

Beat: Miscellaneous

Latest U.S. drone strike in Pakistan kills 18

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USPA News - A United States drone attack in Pakistan's volatile tribal region killed at least eighteen, local media reported Wednesday. The attack took place in the Danday Darpa Khel area of North Waziristan, not far from the Afghan border, when the unmanned vehicle launched missile strikes against a residential compound and a vehicle.

Earlier reports said seven had been killed in the attack, while Geo News later reported a higher death toll at eighteen. The attack came around one month after the last U.S. drone attack in the region, which took place during the first week of June in the Shawal tehsil area, also in North Waziristan. The attack killed at least seven suspected militants. In late May, reports indicated that another U.S. drone strike near Miranshah, the main town of North Waziristan, killed six people, including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Wali-ur-Rehman, who was set to succeed Hakimullah Mehsud to lead the country's Taliban forces. 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 death toll, including the number of civilians killed during such attacks, has remained uncertain. Over a year ago, 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 usually not provided, and the U.S. government does not comment publicly on the strikes. However, the U.S. has used them 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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