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U.S. Intelligence Concludes 'Pro-Ukraine Group' Behind Nord Stream Attack

By AFP

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Gazprom

U.S. officials have seen new intelligence that indicates a "pro-Ukrainian group" was responsible for the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines last year, the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

In a cautious report that did not identify the source of the intelligence or the group involved, the Times said the U.S. officials had no evidence implicating Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky in the pipeline bombing.

But the attack benefitted Ukraine as it left Russia unable to earn millions from the sale of natural gas to Western Europe.

At the same time, the attack added to the pressure of high energy prices on key Ukrainian allies in Western Europe, particularly Germany.

The intelligence suggested the perpetrators behind the sabotage were "opponents of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia," the Times report said.

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But the U.S. officials had no indication of who took part and who organized and paid for the operation, which would have required skilled divers and explosives experts.

They believed those involved were probably Ukrainian or Russian nationals, and that none were from the United States or Britain.

U.S. officials have "no firm conclusions" about the intelligence, "leaving open the possibility that the operation might have been conducted off the books by a proxy force with connections to the Ukrainian government or its security services," the Times said.

The pipelines were ruptured by subsea explosives on Sept. 26, seven months after Russian forces invaded Ukraine.

Several countries were said at the time to have motives for the action: Russia, Germany, Ukraine, Poland, Britain and the United States.

In February, veteran U.S. investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported that the United States had been behind the operation to bomb the Nord Stream pipelines and that Norway assisted.

The White House blasted Hersh's report, which cited an unnamed source, as "complete fiction."

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