



[Russian Operatives Accused of Offering Taliban Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops](#)

American intelligence officials have accused Russian operatives of secretly offering bounties to Taliban militants to kill U.S. troops. The assessment concluded that a Russian military espionage unit was behind the bounties on coalition forces in Afghanistan, which includes American soldiers. The unit, known as the GRU, has also been linked to assassination attempts and other covert operations in Europe. Reports indicate that information regarding the bounties officially came to light back in January after a U.S. special operations raid on a Taliban outpost in Afghanistan uncovered a large amount of cash. President Trump denied being informed of the matter, however intelligence officials stated that he was given a written briefing earlier this year.

In addition to saying that Trump was given a written briefing a few months ago, intelligence officials have also claimed that top members of the White House were aware of classified intelligence indicating that Russia was secretly offering bounties to the Taliban as far back as early 2019. According to the officials, the assessment was included in at least one of President Trump's written daily intelligence briefings at that time. It indicated that Russian operatives had become more aggressive in their desire to make deals with the Taliban. Interrogations of militants in Afghanistan were a key component to the findings that Russia offered monetary bounties to Taliban fighters for successful attacks on coalition troops. The discovery was given even more validity when officials found that Taliban fighters from different parts of Afghanistan were offering similar accounts as to how the large sums of money ended up in their possession.

Both Republicans and Democrats reacted to the reports of the Russian bounties with demands that the White House brief lawmakers on the intelligence assessment and the Trump administration's response. On Monday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) sent a letter to the Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Gina Haspel requesting an interagency briefing for all members of the House on the Russian bounties. Additionally, Representative Liz Cheney (R-WY) tweeted that the White House must explain who knew about the information and when, and what had been done in response to protect American forces and hold Russian leader Vladimir Putin accountable. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) also called for an immediate briefing to all U.S. Senators from the Directors of National Intelligence and the CIA. In response to the requests, members of the House were briefed earlier this week and the Senate Intelligence Committee was briefed on Wednesday afternoon as well.

The Russian bounties offered to Taliban militants in Afghanistan are believed to have resulted in the deaths of multiple American troops, according to U.S. intelligence gathered from military interrogations. While it is unclear how many additional soldiers may have been killed as a result of the bounties, the monetary incentives provided by the Russian operatives led to increased casualties of coalition forces in Afghanistan, including those of U.S. troops.