

Journalist Exposes Western, Gulf Arming Terrorists in Syria

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In August of 2017, Bulgarian reporter Dilyana Gaytandzhieva published a report in mainstream outlet Trud in her home country exposing the paper trail documenting the US, NATO, and Gulf countries were shipping weapons to terrorists in Syria. Gaytandzhieva's reporting was the result of her own travels to Syria where she saw these documents firsthand and her subsequent follow-up investigation after her return home.

That article, "[350 Diplomatic Flights Carry Weapons For Terrorists](#)," is still available and I highly recommend reading it now before going any further in this article.

Now, nearly a year to the day after Gaytandzhieva's article was released (for which she was summarily fired), journalist Robert Fisk has conducted a similar investigation and come to similar conclusions. In his article for The Independent, "[A Bosnian signs off weapons he says are going to Saudi Arabia - but how did his signature turn up in Aleppo?](#)" Fisk traces back the numbers found on shell casings, mortars, and other weapons used by terrorists to their manufacturers in Bosnia and the United States. He writes,

In the basement of a bombed-out al-Qaeda arms storage building in eastern Aleppo last year, I found a weapons log book from a mortar factory in Bosnia - with the handwritten name of one of their senior officials, Ifet Krnjic, on each page. It was dispatched from the Balkans with a cargo of 500 120mm mortars in January 2016. But now, in the forested heart of central Bosnia, I have found Mr Krnjic, who says his company sent the arms to Saudi Arabia.

Sitting on the lawn of his home south of the weapons-manufacturing town of Novi Travnik, he brings his finger down onto the first page of the log book which I showed him. "This is my signature! Yes, that's me!" Krnjic exclaims loudly. "It's a warranty for the 120mm mortar launcher - this is Nato standard. It [the shipment] went to Saudi Arabia. It was part of a supply of 500 mortars. I remember the Saudi shipment well. They [the Saudis] came to our factory to inspect the weapons at the beginning of 2016."

This is astonishing. Not only does Krnjic, the 64-year old newly retired weapons control director of the BNT-TMiH factory at Novi Travnik, acknowledge his signature - but he says he recalls the visits of Saudi officials and military personnel to inspect the mortars before their shipment to Riyadh, and insists all such sales were strictly in accordance with the legal end-user certificates which his company obtained from all customers, stating that the weapons were

to be used only by the armed forces of the nations which purchased them.

Please note that Fisk's article contains screenshots and photos of the documents in question. He continues,

Five-hundred mortars is a massive shipment of weapons – most European armies don't have that many in their individual inventories – and some of them at least appear to have ended up in the hands of Bashar al-Assad's Islamist Nusra Front/al-Qaeda enemies in northern Syria within six months of their dispatch from Bosnia 1,200 miles away. Because the mortars left Bosnia on 15 January 2016 under a BNT-TMiH factory guarantee for 24 months – numbered 779 and with a weapons series number of 3677 – the documents now in The Independent's possession must have reached Aleppo by late July of 2016, when Syrian government troops totally surrounded the enclave held by armed factions including Nusra, Isis and other Islamist groups condemned as "terrorists" by the United States.

When The Independent asked the Saudi authorities to respond to the documents in its possession and their discovery in eastern Aleppo, the Saudi embassy in London replied that the Kingdom did not give "practical or other support to any terrorist organisation [including Nusra and Isis] in Syria or any other country" and described the allegations raised by The Independent as "vague and unfounded". It said Saudi Arabia had been a "leading voice within the international community in support of a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria, while at the same time working with our neighbours and allies to counter the growth of forces of extremism". It made no comment on the weapon log book and arms control coupons, photographs of which The Independent had asked it to examine.

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During this period, however, the city's Islamist defenders – most of whom later departed under a promise of safe passage for jihadi-held areas of Idlib province – fired barrages of mortar shells at government-held western Aleppo.

In the weeks that followed the mid-December surrender of the fighters in eastern Aleppo, the square miles of wreckage remained sown with mines and booby-traps. There were whole districts still cordoned off when I entered three former military barracks of the Islamist groups in February 2017, rubble sometimes blocking my path; stones, bricks, sheet metal and bomb fragments strewn across the roads and inside still standing, though badly damaged, buildings. Inside one of these, lying half-concealed amid iron fragments and field dressings, I found piles of discarded documents containing firing instructions for machine guns and mortars, all of them in English.

They also included weapons shipment papers and arms instruction booklets from Bosnia and Serbia, the pages still damp from winter rains and some stained by footprints. I stuffed as many as I could in the satchel I always carry in wars, later finding – in another building – a Bulgarian weapons shipment paper for artillery shells. In a deep basement of a third building in the Ansari district, with the words Jaish al-Mujaheddin (Army of the Holy Fighters) crudely painted but still visible on the front, its upper floors clearly bombed by Syrian or Russian jets, lay dozens of empty boxes for anti-armour weapons, all marked with their maker's name – the Hughes Aircraft Company, of California. The boxes were labelled "Guided Missile Surface Attack" with stock numbers starting with the computer code "1410-01-300-0254".

