

Russia supplying free fuel to Taliban in war against NATO forces: report



Russia is supporting the Afghan Taliban against NATO forces through a covert programme of laundered fuel sales, The Times said in a report on Tuesday.

“Russian intelligence services are sending fleets of fuel tankers into Afghanistan through the Hairatan border crossing with Uzbekistan,” the report quoted sources in the militant group and Afghan forces as saying.

“From there, they are delivered free of charge to front companies operating on behalf of the Taliban. The arrangement allows about \$2.5 million raised in cash from the sale of the fuel each month to be delivered directly to insurgent paymasters,” the report claimed.

Russia has accelerated its support in recent months in an apparent attempt to bolster the Taliban against Islamic State. The trade has become part of the revived “proxy war” strategy against the US and its allies, which stretches across battlefields from Ukraine to Syria.

“We sell the fuel on and distribute the money directly to our commanders,” a Taliban treasurer from Ghazni province said. He had been authorised to speak to a journalist as part of the Taliban’s efforts to advertise its relationship with international backers, in response to US President Donald Trump’s decision in August to send 3,800 additional US troops and further funding to the Afghan government.

This is the first time the extremist organisation has publicly admitted to receiving the Russian support. Over 13,000 Nato troops are currently stationed in Afghanistan.

“Accepting money from the Russians is not something we like doing,” the Taliban treasurer said, “but it is necessary at this stage of our jihad.”

Moscow has been repeatedly accused by senior US officials of supporting the

Taliban. "Russia does supply arms to the Taliban, and this, of course, is a violation of international norms and violation of the norms of the UN security council," Rex Tillerson, the US secretary of state, said recently.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/17/russia-supplying-free-fuel-to-taliban-in-war-against-nato-forces-report/>

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