

Putin “Names And Shames” Obama Into Bombing Islamic State Oil Smugglers

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The U.S. claims it wants to hit the Islamic State but in one year of bombing it never really touched one of its biggest sources of income. Hundreds of oil tanker trucks are waiting every day at IS distribution points to smuggle oil to Turkey and elsewhere. Only one such distribution point was ever bombed and that attack was by the Iraqi air force.

Now the Russian President Putin played some “name and shame” at the G-20 meeting in Turkey and, lo and behold, the problem gets solved.

The Obama administration recently [claimed](#) it would increase attacks on the most expensive Syrian oil infrastructure which is owned by the Syrian government but under IS control. But it said it would still not hit the large truck gatherings.

While the American-led air campaign has conducted periodic airstrikes against oil refineries and other production facilities in eastern Syria that the group controls, the organization’s engineers have been able to quickly repair damage, and keep the oil flowing, American officials said. The Obama administration has also balked at attacking the Islamic State’s fleet of tanker trucks — its main distribution network — fearing civilian casualties. But now the administration has decided to increase the attacks and focus on inflicting damage that takes longer to fix or requires specially ordered parts, American officials said.

The obvious target to stop the oil trade is to hit the trucks. Without trucks the other infrastructure is useless for IS as the oil can not be sold. With trucks destroyed the men behind the smuggling will lose all profits and leave the business. The “civilian casualties” argument does not hold. There could be warnings to avoid human damage or one could consider that these oil smugglers are dealing with terrorists and thereby accomplices. The real U.S. reluctance to hit the oil smuggling might be out of deference to the Turkish government which of course profits from such oil transfers.

Then came along Russia and its President Putin and demonstrated at the current G-20 meeting that the U.S. is not serious about fighting IS. Today the Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt [reports](#) remarks by President Putin from a G-20 sideline event:

Abdullah Bozkurt @abdbozkurt

Putin in #Turkey: I provided examples based on our data on the financing of different #ISIL 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 says

“I’ve shown our colleagues photos taken from space & from aircraft which clearly demonstrate the scale of the illegal trade in oil”

Putin provided that information and the photos yesterday. Obama must have been deeply embarrassed. Suddenly, a day after Putin exposed the U.S. reluctance to hit IS where it is needed, a big truck assembly [was bombed](#):

Intensifying pressure on the Islamic State, United States warplanes for the first time attacked hundreds of trucks on Monday that the extremist group has been using to smuggle the crude oil it has been producing in Syria, American officials said. According to an initial assessment, 116 trucks were destroyed in the attack, which took place near Deir al-Zour, an area in eastern Syria that is controlled by the Islamic State.

...
Until Monday, the United States had refrained from striking the fleet used to transport oil, believed to include more than 1,000 tanker trucks, because of concerns about causing civilian casualties. As a result, the Islamic State’s distribution system for exporting oil had remained largely intact.

It seems that Putin’s naming and shaming with regards to the oil smuggling was successful. We might soon see a similar effect on the financing sources he mentioned.

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