

Syria: A Tale of Plunder and Resurrection

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While the wholesale theft of Syria's natural resources continues under the watch of illegal US troops, the Russian project of resurrecting ISIS-destroyed Palmyra stands as a stark reminder that ruins can rise again – if Syria's friends help pave the way.

The war on Syria has vanished from the collective West ethos. Yet it's far from finished. Multitudes across the Global Majority may feel the deepest empathy towards Syrians while acknowledging not much can be done while the Western Minority refuses to leave the stage.

In parallel, there are slim chances the New Development Bank (NDB) – the BRICS bank – will start showering Damascus with loans for Syria's reconstruction. At least not yet, despite all the pledges by the Russians and Chinese to help.

Under the lame excuse of “degrading the position for ISIS,” the US State Department de facto [admits](#) that the Empire's illegal occupation of a third of Syria – the part rich in oil and minerals currently being stolen/smuggled – will persist, indefinitely.

Cue to virtually non-stop oil looting in northeastern Hasakah province, as in processions of [dozens of oil tankers](#) crossing to northern Iraq via the al-Waleed or al-Mahmoudiya border crossing, usually escorted by US-backed Kurdish separatist militias.

As if any reminding was needed, the Global Majority is fully aware ISIS is essentially an American black op, a spin-off of al-Qaeda in Iraq, born in camps at the Iraq-Kuwaiti [border](#). The Syrian “Democratic” Forces (SDF) is hardly a democratic US proxy, predictably assembled as a “coalition” of ethnic militias, mostly run by Kurds but also incorporating a few Arab tribesmen, Turkmen, and Salafi-jihadi Chechens.

As if the non-stop [looting](#) of oil was not enough, the Pentagon keeps [dispatching](#) truckloads of ammo and logistical equipment to Hasakah.

Convoys run back and forth to illegal US military bases in the Hasakah countryside, with particular relevance to a base at the al-Jibsa oilfields near the town of al-Shaddadi.

Recently, [39 US military tankers](#) crossed the – illegal – al-Mahmoudiya border towards Iraqi Kurdistan loaded with stolen Syrian oil.

Despite these crude facts, Russia remains excessively diplomatic on the issue. Mikhail Bogdanov, Putin's special representative for the Middle East and Africa, recently told *al-Arabiya*, "Washington uses the pretext of combating terrorism to be present east of the Euphrates in economically important areas, where crude oil and strategic natural reserves are abundant."

He highlighted US troops deployed at al-Tanf in southern Syria and American "support" for the SDF in northern Syria. Yet that's not exactly a ground-breaking reveal that would light a fire under the Americans.

We Steal Your Oil Because We Can

According to Damascus, Syria's energy sector as a whole was robbed by an astonishing \$107 billion between 2011 and 2022 by a toxic mix of US occupation, "coalition" bombing, and theft or looting by terrorist and separatist gangs.

There are no less than a dozen US military bases in Syria – some bigger than the proverbial lily pads (less than 10 acres, valued at less than \$10 million), all of them de facto illegal and certainly not recognized by Damascus. The fact that 90 percent of Syria's oil and gas is concentrated east of the Euphrates in areas controlled by the US and its Kurdish proxies makes Empire's job much easier.

The de facto occupation hits not only energy-rich areas but also some of Syria's most fertile agricultural lands. The net result has been to turn Syria into a net importer of energy and food. Iranian tankers routinely face Israeli sabotage as they ship much-needed oil to Syria's eastern Mediterranean coast.

Complaining does not register a whit with the Hegemon. Earlier this year, the Chinese foreign ministry urged the Empire of Plunder to give Syrians and the "international community" a full account of the oil theft.

This was in connection to a convoy of [53 tankers](#) transporting stolen Syrian oil to US military bases in Iraqi Kurdistan in early 2023.

At the time, Damascus had already revealed that more than [80 percent](#) of Syria's daily oil production was stolen and smuggled by the Americans and its proxy "democratic" forces – only in the first half of 2022.

Syria's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Bassam Sabbagh, has repeatedly denounced how the Empire of Plunder's "theft of resources, oil, gas, and wheat" has plunged millions of Syrians into a state of insecurity, reducing a large part of its population to the status of displaced persons, refugees and victims of food insecurity.

The prospects for Syrian reconstruction are slim without expelling the western marauders. That will have to happen via detailed, concerted cooperation between Russian forces, the

Syrian Arab Army, and the IRGC's Quds Force units.

By itself, Damascus can't pull it off. The Iranians constantly attack the Americans, via their militias, but results are marginal. To force the Empire out, there's no other way apart from making the human cost of stealing Syrian oil unbearable. That's the only message the US understands.

Then there's the Sultan in Ankara. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is going all out to imprint the notion that relations with Moscow are always developing, and that he hopes to have his counterpart Vladimir Putin visit Türkiye in August. That's not likely.

When it comes to Syria, Erdogan is mum. The Russian Air Force, meanwhile, keeps up the pressure on Ankara, bombing its proxy Salafi-jihadist terror gangs in Idlib, but not as heavily as it did between 2015 and 2020.

Palmyra Reborn

Countering so much doom and gloom, something nearly magical happened on July 23. Six years after the liberation of Palmyra – the legendary Silk Road oasis – and overcoming all sorts of bureaucratic hassles, the restoration of this pearl in the desert has finally started.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova found a way to celebrate the moment in a fitting comparison with Ukraine:

“To fight with monuments and fallen Soviet fighters, the Ukrofascists are the best. It is useless to appeal to the conscience or historical memory of the current Kiev regime – there are none. After the goals of the [special military operation](#) are achieved, all destroyed monuments in Ukraine will be restored. In Russia, there are specialists in post-war restoration. An example of their selfless work and professionalism is the restoration of Palmyra in Syria.”

Russian specialists unearthed and reset the ancient source of Efka, which used to irrigate the gardens of Palmyra since the Bronze Age.

They also managed to find the Roman aqueduct that once fed Palmyra with potable water, 12 km away from the city. The Romans had dug a tunnel of nearly human size, then covered it in stone, and the ensemble was buried. It was found nearly intact.

In the 20th century, when the French built the Meridien Hotel in Palmyra, they blocked the aqueduct, so there was no water flowing by. Russian archeologists quickly set to work, and the aqueduct was cleaned. The problem is the French ruined this source of potable water: The aqueduct is totally dried up.

Plans for Palmyra include the restoration of the legendary theater before the end of 2023. The restoration of the arch, blown up with dynamite by ISIS, will take two years. The 1st century AD temple of Bel and other historical infrastructure will be restored. Archeologists are already looking for financial sources.

Somebody should place a call to the NDB in Shanghai.

Of course, the restoration of Syria as a whole is an enormous challenge. It could start by making it easy for Syrian companies and abolishing domestic taxes.

Russia and China can help by setting up a structure to buy Syrian products, with uniform quality control, and sell them in their markets, alleviating the bureaucratic burden on the shoulders of the average Syrian worker and trader. Russians could also exchange Syrian products for wheat and agricultural machinery.

Solutions are possible. Restoration is at hand. Global Majority solidarity, in Syria, should be able to soundly defeat the Empire of Chaos, Plunder and Lies.

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