



Russia not permit US, NATO military transit to Afghanistan

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MOSCOW, January 22 (Itar-Tass) - Russia did not permit the United States and NATO to transit military supplies across the country to Afghanistan, Russian Military Representative to NATO General of the Army Alexei Maslov told Itar-Tass on Thursday.

"No official documents were submitted to Russia's permanent mission in NATO certifying that Russia had authorized U.S. and NATO military supplies transit across the country," he said in comments on some media reports about a statement which Commander of the U.S. Central Command General David Petraeus has recently made in Islamabad concerning alleged agreements with Russia and other countries bordering Russia on alternative transit routes for U.S. and NATO military supplies to Afghanistan.



Russia has concluded with NATO and two NATO states the agreements on transit of non-military supplies in Afghanistan. Specifically in April 2008 Russia has concluded an agreement with the North Atlantic Alliance on simplified railway transit of non-military supplies to Afghanistan and with France and Germany the bilateral agreements on air transit.

According to Russian expert Lieutenant-General Leonid Sazhin in order to provide logistic supplies for its military contingent in Afghanistan the U.S. will have to ask Russia to provide the ground transit of U.S. military supplies across the country or withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

Commenting on some reports about temporarily suspended supplies of medicines, food and fuel for the NATO contingent in Afghanistan across the Khyber Pass in north-western Pakistan because of a recent attack of Taliban militants on a military checkpoint in North Waziristan Sazhin said, "The U.S. already has quite big problems with logistic supplies for its 32,000-strong contingent in Afghanistan and will have more problems after the U.S. contingent is increased to 60,000 servicemen this year."

"The Americans have spoiled relations with Islamabad after lobbying President Pervez Musharraf's resignation despite the fact that the latter could keep the situation in Pakistan under control somehow. Currently Asif Ali Zardari who is the husband of killed Benazir Bhutto rules the country. He has a weak character and cannot be an assistant to the Americans in the struggle against Taliban militants despite all his statements about firm intentions to wage the struggle against terrorists," the Russian general added.

In his opinion currently the U.S. "is trying in some way to take advantage of a quite difficult situation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in order to transit its military supplies for the country's troops in Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan."

"If the Talibs block the Khyber Pass in western Pakistan and the highway to the Afghan city of Kandahar from the direction of the Pakistani city of Chaman in the southwest NATO will have other alternative transit routes but only through Central Asia. Meanwhile quite few military supplies can be airlifted. Ground transport corridors are needed and the Americans cannot do without Russia in this issue. Whether or not Barack Obama's administration wants it the U.S. cannot do without Russia. The new U.S. administration has two options: withdraw the U.S. troops from Afghanistan and recognize its next defeat after Iraq or ask Russia to provide the ground transit of non-military and military supplies across its territory," the Russian expert said.

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