

Bank Transfers Bolstered U.S. Suspicions of Russia-Taliban Bounty – NYT

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The reports come as President Donald Trump tries to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and end America's longest war. **Saifurahman SafiXinhua / Zuma / TASS**

U.S. officials have intercepted data showing financial transfers between a Russian military spy unit and Taliban-linked accounts, The New York Times [reported](#) Tuesday, citing three unnamed officials familiar with the intelligence.

The alleged intercepts bolstered U.S. intelligence conclusions, also [reported](#) by the NYT, that Russia offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants to kill American troops in Afghanistan. Both Russia and the Taliban have denied the claims.

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The U.S. intercepts showed large financial transfers from a bank controlled by Russia's GRU military intelligence agency to a Taliban-linked account, the NYT reported.

"Analysts concluded from other intelligence that the transfers were most likely part of a bounty program," the newspaper wrote.

The GRU has been linked to assassination attempts in Europe including the 2018 poisoning attempt on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain.

Afghan officials reportedly corroborated the intelligence, saying Afghanistan has arrested 13 suspected middlemen between the GRU and Taliban-linked militants in the past six months and seized \$500,000 in cash from one of their homes.

Trump administration officials have briefed several House Republicans on intelligence that both supports and undermines the conclusion that Russia was running a covert bounty operation, two anonymous officials were quoted as saying.

The NYT reported that at least two deadly attacks linked to the alleged bounties were under scrutiny, one of which killed three Marines in April 2019.

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