These papers, some of them lying amid smashed guns and pieces of shrapnel,

provide the most intriguing paper trail yet discovered of just who is producing the weapons that have armed the Assad regime's most ferocious Islamist opponents – and how they apparently reach the fighters of Syria [via countries 'friendly' to the west](#). While claiming that he would have to “search” for documents on the end-user of the 2016 mortar shipment, Adis Ikanovic, the managing director of the Novi Travnik factory, acknowledged to me in his head office that most of his company's exports went to “Saudi Arabia, probably”. An email reminder to Ikanovic six days after our meeting, for copies of the 2016 end-user certificate papers for the mortar shipment, elicited no reply.

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Milojko Brzakovic, managing director of the Zastava arms factory in Serbia, looks through the arms manuals I found in Aleppo – including a 20-page instruction document for the powerful Coyote MO2 machine gun which his company manufactures – and says “there is not a single country in the Middle East which did not buy weapons from Zastava in the past 15 years”. He agrees that the documents I presented to him, which included a 52-page manual for his company's 7.62mm M84 machine gun, which I also found in the Aleppo ruins beneath a bombed apartment bloc which had ‘Nusrah’ painted in Arabic on its wall, were published by Zastava in Serbia, and that Saudi Arabia and the Emirates were among his customers.

Ifet Krnjic's account of the mortar shipment from BNT-TMiH in Bosnia is both precise and detailed. “When the Saudis came to our factory to inspect at the beginning of 2016, there was a Saudi ‘minister’... and some Saudi officers who also came to inspect the weapons before receiving them. The officers wore civilian clothes. The minister was in a robe. All our production after the [Bosnian] war is under the control of the Americans and Nato who are always coming here... and they know each and every piece of our weapons which go outside our factory.”

Krnjic, who lives in the tiny village of Potok Krnjic, Bosnian hamlets sometimes carry the names of extended families, south of Novi Travnik, describes how he recognised Nato officers visiting the plant, one of them “a Canadian officer, a black guy whose name is Stephen”. Ikanovic, the BNT-TMiH boss, confirms that all weapons shipments, including those to Saudi Arabia, were checked by the European Union Force Althea (EUFOR), the successor to Nato's SFOR, and set up under the 1995 Dayton accords which ended the Bosnian war. Ikanovic says an Austrian general visits his factory for inspections, identified to me by other employees as Austrian two star Major General Martin Dorfer, the EUFOR commander. Krnjic says weapons from the plant are exported by Tuzla airport or through Sarajevo.

The Saudis, Krnjic tells me, “were never complaining because we have had a very good reputation for a long time, not only for our weapons but for who can give the shortest delivery date... I know I should not say all of this, but Nato and the EU have given us the green light to do this. Ours is the only mortar that can shoot from asphalt. Each mortar has a base plate, but other base plates [from other countries' mortars] break – they can only be used on soft ground. With ours, the mortars can also be carried in sacks – they are three shells, one barrel, you shoot at a building and then you disappear. Only Chinese mortars are better than ours – I saw them in Iraq.”

It transpires that although Krnjic has never visited Syria, he was employed in a weapons factory built by BNT-TMiH in Iraq in 1986, during the eight year Iran-Iraq war. “I was working inside the factory in Iraq – I wasn't waging a war there” he says. “The factory there was more modern than ours [in Novi Travnik] – we were in Fallujah and Ramadi. By that time, we were already doing rocket launchers for Saddam, 260mm with a range of 500km. I saw Saddam three times.”

But Novi Travnik's fortunes declined when the Bosnian war began in 1992, its once 10,000-strong workforce today reduced to fewer than 900. Much of the factory compound is now overgrown with rusted steel walls around some of its machine shops. Krnjic, a member of Bosnia's Social Democratic Party and a veteran of the country's civil war, retired from the company some months before Ikanovic was appointed managing director.

"I cannot export anything without a licence with the approval of five different ministers here in Bosnia, and it [the contract] is overlooked by Nato," Ikanovic said. "We can only sell to countries which are on Nato's 'white list'." Like Krnjic, and Brzakovic in Serbia, he says that his arms company must receive an internationally recognised end-user certificate for any arms export – but agrees that exporters had neither an obligation nor any way of preventing the further shipment of its weapons to third parties once they had arrived at their initial destination.

