

## 'Obama gave Green Light to Pakistan attacks'

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US commanders say they had consulted President Barack Obama before launching recent drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal belt near the Afghan border.

"Four days after assuming the presidency, he (Obama) was consulted by US commanders before they launched the two attacks," Guardian said Sunday.

The report comes after 22 people were killed in two separate US missile strikes on the Waziristan region bordering Afghanistan, on Friday.

The attacks were the first since President Barack Obama took office Tuesday.

Obama has said that he is prepared to bomb inside Pakistan if he gets relevant intelligence about the whereabouts of al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden.

Obama earlier hinted at increased operations in Pakistan, saying he thought George W. Bush had made a mistake in switching to Iraq before completing the job against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Meanwhile Pakistan's foreign ministry said Saturday that it had told US that the attacks by unmanned aircraft were of its 'great concern'.

"We maintain that these attacks are counterproductive and should be discontinued," it said in a statement.

President Obama has not commented on the missile strikes.

However, he has made the war in Afghanistan and the intertwined fight with al-Qaeda in Pakistan a foreign policy priority.

Obama has emphasized that Pakistan and Afghanistan are the central front in the US so-called war against terrorism.

"Afghanistan and Pakistan are the central front in the America's war against terrorism and the deteriorating situation in the region poses a grave threat to the global security. It's an international challenge of the highest order. That's why we are pursuing a careful review of our policy," Obama said on Thursday.

The tribal regions along the shared border between Pakistan and Afghanistan have become a safe haven for militants after a US-led invasion in late 2001 toppled Taliban in Afghanistan and sent insurgents to border areas with Pakistan.

The US and its western allies have accused Pakistan of 'not doing enough' to prevent attacks on supply routes as well as cross-border operations carried out by insurgents against foreign troops in Afghanistan.

Pentagon has used the allegation as a pretext to launch drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal regions — a move that has increased tension between Islamabad and Washington and has triggered anti-American sentiments among the Pakistani people.

Over 500 people — suspected militants as well as civilians — have been killed in such attacks, which started under the Bush administration.

Pakistan says that the drone attacks undermine the country's sovereignty and trigger public anger.

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