



NATO Foundation
Defense College

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Russian tankers and the war in Syria

According to Reuters, Russian tankers are smuggling jet fuel to Syria crossing the Mediterranean Sea and docking Greek and Cypriot ports both in October and November delivering about 20.000 tons of fuel.

If confirmed, it is not only a violation of current international sanctions to Syria but also a confirmation that Russia will continue with air strikes to support Assad. Furthermore part of the Russian jet fuel can supply the Syrian Air Force. The end of the war in Syria is so distant.

Officially, Russia is only targeting Islamic State militants and jihadist fighters with its own air force. However it is evident how, since the beginning of the war in 2011, that the Russian intervention in favour of the Syrian government changed the course of the conflict.

All the parties involved in this case are denying such events or avoiding any comment or official statement. However, open source ship-tracking position systems confirm that both the Yaz and Mukhalatka ships owned by the Russian company Transpetrochart moored in Greece, Cyprus, Syria and Lebanon last October. The company was founded in 2002. Transpetrochart Ltd is specialized on the shipping of crude oil, fuel oil, diesel oil, gasoline, industrial oils, vegetable oils, and also some easy chemical cargoes within IMO-II requirements along inland waterways of Russia and international sea routes. The company's site was, at the press stop, impossible to consult, because declared suspended.

The Navy fleet in the Mediterranean Sea is pursuing the Russian national interest in the area exactly as during the Cold War: no obstacle to its influence and operational activities in the area.

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