

# Google Maps blamed in border dispute

November 6 2010

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Google Maps has been embroiled in a Central American border dispute that saw two neighboring countries dispatch troops and heavily armed police to their joint border.

The Internet search giant stepped into the fray after a Nicaraguan commander cited Google's version of the border map in an interview with Costa Rican newspaper La Nacion to justify a raid on a disputed area of Costa Rica.

The area is hotly disputed by the two neighbors, and Costa Rica has asked the Organization of American States (OAS) to investigate the alleged violations of its territory and intervene in the matter. OAS Secretary General Jose Manuel Insulza is touring both countries in a bid to mediate the dispute.

Late Friday, [Google](#) said a discussion with US State Department officials led it to conclude that "there was indeed an error in the compilation of the source data, by up to 2.7 kilometers (1.7 miles)," for its map of the region.

Google geopolitics analyst Charlie Hale said in a Google blogpost that the State Department has provided a corrected version and "we are now working to update our maps."

The error lies in Google's depiction of the border in part of the Caribbean coast, near the San Juan River, the very center of the dispute between San Jose and Managua that arose over Nicaragua's dredging of a

river that separates the two countries.

Hale said Google's map of the area will be corrected to follow the demarcation laid out in an 1897 arbitration award of a previous border treaty.

"The corrected version will follow the east bank of the San Juan River going northward, nearly to the Caribbean. It will then turn eastward and follow the southern shoreline of a large lagoon, Laguna los Portillos," he explained.

The Nicaraguan government had earlier demanded that Google reject Costa Rica's request and leave unchanged its depiction of the border, which it called "correct."

"I official request that (the border marking) not be modified," Foreign Minister Samuel Santos asked Google representative Jeffrey Hardy.

Hale noted that cartography is a "complex undertaking," borders constantly change and "there are inevitably going to be errors" in the data.

"It is our goal to provide the most accurate, up-to-date maps possible," he added. "We work hard to correct any errors as soon as we discover them."

On Tuesday, Costa Rica dispatched fresh security forces to its border with Nicaragua to bolster 150 agents sent last week to the border region, the scene of increasingly heated cross-border tensions since October 18.

The two countries have been at loggerheads since the 19th century on navigation rights for the San Juan River, which runs along half the frontier between the two Central American countries.

Nicaragua has denied sending troops over the [border](#), as claimed by Costa Rica, which says Nicaraguan soldiers have crossed the waterway, pitched tents on a disputed island and raised their country's flag there.

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Citation: Google Maps blamed in border dispute (2010, November 6) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-11-google-blamed-border-dispute.html>

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