Beat: News

Fresh U.S. drone strike kills 4 suspected militants in Pakistan`s tribal region

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USPA News - At least four suspected militants were killed Monday when a U.S. drone targeted a suspected militant compound in Pakistan`s volatile tribal region, Pakistani intelligence officials said, less than 24 hours after another drone strike killed six militants. The unmanned U.S. drone fired at least two missiles at a residential building in the Datta Khel area near the main town of Miranshah in Pakistan`s volatile North Waziristan tribal area, which is also near the border with Afghanistan.

The targeted house, which was completely destroyed, was allegedly being used by militants. Pakistani intelligence officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said four bodies were recovered at the scene of Monday`s drone strike, which occurred after locals observed drones overnight. It was unclear which group the militants were allegedly affiliated with, but there were no immediate claims of civilian casualties. Pakistan`s foreign ministry strongly condemned the drone strike, which came less than 24 hours after a U.S. drone targeted a suspected militant compound in the remote Ghulam Khan area of North Waziristan. Sunday`s attack resulted in the deaths of at least six people, all of whom were allegedly affiliated with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), better known as the Pakistani Taliban. "These unilateral strikes are a violation of Pakistan`s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Pakistan has repeatedly emphasized the importance of bringing an immediate end to drone strikes," the foreign ministry said in Monday`s statement which used the same text as a statement released to condemn Sunday`s attack. The ministry statement said the continuing drone strikes by the United States also set "dangerous precedents" for relations between the countries. "These drone strikes have a negative impact on the mutual desire of both countries to forge a cordial and cooperative relationship and to ensure peace and stability in the region," it said. U.S. drone strikes have become relatively common during President Barack Obama`s tenure in which the unmanned aircraft have targeted suspected militants, their hideouts, and training facilities. However, the number of civilians killed along with militants during such attacks has remained uncertain. The total number of deaths caused by drone strikes in 2012 stood well over 300, according to the Washington-based think tank New America Foundation, and as many as 3,239 individuals have been killed as a result of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan alone between 2004 and January 2013. In January 2012, President Obama, for the first time during his presidency, publicly acknowledged that U.S. drones regularly strike suspected militants along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He confirmed that many of these strikes are carried out in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, targeting al-Qaeda and Taliban suspects in tough terrain. Pakistan`s government has been public in its stance against the drone strikes, as local residents and officials have blamed them for killing innocent civilians and motivating young men to join the Taliban. Details about the alleged militants are almost never provided, and the U.S. government does not comment publicly on the strikes. However, the U.S. has used drones as an important tool in their fight against terrorism. In June 2012, al-Qaeda deputy leader Abu Yahya al-Libi was killed when an unmanned U.S. drone fired at least two missiles at a compound and a nearby pickup truck in the village of Hesokhel, located in the Mir Ali district just east of Miranshah. It was the most serious blow to al-Qaeda since U.S. Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden during a secret military operation in the Pakistani city of Abbotabad in May 2011.

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