

North Korea Receiving Russian Supplies Despite Sanctions – Reports

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People walk in front of a monitor showing news of North Korea's threat **Toru Hanai / Reuters**

Russian smugglers are illicitly supplying North Korea with contraband energy and goods, evading sanctions and ignoring concerns about the isolated Asian country's nuclear tests, the Washington Post [reported](#) Monday.

“As the Chinese cut off oil and gas, we’re seeing [North Korea] turn to Russia,” the newspaper quoted an unnamed senior U.S. official with knowledge of alleged Russian smuggling into North Korea as saying on Monday.

Officials and experts reportedly noticed a sharp rise in supplies of Russian diesel and other fuels to North Korea starting in spring 2017.

The newspaper said a “dedicated ferry line” was launched between Russia’s Far East and North Korea to accommodate heavy traffic. The spike coincided with new UN sanctions and a ban on Chinese government fuel shipments in May, according to the Post.

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The news comes as the UN Security Council ratified new sanctions against North Korea after its sixth nuclear test since 2006. The 15-member Council, including permanent members Russia and the U.S., unanimously [passed](#) the sanctions resolution on Monday banning textile exports and capping fuel imports.

The U.S. Justice Department and Treasury Department were reportedly motivated by Pyongyang's increased trade with Moscow when it [blacklisted](#) four Russian citizens and one Russian company in August.

The Post cites U.S. court documents that describe a web of "front companies" formed by Russian citizens to specifically hide deals with North Korea.

A Treasury Department official points to China's willingness to "increase the pressure" on North Korea and a lack of clarity on whether "the Russians are willing to go along with that," the Post reported.

"Russia is now a player in this realm," said Anthony Ruggiero, now a fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies Washington think tank.

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