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KARACHI: At this year's International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) held in Karachi from November 7 to 11, both Pakistan and China displayed indigenously developed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) which attracted the attention of foreign delegates and journalists.

Pakistan's Advance Engineering and Research Organisation (AERO) part of the state-owned Global Industrial and Defence Solutions (GIDS) conglomerate showcased its Shahpar UAV at the exhibition. The autonomous canard-pushing UAV boasts an endurance of seven hours and can relay data in real time out to a range of 250km. The drone can carry up to 50kg in payload, which can be configured for reconnaissance and day/night surveillance missions.

China's Aerospace Long-March International Trade Company (ALIT) also unveiled its CH-4 unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV) series. The UCAV, being offered for export, also boasts a maximum operational range of 250km while being guided from a ground control station. Defence analysts suggest that this range could be infinitely extended if it is guided via satellite.

According to ALIT's assistant president Yang Yunli, the UCAV, which features a wingspan of around 18 feet and a maximum payload capacity of three tones, can fly continuously for 30 hours. He said it comes equipped with a forward looking infra-red (FLIR) sensor, enabling it to navigate at night.

Yunli added that while initial versions can carry up to four missiles, later versions will have the ability to carry a bigger offensive payload. When asked how the CH-4 would compare to the American Predator UCAV, he claimed the two are equally capable.

Courtesy: Tribune