Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. drone kills 4 suspected militants in Pakistan's tribal region

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USPA News - A U.S. drone strike struck a suspected militant compound in Pakistan`s volatile tribal region on Friday, killing at least four suspected militants and injuring two others, Pakistani intelligence officials said on Saturday. There were no reports of civilian casualties.

The unmanned U.S. drone fired at least two missiles at a suspected militant hideout in the town of Shiwal in the Shawal Tehsil area, located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) southwest of Miranshah, the main town of Pakistan`s volatile North Waziristan tribal area, which is also near the Afghan border. Pakistani intelligence officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the compound was being used by militants. "There were several missiles that were fired by the American drone and the house was completely destroyed. Four badly burned bodies were found but we don`t know their identities," one official said. Two suspected militants were also wounded in the drone strike, but their affiliation was not immediately known. In June, 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. Pakistani officials have repeatedly described the U.S. drone attacks as illegal. Pakistani President Asif Zardari has expressed the need to establish alternative security operations to the drone strikes, but U.S. officials have indicated that they will continue to carry out drone strikes to take out militants. Few details about casualties from the strikes are usually available, but allegations of civilian casualties regularly spark protests in Pakistan. According to the Washington-based think tank New America Foundation, as many as 2,680 individuals were killed as a result of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan between 2004 and early 2012. In January, U.S. President Barack 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. The U.S. considers the Pakistan-Afghan border to be the most dangerous place on Earth. The area is known to be a stronghold of the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network, which is one of the top terrorist organizations and threats to U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. But controversy has surrounded 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 usually not provided, and the U.S. government does not comment on the strikes.

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