Fisk followed up his article with another entitled, "[I traced missile casings in Syria back to their original sellers, so it's time for the west to reveal who they sell arms to,](#)" also published in The Independent. In that article he writes,

Readers, a small detective story. Note down this number: MFG BGM-71E-1B. And this number: STOCK NO 1410-01-300-0254. And this code: DAA A01 C-0292. I found all these numerals printed on the side of a spent missile casing lying in the basement of a bombed-out Islamist base in eastern [Aleppo](#) last year. At the top were the words "Hughes Aircraft Co", founded in California back in the 1930s by the infamous Howard Hughes and sold in 1997 to Raytheon, the massive US defence contractor whose profits last year came to \$23.35bn (£18bn). Shareholders include the Bank of America and Deutsche Bank. Raytheon's Middle East offices can be found in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Kuwait.

There were dozens of other used-up identical missile casings in the same underground room in the ruins of eastern Aleppo, with sequential codings; in other words, these anti-armour missiles – known in the trade as Tows, "Tube-launched, optically tracked and wire-guided missiles" – were not individual items smuggled into Syria through the old and much reported CIA smugglers' trail from Libya. These were shipments, whole batches of weapons that left their point of origin on military aircraft pallets.

Some time ago, in the United States, I met an old Hughes Aircraft executive who laughed when I told him my story of finding his missiles in eastern Aleppo. When the company was sold, Hughes had been split up into eight components, he said. But assuredly, this batch of rockets had left from a US government base. Amateur sleuths may have already tracked down the first set of numbers above. The "01" in the stock number is a Nato coding for the US, and the BGM-71E is a Raytheon Systems Company product. There are videos of Islamist fighters using the BGM-71E-1B variety in Idlib province two years before I found the casings of other anti-tank missiles in neighbouring Aleppo. As for the code: DAA A01 C-0292, I am still trying to trace this number.

Even if I can find it, however, I can promise readers one certain conclusion. This missile will have been manufactured and sold by Hughes/Raytheon absolutely legally to a Nato, pro-Nato or "friendly" (i.e. pro-American) power (government, defence ministry, you name it), and there will exist for it an End User Certificate (EUC), a document of impeccable provenance which will be signed by the buyers – in this case by the chaps who purchased the Tow missiles in very large numbers – stating that they are the final recipients of the weapons.

There is no guarantee this promise will be kept, but – as the arms manufacturers I’ve been talking to in the Balkans over the past weeks yet again confirm – there is neither an obligation nor an investigative mechanism on the part of the arms manufacturers to ensure that their infinitely expensive products are not handed over by “the buyers” to Isis, al-Nusra/al-Qaeda – which was clearly the case in Aleppo – or some other anti-Assad Islamist group in Syria branded by the US State Department itself as a “terrorist organisation”.

Of course, the weapons might have been sent (illegally under the terms of the unenforceable EUC) to a nice, cuddly, “moderate” militia like the now largely non-existent “Free Syrian Army”, many of whose weapons – generously donated by the west – have fallen into the hands of the “Bad Guys”; i.e. the folk who want to overthrow the Syrian regime (which would please the west) but who would like to set up an Islamist cult-dictatorship in its place (which would not please the west).

Thus al-Nusra can be the recipients of missiles from our “friends” in the region – here, please forget the EUCs – or from those mythical “moderates” who in turn hand them over to Isis/al-Nusra, etc, for cash, favours, fear or fratricidal war and surrender.

It is a fact, I’m sorry to recall, that of all the weapons I saw used in the 15-year Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), not one was in the hands of those to whom those same weapons were originally sold. Russian and Bulgarian Kalashnikovs sold to Syria were used by Palestinian guerrillas, old American tanks employed by the Lebanese Christian Phalange/Lebanese forces were gifts from the Israelis who received them from the US.

These outrageous weapons shipments were constantly recorded at the time – but in such a way that you might imagine that the transfers were enshrined in law (“American-made, Israeli-supplied” used to be the mantra). The Phalange, in fact, also collected bunches of British, Soviet, French and Yugoslav armour – the Zastava arms factory in the Serbian city of Kragujevac, which I have just visited, featured among the latter – for their battles.

In eastern Aleppo, who knows what “gifts” to the city’s surviving citizens in the last months of the war acquired a new purpose? Smashed Mitsubishi pick-up trucks, some in camouflage paint, others in neutral colours, were lying in the streets I walked through. Were they stolen by al-Nusra? Or simply used by NGOs? Did they arrive, innocently enough, in the lot whose documents, also found in Aleppo, registered “Five Mitsubishi L200 Pick Up” sent by “Shipper: Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (Chase), Whitehall SW1A SEG London”?

Of course they did – alongside the Glasgow ambulance I found next to a gas canister bomb dump on the Aleppo front line at Beni Zeid in 2016, whose computer [codings I reported in The Independent at great length](#) – five codings in all – and to which the Scottish Ambulance Authority responded by saying they could not trace the ambulance because they needed more details.

But back to guns and artillery. Why don’t Nato track all these weapons as they leave Europe and America? Why don’t they expose the real end-users of these deadly shipments? The arms manufacturers I spoke to in the Balkans attested that Nato and the US are fully aware of the buyers of all their machine guns and mortars. Why can’t the details of those glorious end user certificates be made public – as open and free for us to view as are the frightful weapons which the manufacturers are happy to boast in their catalogues.

