

## Pakistan army flexes muscles to shoot down drone aircraft

Pakistan's army Friday carried out a training exercise in which pilotless aircraft drones were shot down by anti-craft guns and short range surface-to-air missiles, a military statement said.

The exercise was carried out as public pressure on the government in Islamabad is increasing to use force to halt air raids by US drones that target suspected militant hideouts in Pakistan's tribal region.

'The elements of army air defence demonstrated their shooting skills by targeting the drones flying at different altitudes,' said the statement.

The indigenously built man-portable surface-to-air missile Anza II, the anti-aircraft Oerlikon and an unnamed 57 mm radar-controlled gun were used in the exercises that were conducted in a semi-desert area near Muzaffargarh in central Pakistan.

US spy planes have carried out around two dozen airstrikes in Pakistan's tribal districts, which are believed to have safe havens of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters launching cross-border attacks on international forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistan says the actions violate its sovereignty and undermine its efforts against terrorism.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday condemned this week's first US drone strike outside the tribal region, in Bannu district of North-Western frontier province. 'Such attacks will not be tolerated,' he told the National Assembly, the lower house of

parliament.

Pakistan's foreign ministry on the same day summoned US Ambassador Anne Patterson to lodge a formal protest over the incident.

( © IANS / India eNews)