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Bomb kills 5 border police in southern Afghanistan

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At least five border policemen were killed and one wounded when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle in the southern province of Kandahar, officials said Friday. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Taliban militants mostly have been blamed — or take credit — for other recent attacks.

"The incident happened in the border town of Spin Boldak late Thursday afternoon, when the police were on patrol," said Ghorzang, a border officer who, like most Afghans, goes by one name.

The district of Spin Boldak, which is on the border with Pakistan, has been the site of several insurgent attacks on Afghan and coalition forces. In January, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in a public bath, killing 17 people and wounding 23, including the police commander who was the target.

"This is the work of Taliban, who cannot fight face to face. They resort to mines and suicide attacks," Ghorzang said, speaking by telephone from Spin Boldak.

In addition, insurgent attacks killed one NATO service member Thursday and one Friday in eastern Afghanistan, according to statements the coalition forces issued in Kabul. The statements gave no further details about the locations of the attacks or the troops' nationalities. Mostly U.S. forces serve in that part of the country.

Violence is rising as the Taliban intensify attacks on foreign and Afghan troops on the eve of the security transition from U.S.-led NATO troops to Afghan forces, scheduled to start this summer.

Militants had carried out several deadly attacks within the past week:

- On Thursday, three police trainers were killed and six wounded when an explosive device placed in their vehicle went off in the eastern city of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. The Taliban took credit for the attack.
- On Monday, a suspected Taliban sympathizer opened fire inside the Afghan Defense Ministry — possibly one of the best-guarded buildings in Kabul, the Afghan capital — killing two soldiers and wounding seven. The attack happened only hours before French Defense Minister Gerard Longuet had planned to meet there with his Afghan counterpart, Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak.

"It is not clear how the gunman got into the building. We are investigating this," Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, the spokesman for the defense minister, said Wednesday. A Taliban spokesman said the attack was intended to disrupt the visit of Longuet, who'd arrived Sunday in Afghanistan. France has nearly 4,000 troops assigned to the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force.

- Last Saturday, a suspected Taliban infiltrator wearing an Afghan army uniform detonated his explosives at a military base in the eastern province of Laghman, killing five NATO and four Afghan soldiers and wounding eight. It was the deadliest insurgent attack in recent months.
- On April 15, a suicide bomber in a police uniform killed the Kandahar provincial police chief, Khan Muhammad Mujahid, along with two others at the police headquarters.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the Laghman and Kandahar attacks.

The insurgents have discovered that attackers wearing police or army uniforms is an effective tactic, and they've vowed to continue it.