It was instructive that when The Independent asked the Saudis last [week to respond to Bosnian weapons shipment documents](#) I found in eastern Aleppo last year (for 120mm mortars) – which the factory’s own weapons controller

recalled were sent from Novi Travnik to Saudi Arabia – they replied that they (the Saudis) did not provide support of any kind “to any terrorist organisation”, that al-Nusra and Isis were designated “terrorist organisations” by Saudi Royal Decree and that the “allegations” (sic) were “vague and unfounded”.

But what did this mean? Government statements in response to detailed reports of arms shipments should not be the last word – and there is an important question that remained unanswered in the Saudi statement. The Saudis themselves had asked for copies of the shipment documents – yet they did not specifically say whether they did or did not receive this shipment of mortars, nor comment upon the actual papers which The Independent sent them.

These papers were not “vague” – nor was the memory of the Bosnian arms controller who said they went with the mortars to Saudi Arabia and whose shipment papers I found in Syria. Indeed, Ifet Krnjic, the man whose signature I found in eastern Aleppo, has as much right to have his word respected as that of the Saudi authorities. So what did Saudi Arabia’s military personnel – who were surely shown the documents – make of them? What does “unfounded” mean? Were the Saudis claiming by the use of this word that the documents were forgeries?

These are questions, of course, which should be taken up by the international authorities in the Balkans. Nato’s and the EU’s writ still runs in the wreckage of Bosnia and both have copies of the documents I found in Aleppo. Are they making enquiries about this shipment, which Krnjic said went to Saudi Arabia, and the shipping documents which clearly ended up in the hands of al-Nusra – papers of which Nato and the EU had knowledge when the transfer was originally made?

All of this information, however, was documented at least a year ago when Bulgarian reporter Dilyana Gaytandzhieva was provided leaked documents showing Azerbaijani airline Silk Way Airlines was trafficking weapons via diplomatic flights.



The report by Gaytandzhieva entitled, “[350 Diplomatic Flights Carry Weapons For Terrorists,](#)” blew the lid on a secret program to provide weapons to terrorists in Iraq and Syria as well as anti-Houthi militants in Yemen. Gaytandzhieva’s report claimed that the documents leaked to her by anonymous sources show that the Azerbaijani airline Silk Way Airlines was contracted by companies in the United States, Israel, and the Balkans to the

militaries of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates as well as U.S. Special Ops. Gaytandzhieva's own on-the-ground reporting also uncovered many weapons related to this secret trade in Aleppo after she had traveled there to investigate the story.

PLEASE NOTE: It is important to visit Gaytandzhieva's original article in which she presents scanned copies of the documents sent to her.

Although Gaytandzhieva's report was months old, it gained wider traction in the alternative media after it was revealed she was subsequently interrogated by Bulgaria's intelligence services and then fired from her newspaper because of the story.

Gaytandzhieva reported that at least 350 diplomatic flights by Silk Way Airlines (an Azeri state-run company) transported weapons all across the world to various war zones over the past three years. She writes that the planes carried "tens of tons of heavy weapons and ammunition headed to terrorists under the cover of diplomatic flights." Gaytandzhieva stated that the documents implicating Silk Way Airlines were sent to her on Twitter by Anonymous Bulgaria.

She reported that the documents included correspondence between the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Azerbaijan to Bulgaria. They also include documents which were attached requesting clearance for overflight and/or landing in Bulgaria and many other countries in Europe as well as the United States, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey including others still.

According to Gaytandzhieva, the documents show Silk Way Airlines offering diplomatic flights to private companies and arm manufacturers in Israel, the Balkans, and the United States as well as the UAE, KSA, militaries and U.S. Special Ops Command (USSOCOM). The airline also offered its services to the militaries of Germany and Denmark in Afghanistan and to Sweden in Iraq.

According to Gaytandzhieva, the diplomatic flights were utilized because they are exempt from checks, taxes, and air bills. For that reason, she stated that the Silk Way planes transported "hundreds of tons of weapons to different locations around the world without regulation" and for free. The reporter wrote that the planes made stops ranging from a few hours up to a whole day for no logical reason i.e. repair, refueling, etc., thus lending further evidence that the planes were indeed shipping weapons as a primary mission.



Gaytandzhieva wrote that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) requires that “Dangerous Goods, Regulations, operators, transporting dangerous goods forbidden transportation by civil aircrafts, must apply for exemption for transportation of dangerous goods by air.” She stated that, according to the documents she received, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry sent instructions to its embassies in Bulgaria and other European countries requesting diplomatic clearance for Silk Way Airlines flights. The embassies then sent diplomatic notes to the Foreign Ministry of the host countries to request the exemption. The Foreign Ministry would then send back a note signed by the local civil aviation authorities granting the necessary exemption for the transport of the dangerous goods by air.

