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The New York Times

## Afghan Spy Agency Accuses Pakistan Agency in Suicide Bombing

By Rod Nordland, Abdul Waheed Wafa

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KABUL — A spokesman for Afghanistan's intelligence agency on Monday accused Pakistan's intelligence agency of involvement in the suicide bombing here last week that killed six NATO soldiers, including four colonels.

While Saeed Ansari, the spokesman for the National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan's spy agency, did not mention the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agency by name, he left no doubt of what he meant.

The remarks came in a news conference announcing the arrest of seven people suspected of organizing the attack last Tuesday, in which a suicide bomber drove a minivan full of explosives into a convoy of armored S.U.V.'s. The blast killed 18 people, including a Canadian and an American colonel, 2 American lieutenant colonels and their 2 American drivers, as well as 12 Afghan civilians.

The seven were also charged with involvement in other suicide attacks in Kabul that killed another 25 people.

“All the explosions and terrorist attacks by these people were plotted from the other side of the border and most of the explosives and materials used for the attacks were brought from the other side to Afghanistan,” Mr. Ansari said.

“Of course, when we say that those attacks were plotted from the other side of the border, the intelligence service of our neighboring country has definitely had its role in equipping and training of this group,” Mr. Ansari said.

Afghan officials have frequently accused the Pakistani intelligence agency of supporting the Afghan Taliban and have voiced suspicions about the agency’s role in Taliban suicide attacks on Indian targets in Kabul. In February, suicide bombers attacked two guesthouses popular with Indians, killing 16 people, and in 2008 a suicide bombing of the Indian Embassy killed 41 people.

The seven suspects, all Afghans ranging in age from 21 to 45, lived in Kabul, and included a schoolteacher, a taxi driver and a trading company employee. One was identified as the second in command of the Taliban suicide bombing cell. Mr. Ansari said they had been arrested in the past week but did not say how the authorities managed to arrest them so quickly. Their commander, he said, was a man known as Dawood, the Taliban’s shadow governor for Kabul.

In addition to the attack on the NATO convoy, the suspects were involved in the attack on the guesthouses in February, he said. Mr. Ansari released names and photos of the suspects as well as videotaped confessions.

In the confessions, each a few minutes long, the men admitted having various roles in the attacks, from providing vehicles to storing explosives. They said the attacks had been organized while they were in the Pakistani city of Peshawar. They did not explicitly implicate the Pakistani I.S.I. or Pakistani officials in their plot, but said they belonged to the Taliban, and had organized their attack from the group’s clandestine offices in Peshawar.

Mr. Ansari did not explain what evidence the Afghan spy agency had of Pakistani involvement in the suicide bombings.

On Monday an Afghan court convicted the former treasurer of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Muhammad Noor, of taking bribes and putting more than half a million dollars into his private bank accounts, allegedly to transfer it to his boss, the acting minister, Sediq Chakari.

Mr. Chakari was dismissed from his ministerial post in December and is believed to be in exile in Britain; he has dual British-Afghan citizenship.

The court sentenced Mr. Noor to 15 years in jail and ordered him to repay 41 million afghanis, about \$900,000, to the government.

During the proceedings, Mr. Noor claimed the money in his accounts was his personal property, but the prosecutor noted that civil servants of his rank earn \$200 a month.

The ministry helps finance those going on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

