

Where Does ISIS Get Its Funding? Maybe We Should Ask Our Allies

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Russia's defense ministry accused Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [pictured left with US President Barack Obama] and his family of directly and personally benefiting from illegal oil smuggled through Islamic State-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq — and Russia has pictures that appear to prove it.

At a rare briefing that was open to the press in Moscow, defense ministry officials [displayed](#) satellite images it [claims](#) show the “vehicles, carrying oil, lined up in a chain going beyond the horizon” that Russian President Vladimir Putin described to French President François Hollande in a meeting on Friday, as [reported](#) by Zero Hedge. “The views resemble a living oil pipe stretched from ISIS and rebel-controlled areas of Syria into Turkey.” Putin expounded on the scenes Russian pilots had [observed](#) in surveillance sorties:

“Day and night they are going to Turkey. Trucks always go there loaded, and back from there — empty. We are talking about a commercial-scale supply of oil from the occupied Syrian territories seized by terrorists. It is from these areas [that oil comes from], and not with any others. And we can see it from the air, where these vehicles are going.”

He added that Russia “assume[s] that the top political leadership of Turkey might not know anything about this [illegal oil trade]. Hard to believe, but it is theoretically possible.”

Putin has accused Turkey of downing a Russian fighter jet near the Syrian border to protect its own oil supply line. He [stated](#) Monday:

“We have every reason to believe that the decision to down our plane was guided by a desire to ensure security of this oil’s delivery routes to ports where they are shipped in tankers.”

Though Russian officials did not specify what evidence they might have of the Erdoğan family’s direct involvement in this illicit oil trade, other news sources have come forward in recent times to [implicate](#) his son, Bilal Erdoğan, who [heads](#) BMZ Group Denizcilik, a maritime [shipping company](#) that primarily transports oil. [According to](#) Zero Hedge:

“The son of Erdoğan, it seems, is the man who makes the export sales of ISIS-controlled oil possible.

“Bilal Erdoğan owns several maritime companies. He has allegedly signed contracts with European operating companies to carry Iraqi stolen oil to different Asian countries. The Turkish government buys Iraqi plundered oil which is being produced from the Iraqi seized oil wells. Bilal Erdoğan’s maritime companies own special wharfs in Beirut and Ceyhan ports

that are transporting ISIS' smuggled crude oil in Japan-bound oil tankers."

Pres. Erdoğan has [repeatedly, vehemently denied](#) any entanglement in the illicit [ISIS oil business](#) — even going as far as promising to [tender his resignation](#) should verifiable evidence surface:

"We are not that dishonest as to buy oil from terrorists. If it is proven that we have, in fact, done so, I will leave office. If there is any evidence, let them present it, we'll consider [it]."

Russia's defense ministry has answered this challenge by presenting their evidence which can be viewed in the video and images below:



Though Erdoğan seemingly proffered this offer without any sense of irony, the global community collectively wondered if, as Zero Hedge [put it](#), *"the man who just finished starting a civil war just so he could regain a few lost seats in Parliament and who would just as soon throw you in jail as look at you if he thinks you might be a threat to his government,"* could ever stick to such a promise.

"Nobody has the right to slander Turkey by saying Turkey is buying Daesh [ISIS, Islamic State] oil," Erdoğan [asserted](#) Wednesday from a university in Qatar's capital, Doha.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov [retorted](#):

"Turkey is the main consumer of the oil stolen from its rightful owners, Syria and Iraq. According to information we've received, the senior political leadership of the country — President Erdoğan and his family — are involved in the criminal business. Maybe I'm being too blunt, but one can only entrust control over this thieving business to one's closest associates.

"They have [invaded](#) the territory of another country and are brazenly plundering it.

"In the West, no one has asked questions about the fact that the Turkish president's son heads one of the biggest energy companies, or that his son-in-law has been appointed energy minister. What a marvelous family business!"

One notable omission by mainstream media in the U.S., concerning escalating tensions between Turkey and Russia, is a potentially explosive claim by opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) that Bilal Erdoğan's company's ships have stopped in ports in both Syria and Russia, transporting unknown commercial merchandise and food. Dr. Sezin Tanrikulu of the CHP [explained](#) the allegation in the Turkish daily newspaper, Cumhuriyet, whose chief editors were recently [arrested](#) and [charged with espionage](#) for reporting ostensible evidence about Turkey's entanglement in the ISIS oil business:

"It was reported by the press that the ship G. Inebolu, belonging to Manta Denizcilik [BMZ

Group], in which Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son is a partner, left the Russian port of Novorossiysk on April 3rd 2014, arrived in Istanbul on April 10 and on the same day traveled through the Aegean and Mediterranean and cast anchor in the Syrian port of Tartus, which is under the control of Esad [Assad]."

Tanrikulu goes on to ask what those goods might be, should those shipments be proven true — and more importantly, if a conflict exists with Erdoğan's own son being involved in trade with Syria and Russia in this way.

What is perhaps most pertinent — and also most representative of the complexities rife in the Middle East imbroglio — is the extent to which Erdoğan knows about his son's dealings, and precisely what those dealings might be. Wouldn't such commerce with Syria's Assad regime and Russia's Putin administration directly contradict NATO's [support](#) of member state, Turkey?

After accusations had been cast between the two increasingly belligerent States in late November, Iraq had finally had enough, and on Wednesday, [demanded](#) a U.N. Security Council investigation of the "criminals" smuggling ISIS oil.

"We don't believe the Americans support Daesh," [said](#) spokesperson for Iraq's Ministry of Defense, Naseer Nouri.

"But it is true that most people are saying they do, and they are right to believe that the Americans should be doing more than they are. It's because America is so slow that most people believe they are supporting Daesh."

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