These requests, according to the documents and the report, included information about the type and quantity of the goods on board, listed as “heavy weapons and ammunition.” Still, Gaytandzhieva wrote, “the responsible authorities of many countries (Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Turkey, Germany, UK, Greece, etc.) have turned a blind eye and allowed diplomatic flights for the transport of tons of weapons, carried out by civil aircrafts for military needs.”

US Connection

The main customers of the “flights for weapons” program seem to be American companies which supply weaponry to the U.S. military and Special Operations Command. In the cases being addressed by Gaytandzhieva, however, all the weapons being transported are “non-Standard” weapons, meaning those not used by the U.S. military or Special ops.

According to the “register of federal contracts,” American companies were awarded contracts for \$1 billion over the last three years under a program for “non-US standard weapons supplies.” According to the documents analyzed by Gaytandzhieva, all of these companies used Silk Way Airlines for the weapons transport. In some cases where Silk Way Airlines was too busy to accommodate shipment, Azerbaijan Air Force planes were used to transport the weapons. The weapons, however, never reached Azerbaijan.

Gaytandzhieva writes,

The documents leaked from the Embassy include shocking examples of weapon transport. A case in point: on 12th May 2015 an aircraft of Azerbaijan Air Forces carried 7,9 tons of PG-7V and 10 tons of PG-9V to the supposed destination via the route Burgas (Bulgaria)-Incirlik (Turkey)-Burgas-Nasosny (Azerbaijan). The consignor was the American company Purple Shovel, and the consignee – the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan. According to the documents, however, the military cargo was offloaded at Incirlik military base and never reached the consignee. The weapons were sold to Purple Shovel by Alguns, Bulgaria, and manufactured by Bulgaria's VMZ military plant.

According to the federal contracts registry, in December of 2014 USSOCOM signed a \$26.7 million contract with Purple Shovel. Bulgaria was indicated as the country of origin of the weapons.

On 6th June 2015, a 41-year old American national Francis Norvello, an employee of Purple Shovel, was killed in a blast when a rocket-propelled grenade malfunctioned at a military range near the village of Anevo in Bulgaria. Two other Americans and two Bulgarians were also injured. The US Embassy to Bulgaria then released a statement announcing that the U.S. government contractors were working on a U.S. military program to train and equip moderate rebels in Syria. Which resulted in the U.S. Ambassador in Sofia to be immediately withdrawn from her post. The very same weapons as those supplied by Purple Shovel were not used by moderate rebels in Syria. In December of last year while reporting on the battle of Aleppo as a correspondent for Bulgarian media I found and filmed 9 underground warehouses full of heavy weapons with Bulgaria as their country of origin. They were used by Al Nusra Front (Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria designated as a terrorist organization by the UN).

Another U.S. contractor involved in the same program for non-US standard military supplies is Orbital ATK. This company received \$250 million over just the past two years. Information as to what type of weapons and to whom those weapons were supplied is classified.

According to the documents, Orbital ATK transported weapons on 6 diplomatic Silk Way Airlines flights in July and August of 2015 flying the route Baku (Azerbaijan)-Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina)-Baku-Kabul (Afghanistan). The weapons were exported by IGMAN j.j. Konjic, (Bosnia and Herzegovina) commissioned by Orbital ATK. The consignee was the National Police of Afghanistan. Interestingly, all these diplomatic flights with weapons had technical landings and a 7 h 30 min stop at Baku before their final destination – Afghanistan.

Military aircrafts of Azerbaijan transported 282 tons of cargo (PG-7VL and other grenades) on 10 diplomatic flights in April and May 2017 to the destination Baku-Rijeka (Croatia)-Baku. The consignor was the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan, and the consignee – Culmen International LLC, USA. This same company has been awarded two contracts (\$47 million each) along with other contractors for non-US standard weapon supplies on 18 February 2016 and 19 April 2017 respectively. Culmen International LLC has also signed a \$26.7 million contract for foreign weapons with the Department of Defense and a \$3.9 million contract for newly manufactured non-US standard weapons.

Chemring Military Products is another main contractor in the program for non-US standard weapon supplies to the US army through diplomatic Silk Way Airlines flights. This military supplier has 4 contracts for \$302.8 million in total. The weapons were purchased from local manufacturers in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania and according to documents transported to Iraq and Afghanistan via diplomatic flights.

One of those flights in particular, on 18 October 2016, carrying 15.5 tons of 122 mm rockets bought by Chemring in Belgrade, Serbia, was diverted from its

destination – Kabul, and instead landed in Lahore, Pakistan. After a 2-hour stop, the aircraft took off to Afghanistan. The only possible explanation for the extension of the flight by a thousand kilometers is offloading in Pakistan, even though documents stated that the cargo was destined for Afghanistan.

