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China Shipped Assault Rifles, Body Armor, Drone Parts to Russia – Reports

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A soldier in front of some Chinese PLA and Russian military weapons in Taipei, Taiwan, Nov. 30, 2021. **Daniel Ceng Shou Yi / EPA / TASS**

Chinese companies had sent assault rifles, body armor and drone parts to Russia last year in what appears to be the first documented proof of Beijing supplying Russian companies with dual-use goods, Politico Europe has reported, citing customs data.

The shipments took place between June-December 2022, the outlet said Thursday, citing the customs data aggregator ImportGenius.

China could be relying on dual-use items "to quietly increase its assistance to Moscow while avoiding reprisals officials in Washington and Europe have been threatening in recent weeks," Politico Europe wrote.

One of China's largest state defense contractors, China North Industries Group Corporation Limited, reportedly sent 1,000 CQ-A assault rifles in June to Tekhkrim, a Russian company that deals with the Russian state and military.

It was not immediately clear if Russian troops used any of the rifles, which are modeled off of the M16 and have been used by armed forces in Asia, Africa and Latin America, according to Politico Europe.

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More than 12 tons of Chinese body armor was also routed to Russia via Turkey in late 2022, according to Politico Europe. It was apparently part of $10 million worth of almost 80 tons of body armor delivered mostly from Turkey, with some shipments arriving via the UAE and China.

"It is the first confirmation that China is sending rifles and body armor to Russian companies," Politico Europe said.

A small Russian distributor was said to have received 12 shipments of drone parts, including batteries and cameras, from the Chinese drone maker DJI via the UAE in November and December 2022. DJI drones have been spotted on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Russia has relied on China and other countries for navigation equipment, satellite imagery, vehicle components and other raw materials for months, according to Politico Europe.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington told Politico that Beijing "is not a party to the crisis, and has not provided weapons to either side of the conflict."

"China did not create the crisis," spokesperson Liu Pengyu was quoted as saying, adding that Beijing is "committed to promoting talks for peace."

Western officials have recently accused Beijing of considering supplying the Russian military with weapons that could tip the nature of the fighting in Russia's favor.

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