings" that violate international law. The UN and several human rights organizations have already identified the U.S. as the world's number one user of "targeted killing," largely due to its drone attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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