The largest non-US standard weapons supplier to the US army is Alliant Techsystems Operations-USA with contracts totalling \$490.4 million. In December of 2016, this company transported tons of grenades (API 23×115 mm, HE 23×115 mm, GSH 23×115 mm) from Yugoimport, Serbia to the Afghani Defense Ministry on diplomatic flights to the destination Baku-Belgrade-Kabul.

The Saudi Connection

The United States is by no means the sole patron of Silk Way Airlines and the diplomatic cover business for arms transfers. As many as 23 diplomatic flights carrying weapons from Bulgaria, Serbia, and Azerbaijan to Riyadh and Jedda were utilized according to Gaytanzhieva's investigation. The consignees were listed as VMC military plant and Transmobile of Bulgaria, Yugoimport in Serbia, and CIHAZ in Azerbaijan, according to the documents.

It must be noted that KSA was clearly not purchasing those weapons for itself because KSA only uses Western weapons. It seems obvious that, if the documents are accurate, the weapons were those being funneled to terrorists in Syria and Yemen. KSA also provides weapons to southern Africa where wars, civil wars, warlords, and terror are commonplace due to the region's vast amounts of natural wealth.

Gaytanzhieva writes,

On 28 April and 12 May this year, Silk Way carried out two diplomatic flights from Baku to Burgas-Jeddah-Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). The military cargo on-board of both flights was paid for by Saudi Arabia, according to the documents leaked from Azerbaijan's Embassy to Bulgarian sources. The aircraft made a technical landing at Jeddah airport with a 12 h 30 min stop for the first flight and 14 h stop for the second one.

The aircraft was loaded with mortars and anti-tank grenades including SPG-9 and GP-25. These very same weapons were discovered by the Iraqi army a month ago in an Islamic State warehouse in Mosul. Islamic State jihadists are also seen using those heavy weapons in propaganda videos posted online by the terrorist group. Interestingly, the consignee on the transport documents, however, is the Republican Guards of Congo.

Coyote machine gun 12,7x108 mm appeared in videos and photos posted online by militant groups in Idlib and the province of Hama in Syria. The same type of weapon was transported on a diplomatic flight via Turkey and Saudi Arabia a few months earlier.

In February and March of 2017, Saudi Arabia received 350 tons of weapons on Silk Way diplomatic flights flying to the route Baku-Belgrade-Prince Sultan-Baku. The cargo included 27 350 pcs. 128-mm Plamen-a rockets and 10 000 pcs. 122 mm Grad rockets. The consignor was Tehnoremont Temerin, Serbia to order by Fameway Investment LTD, Cypruss.

On 5 March 2016, an Azerbaijan Air Force aircraft carried 1700 pcs. RPG-7 (consignor: Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan) and 2500 pcs. PG-7VM

(consignor: Transmobile Ltd., Bulgaria) for the Defense Ministry of Saudi Arabia. Diplomatic flights from Burgas Airport to Prince Sultan Airport on 18 and 28 February 2017 each carried a further 5080 psc. 40 mm PG-7V for RPG-7 and 24 978 psc. RGD-5. The weapons were exported by Transmobile, Bulgaria to the Ministry of Defense of Saudi Arabia. Such munitions and RPG-7 originating in Bulgaria can often be seen in videos filmed and posted by the Islamic State on their propaganda channels.

UAE Connection

UAE also uses western standard weapons for its military. However, it is also another country that purchased non-standard weapons which were then apparently transferred to a third party. Gaytanzhieva writes,

On three flights to Burgas-Abu Dhabi-Swaihan in March and April of 2017, Silk Way transported 10.8 tons of PG7VM HEAT for 40 mm RPG-7 on each flight with technical landing and a 2-hour stop in Abu Dhabi. The exporter is Samel-90, Bulgaria, the importer – Al Tuff International Company LLC. The latter company is involved with Orbital ATK LLC, which is the Middle East subsidiary of the American military company Orbital ATK. Although the ultimate consignee is the UAE army, the documents of the flight reveal that the sponsoring party is Saudi Arabia.

Cash And Carry

Gaytanzhieva reported that, on February 26, 2016, an Azeri Air Force plane took off from Baku and landed in UAE. At this point, it loaded two armored vehicles and a Lexus car. The payment, according to the “request for clearance” documents showed that the payment was made in U.S. dollars cash. The plane then landed in North Sudan and, the next day, it landed in the Republic of Congo. Safe Cage Armour Works FZ LLC., UAE was listed as the exporter and the Republican Guards of the Congo was listed as the receiving entity. Saudi Arabia was the sponsoring party.

White Phosphorous

Although not specifically considered a “chemical weapon” in the traditional sense, White Phosphorous is, in effect, a chemical agent. It is used largely for its smoke screening purposes but there is also a psychological element since contact with white phosphorous results in excruciatingly painful deep first, second, and third degree burns.

