

Putin's Revenge? The Fight for the Border

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"We have received additional information confirming that the oil controlled by Islamic State militants (ISIS) enters Turkish territory on an industrial scale. We have every reason to believe that the decision to down our plane was guided by a desire to ensure the security of this oil's delivery routes to ports where they are shipped in tankers." -Russian President Vladimir Putin, Paris, 11-30-15

On Monday, the remains of Lieutenant Colonel Oleg Peshkov were flown to Moscow where he was met by the Russian Minister of Defense, the Head of the Russian Airforce, family members and a full military drill team. Peshkov will be buried with honors and receive the Russian Federation's highest award, the Medal of Valor, for his service in fighting US-backed terrorist groups in Syria. Peshkov's Su-24 was ambushed last Tuesday by a Turkish F-16 when he allegedly drifted into Turkish airspace for 17 seconds.

The surprise attack, which was not preceded by any warning, forced the pilot to eject after which he was shot and killed while descending in his parachute. The anti-regime militant who claims to have killed Peshkov, is a Turkish ultra-nationalist named, Alparslan Celik, who is a leader in The Grey Wolves, a terrorist organization that has "carried out scores of political murders since 1970s." Celik's group of "moderate" jihadis is one of many disparate militias that are supported by both the US and Turkey in their effort to topple Syrian President Bashar al Assad and splinter the country into smaller parts.

The downing of the Su-24 has not triggered the knee-jerk reaction from Moscow that many had expected. Instead, it has focused Putin's attention on his ultimate goal of defeating terrorism in Syria and maintaining the sovereign integrity of the state. Putin has boosted Russia's military presence to 69 Sukhoi fighter jets, 160 bombers, as well as submarines and warships located in the Mediterranean Sea. He has also deployed the S-400 anti-aircraft defense system to Latakia and ordered the Moskva guided missile cruiser to remain within firing distance off the coast of Syria. The downing of the Russian warplane has only intensified Putin's determination to seal the northern border, defeat the terrorists and win the war in Syria. This is clearly not the reaction Washington was hoping for.

In candid remarks to the Russian media, Putin implicated the US in the downing of the Su-24 stating that the US military was briefed on the warplane's flight path and then immediately passed along that information to Turkey. Here's what he said:

"We told our US partners in advance where, when at what altitudes our pilots were going to operate. The US-led coalition, which includes Turkey, was aware of the time and place where our planes would operate. And this is exactly where and when we were attacked. Why did we share this information with the

Americans? Either they don't control their allies, or they just pass this information left and right without realizing what the consequences of such actions might be. We will have to have a serious talk with our US partners."

Putin's damning remarks have not appeared in any of the western media. The censorship of this information is similar to the blackout of comments Putin made just two weeks earlier at the G-20 summit where he announced that "40 countries" are financing ISIS including members of the G-20. Here's an excerpt of Putin's bombshell announcement:

"I provided examples based on our data on the financing of different Islamic State units by private individuals. This money, as we have established, comes from 40 countries and, there are some of the G20 members among them," Putin told the journalists.

"I've shown our colleagues photos taken from space and from aircraft which clearly demonstrate the scale of the illegal trade in oil and petroleum products. The motorcade of refueling vehicles stretched for dozens of kilometers, so that from a height of 4,000 to 5,000 meters they stretch beyond the horizon," Putin added, comparing the convoy to gas and oil pipeline systems." ([Putin: ISIS financed from 40 countries, including G20 members](#), RT)

Don't look for this story in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post. You won't find it. It's not in the interest of the major media to publish information that suggests that Washington and its allies are providing material support for terrorist organizations.

It's clear that Russia's bombardment of jihadi groups operating near the Turkish-Syrian border has Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan worried. Erdogan has long hoped that the area would be turned into a Safe Zone where Sunni militants- committed to removing Assad from power- could receive weapons and other support from their sponsors while coming and going as they pleased. The Russian-led coalition's attempt to retake the area and seal the border to stop the flow of terrorists from Turkey, is probably what precipitated the attack on the Russian warplane. It was a desperate attempt to wave-off the Russian offensive and reverse the course of the war which has turned decisively in Assad's favor. As for the militant groups that are operating in this area, analyst Pepe Escobar sums it up like this in a recent post at Sputnik News:

"The Su-24s were actually after Chechens and Uzbeks — plus a few Uyghurs — smuggled in with fake Turkish passports (Chinese intel is also on it), all of these operating in tandem with a nasty bunch of Turkish Islamo-fascists. Most of these goons transit back and forth between the CIA-weaponized Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Jabhat al-Nusra. These were the goons who machine-gunned the Russian pilots as they parachuted down after the hit on the Su-24...."

