

# Russia Turns the Screws on the West: Putin Accuses Washington of “ISIS Oil Coverup”

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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*Last Wednesday, the Russian MoD [delivered a lengthy presentation](#) which contained compelling visual evidence of a connection between Islamic State's illegal and highly profitable trade in stolen Iraqi and Syrian crude and Turkey. Here are some highlights:*

*After loading up with oil, a truck convoy in east Syria heads toward Turkey in direction Al-Qamishli:*



October 18: in the Dzer-er-zor region a satellite image reveals 1772 oil trucks:



November 14: in the Tavan and Zaho regions, in the zone where coalition forces are active, one can see a gathering of oil trucks:



November 28: in the region Kara-Choh on the territory of an oil refinery one can see 50 oil trucks:



The routes of alleged oil smuggling from Syria and Iraq to Turkey:



A substantial part from east Syria enter a refinery in Batman, Turkey (100km from the Syria border):



The slide show, hosted by Deputy Minister of Defence Anatoly Antonov, featured photos of oil trucks, videos of airstrikes and maps detailing the trafficking of stolen oil. It was the latest PR snafu for Erdogan who is struggling to convince Turkey's allies that The Kremlin's accusations are unfounded and that Ankara isn't set to put NATO in an awkward position by effectively instigating a shooting war with Russia.

Washington came to Erdogan's defense in the aftermath of Moscow's claims as State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the US is confident that Ankara "is not complicit in Islamic State oil smuggling." Russia seemed to take that denial in stride, but after US special envoy and coordinator for international energy affairs, Amos Hochstein, said on Friday that the amount of oil smuggled into Turkey from Syria is "of no significance from a volume perspective", Moscow appears to have had enough.

On Saturday, Russia accused the US of participating in a cover-up.

"Our colleagues from the State Department and the Pentagon have confirmed that the photo-proof, which we presented at a briefing [on December 2], of the origin and destination of the stolen oil, coming from the areas controlled by the terrorists, is authentic. However, the US claim that they 'don't see the border crossings with tanker trucks crossing the border,' raises a smile, if only, because the photos are still images,"

Major General Igor Konashenkov, a Defense Ministry spokesman said.

"We advise the American side to have a look at how the tanker trucks not only drive through checkpoints at the Turkish border, but pass through them without even stopping."

As [RT notes](#), an unnamed US State Department official confirmed to Reuters on Friday that the Russian photos of thousands of oil tanker trucks in Syria were authentic [but] stressed that he hasn't seen "the imagery of the border crossing with trucks crossing the border, and that's because [the US doesn't] believe it exists."

Well, here it is:

"The declarations of the Pentagon and the State Department seem like a theatre of the absurd," the MoD added, before noting that Washington should "watch the videos taken by its (own) drones which have recently been three times as numerous over the Turkey-Syria border and above the oil zones". That, by the way, is an attempt to mock Washington for increasing the number of drones monitoring the situation while failing to actually conduct strikes. Earlier this week, Russia said that despite Washington's claims, the US and its partners are actually not bombing ISIS oil infrastructure or convoys.

In case the above isn't clear enough, here's more from the Russian MoD's Facebook: "When US officials say they don't see how the terrorists' oil is smuggled to Turkey... it smells badly of a desire to cover up these acts."

We have on any number of occasions suggested that Washington has avoided striking ISIS

oil convoys in an effort to ensure that the group retains the funding it needs to continue to destabilize Syria and the Assad government (see [here](#) for instance) and in order to preserve amicable relations with Ankara which appears to benefit from the trafficking of illegal crude both from Kurdistan and Islamic State.

And so, Russia once again turns the screws on the West in an effort to expose what at this point looks to be a coordinated effort to facilitate the funding of international terrorism via the establishment and maintenance of smuggling routes for some 50,000 b/d of oil looted from fields in eastern Syria and northern Iraq. If the US is indeed complicit in this, it might be time to cut ties with Erdogan because Moscow is on the PR warpath and it's just a matter of time before the smoking gun emerges.

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