

Moscow Says U.S. Leaks May Be Intended to 'Deceive' Russia

By [AFP](#)

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Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

The leak of a trove of highly sensitive documents online could be a move by the United States to "deceive" Russia, its deputy foreign minister was quoted as saying Wednesday.

"It's probably interesting for someone to look at these documents, if they really are documents or they could be a fake or it could be an intentional leak," Sergei Ryabkov told Russian news agencies.

"Since the U.S. is a party to the (Ukraine) conflict and is essentially waging a hybrid war against us, it is possible that such techniques are being used to deceive their opponent, the Russian Federation," he said.

The breach — which has sparked a criminal investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice — includes classified information about Ukraine's fight against Russian forces, as well as secret

assessments of U.S. allies.

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A document reviewed by AFP highlighted U.S. concerns about Ukraine's capacity to keep defending against Russian strikes, while the Washington Post reported that another expressed doubts about the success of an upcoming offensive by Kyiv's forces.

The Guardian newspaper said that in one document U.S. officials estimated that there were 97 special forces members from NATO countries active in Ukraine at one point, including 50 British troops.

Asked about the leaks during a briefing on Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Like everyone else, we do not know the degree of credibility these documents have.

"But even disregarding them, long before these documents appeared, we had and still have information that many fighters and instructors from NATO countries, including the United Kingdom, are taking part in combat operations."

Dozens of photographs of documents — some of which also point to U.S. spying on allies and partners including Israel, South Korea and Ukraine — have been found on Twitter, Telegram, Discord and other sites in recent days, though some may have been circulating online for some time.

Many of the documents are no longer available on the sites where they first appeared, and Washington is reportedly working to have them removed.

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