Turkey, for all practical purposes, has been a handy, sprawling Salafi-jihadi Infrastructure and Logistics Center; it offers everything from porous borders enabling countless jihadi return tickets from Syria to Europe, facilitated by corrupt police, to a convenient crossroads for all kinds of smuggling and a hefty money laundering ops." ([Sultan Erdogan's War on...Russia](#), Pepe Escobar, Sputnik)

Escobar sums up Ankara's role in Syria as succinctly as anyone. Erdogan has been ISIS best

friend, of that, there is little doubt. The problem that Turkey faces now is that the Russian-led coalition is rapidly destroying the infrastructure that provides funding for ISIS, (oil refineries, fields and transport) while gradually retaking territory that was formally controlled by the many anti-regime or al Qaida-linked groups in the north, west and central parts of the country. In the last few days alone, Russia and Co. have concluded the encirclement of Syria's biggest city, Aleppo, vaporized a convoy of over 500 oil trucks in the vicinity of Raqqa, and intensified their bombing in the Turkmen Mountains, the Kurdish Mountains, and the Prophet Jonah Mountains. The coalition has moved as far north as Azaz along the Turkish border and recaptured the strategic Aleppo-Raqqa highway which completely cuts off ISIS supply-route from the east in Raqqa. All of the recent progress comes in the wake of the retaking of the strategic Kuweris Airbase which was the tipping point in the 4 and a half year-long conflict. Now the Russian coalition has focused on closing the border, a move that will sever vital supply-lines to pro-Turkish militias operating in Syria and force the terrorists to either flee or surrender. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov emphasized this point last week saying, "We are convinced that by blocking the border we will in many respects solve the tasks to eradicate terrorism on Syrian soil."

Keep in mind, that Erdogan is not the only one with designs on the so-called "Afrin-Jarabulus corridor" east of the Euphrates. Powerful politicians in the US, including John McCain, Lindsay Graham, Jeb Bush, Hillary Clinton and others, have all alluded to this area as the most suitable location for a no-fly zone. And, despite the fact that Obama refuses to send US ground forces to fight in Syria, he has continued to fuel the conflict in other less conspicuous ways. Just last Wednesday, under the cover of the Thanksgiving holiday when the media was preoccupied with other matters, Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 which provides another \$800 million in aid to armed extremists in Syria and Ukraine. The NDAA, which effectively prevents the closing down of US concentration camp at Guantanamo Bay (Gitmo), reflects Obama's determination to continue Washington's vicious policy in Syria which has resulted in the deaths of more than 250,000 and the displacement of 11 million more.

This helps to explain why the Russian offensive has set alarms off in Washington; it's because the US plan to establish a permanent staging ground for terrorists in N Syria is quickly going up in smoke.

Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, Toni Cartalucci explains exactly what's at stake for the warring parties in a brilliant piece at Global Research titled "'Humanitarian Supplies' for the Islamic State (ISIS): NATO's Terror Convoys Halted at Syrian Border". Here's an excerpt:

"Russia's increased activity along the Syrian-Turkish border signifies the closing phases of the Syrian conflict. With Syrian and Kurdish forces holding the border east of the Euphrates, the Afrin-Jarabulus corridor is the only remaining conduit for supplies bound for terrorists in Syria to pass.....When this corridor is closed and supplies cut off, ISIS, Nusra, and all associated NATO-backed factions will atrophy and die as the Syrian military restores order across the country...

With that support being cut off and the prospect of these militants being eradicated, the true sponsors behind this conflict are moving more directly and overtly to salvage their failed conspiracy against the Syrian state. What we see emerging is what was suspected and even obvious all along - a proxy war started by, and fought for Western hegemonic ambitions in the region,

intentionally feeding the forces of extremism, not fighting them.”
([Humanitarian Supplies for the Islamic State \(ISIS\): NATO’s Terror Convoys Halted at Syrian Border](#), Global Research)

Seen in this light, Obama’s recent request for Turkey to deploy “30,000 (troops) to seal the border on the Turkish side”, (See: [Wall Street Journal](#)) should be viewed with extreme skepticism. Clearly, Washington has not relented in its “Assad must go” policy at all, in fact, Obama reiterated that mantra less than a week ago. That means the Obama crew may be hoping that Turkish ground forces can succeed where his jihadi proxies failed, that is, that the 30,000 troops will be used to clear and hold a 60x20-mile stretch of Syrian territory that can be used as the proposed safe zone. All Turkey would need is a pretext to invade and a little bit of air cover from the USAF. It wouldn’t be the first time a false flag was used to start a war.

The bottom line is this: Putin had better move quickly before Washington and Ankara get their ducks in a row and begin to mobilize. The time to seize the border is now.

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