The use of white phosphorous over heavily populated civilian areas is prohibited under international law. In fact, white phosphorous is only allowed if the agent is being used for the purposes of masking or camouflage. If being used as a weapon, it is banned as a chemical weapon under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With that in mind, Gaytanzhieva writes,

White Phosphorus is an incendiary weapon whose use is very controversial due to the deadly harms it can inflict. On 31 March 2015, Silk Way transported 26 tons of military cargo including white phosphorus from Serbia (exporter: Yugoimport) and 63 tons from Bulgaria (exporter: Arsenal). On 22 March, another 100 tons of white phosphorus were exported from Yugoimport, Belgrade to Kabul. No contract is attached to the documents of those flights.

On 2 May 2015, a Silk Way aircraft loaded 17 tons of ammunition, including white phosphorus, at Burgas airport. The exporter was Dunarit, Bulgaria. The aircraft made a technical landing and a 4-hour stop at Baku before reaching its final destination – Kabul. The consignee was the Afghani police. No contract is attached as proof.

Baku - The Secret Weapons Hub For The World

Although Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense is routinely listed as the consignee for weapons, it routinely did not receive the arms it was slated to obtain. For instance, according to Gaytanzhieva, on May 6, 2015, an Azeri military plane flew to Burgas, Bulgaria to Incirlik Turkey and back to Burgas. That flight carried aviation equipment from Bulgaria to Turkey with EMCO LTD, Sofia listed as the consigner and the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan listed as the consignee. The cargo, however, was unloaded in Turkey and never even touched down in Azerbaijan.

Gaytanzhieva asserts that some of the weapons carried on diplomatic Azeri flights were used by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh against Armenia. Back in 2016, Azerbaijan accused Armenia of using white phosphorous but Armenia denied the Azeri allegations. Armenia accused Azerbaijan of making the story up for propaganda purposes. Indeed, she writes, the only evidence that Azerbaijan could produce was one unexploded grenade discovered by Azeri soldiers. She also asserts that documents from the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Sofia, Bulgaria showed that white phosphorous weapons were transported on a diplomatic flight via Baku in 2015.

She writes,

Baku plays the role of an international hub for weapons. Many of the flights make technical landings with stops of a few hours at Baku airport or other intermediary airports en-route to their final destinations. Moreover, these types of aircrafts flying to the same destinations do not typically make technical landings. Therefore, a landing for refueling is not actually required. Despite this, Silk Way aircrafts constantly made technical landings. A case in point: in December of 2015 Silk Way carried out 14 flights with 40 tons of weapons on each flight to the destination Ostrava (the Czech Republic)-Ovda (Israel)-Nososny (Azerbaijan). The exporter is not mentioned in the documents while the receiver is consistently the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan. Strangely, the aircraft diverted and landed at Ovda airport (a military base in Southern Israel), where it remained for 2 hours.

In 2017, there were 5 flights from Nish (Serbia) via Ovda (Israel) to Nasosny (Azerbaijan). Each flight carried 44 tons of cargo – SPG Howitzer, RM-70/85. The consignor is MSM Martin, Serbia, the consignee: Elbit Systems, Israel, and the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan. All aircrafts landed in Israel and stayed for 2 hours en-route to Azerbaijan.

The same Israeli company Elbit Systems on a flight from Barno (the Czech Republic) via Tel Aviv (Israel) to Bratislava (Slovakia) re-exported armored vehicles (TATRA T-815 VP31, TATRA T-815 VPR9). They were sent by Real Trade, Prague to Elbit Systems. The ultimate consignee, however, was the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan. The aircraft landed in Tel Aviv and then in Bratislava, where the cargo was imported by another company – MSM Martin, Slovakia. It is not clear why the plane flew from Europe to Asia and then back to Europe with the same cargo on-board. Ultimately, it did not reach its final destination – Azerbaijan. This type of aircraft, IL 76TD, can carry cargo of up to

50 tons. This one carried only 30 tons according to the documentation provided. Therefore, it could carry additional cargo of 20 tons. Since the flight was diplomatic, it was not subjected to inspection.

Burkina Faso's Military Coup

Gaytanzhieva also draws a connection between diplomatic weapons flights landing in Brazzaville, Burkina Faso, dropping off non-standard weapons. A week after the weapons were dropped a coup was attempted in the country. She writes,

Some diplomatic flights carry weapons for different conflict zones crossing Europe, Asia and Africa. Such is the case with two Azerbaijan Air Forces flights to the destination Baku-Belgrade-Jeddah-Brazzaville-Burkina Faso on 30 August and 5 September 2015. The consignors were CIHAZ, Azerbaijan, and Yugoimport, Serbia. The consignee was the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Congo. The aircraft made two technical landings – in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

The 41.2-ton cargo from Baku and Belgrade included: 7, 62 mm cartridges, 12 pcs. sniper rifles, 25 pcs. M12 “Black Spear” calibre 12,7x108 mm, 25 psc. RBG 40x46 mm/6M11, and 25 pcs. Coyote machine gun 12,7x108 mm with tripods. The same heavy machine gun appeared in videos and photos posted online by militant groups in Idlib and the province of Hama in Syria a few months later. The aircraft also carried: 1999 psc. M70B1 7,62x39 mm and 25 psc. M69A 82 mm. On 26 February 2016, a video featuring the same M69A 82 mm weapons was posted to Youtube by a militant group calling itself Division 13 and fighting north of Aleppo.

Interestingly, the aircraft that carried the same type of weapons landed in Diyarbakir (Turkey), 235 km away from the border with Syria. Another type of weapon, RBG 40 mm/6M11, which was from the same flight and supposedly destined for Congo too, appeared in a video of the Islamic Brigade of Al Safwa in Northern Aleppo.

After Turkey, the aircraft landed in Saudi Arabia and remained there for a day. Afterwards it landed in Congo and Burkina Faso. A week later, there was an attempted military coup in Burkina Faso.

The Kurdish Connection

Gaytanzhieva also documents how Kurdish groups such as the YPG have been receiving arms transporting by these secret diplomatic flights. She writes,

In March of 2017, over 300 tons of weapons were allegedly sent to the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Northern Syria. Six diplomatic flights transported 43 tons of grenades on each flight from VMZ Military Plant, Bulgaria, to the Defense Ministry of Iraq. There are no contracts applied, however. On 28 March, 82 tons of cargo (AKM 7,62x39 mm and AG-7) were sent from Otopeni (Romania) to Erbil (Iraqi Kurdistan). The consignor was Romtechnica S.A., the consignee – again the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad. No contracts are provided for this flight either.

On 16 March 2016, yet another Silk Way diplomatic flight carried 40 tons of military cargo from Slovenia to Erbil: the exporter is ELDON S.R.O., Slovakia, the importer – Wide City Ltd. Co, Erbil, the final consignee – the government of

Kurdistan.

Wide City Ltd. Co has three offices – in Limassol (Cyprus), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Erbil. The office of the Bulgarian company Techno Defence Ltd is at the address in Sofia. On the website of the company, the owner of Techno Defense Ltd Hair Al Ahmed Saleh claims that he has an office in Erbil and that his company manufactures Zagros weapons in Azerbaijan (K15 zagros, 9×19 mm and automatic K16 zagros). These types of Zagros weapons appeared in propaganda footage posted by the military wing of the Kurdish PKK party, which is designated as a terrorist organisation by Turkey. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is also an ethnical Kurd.

Gaytandzhieva states that she reached out to all sides for questions and statements on her investigation but never received an answer or comment.

Gaytandzhieva Fired From Newspaper After Questioning

Although the report was months old, Qatari-based al-Jazeera ran the story and revealed that Gaytanzhieva had been interrogated by the Bulgarian national security services and subsequently fired from her job with the paper. The reporter later tweeted and confirmed that she had indeed been questioned by security services and fired from her job.

Conclusion

Gaytandzhieva's report was groundbreaking to say the least not simply because she exposed the fact that Western and gulf countries are procuring weapons for conflicts across the globe but also because she exposed the direct mechanism that they have undertaken to accomplish the weapons facilitation.

Her report exposed the fact that these weapons did not simply make it in to the hands of the moderate cannibals known as "rebels" by the Western corporate press but also into the hands of al-Qaeda and al-Nusra. In other words, these weapons found their way into the hands of ISIS since ISIS and Nusra/Qaeda are essentially the same organization.

Fisk's report is also groundbreaking in that it has not only corroborated the work of Gaytandzhieva but also because it has unearthed further connections and shed light upon some of the exact players in the terrorist funding game.

Taken together, both reports show how NATO standard and non-NATO standard weapons are being shipped to Western-backed terrorists in Syria and how the rat lines of the war contain more than just rats but weapons as well.

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Brandon Turbeville writes for Activist Post – [article archive here](#) – He is the author of seven books, [Codex Alimentarius — The End of Health Freedom](#), [7 Real Conspiracies](#), [Five Sense Solutions](#) and [Dispatches From a Dissident, volume 1](#) and [volume 2](#), [The Road to Damascus: The Anglo-American Assault on Syria](#), [The Difference it Makes: 36 Reasons Why Hillary Clinton Should Never Be President](#), and [Resisting The Empire: The Plan To Destroy Syria And How The Future Of The World Depends On The Outcome](#). Turbeville has published over 1000 articles on a wide variety of subjects including health, economics, government corruption, and civil liberties. Brandon Turbeville's radio show *Truth on The Tracks* can be found every Monday night 9 pm EST at [UCYTV](#). His website is [BrandonTurbeville.com](#) He is available for

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