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Moscow Says U.S. Will Answer for Devastation in Syria, 'Sooner or Later'

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Russian Defense Ministry

Moscow is pushing back against harsh criticism by C.I.A. Director John Brennan, who told PBS in an interview this Tuesday that Russia has pursued a "scorched-earth policy" in Syria, leading to "devastation and thousands upon thousands of innocent deaths." According to the head of the C.I.A., "that's not something that the United States would ever do in any of these military conflicts."

Igor Konashenkov, the spokesperson for Russia's Defense Ministry, told the news agency RIA Novosti on Wednesday that the U.S.-led international military coalition that's been operating in Syria since 2012 has "methodically destroyed Syria's infrastructure in order to maximize the weakening of the country's legitimate government, despite the threat to the civilian population."

Konashenkov also accused the United States of failing to attack oil-production facilities controlled by the Islamic State, banned in Russia as a terrorist organization, which allowed

the group to earn tens of millions of dollars on illicit oil sales, and thereby recruit mercenaries from around the world, Moscow says.

“Sooner or later, they’ll have to answer for all this,” Konashenkov warned. “So this attempt by Brennan with these statements to ‘soften the blow’ of what’s to come is unlikely to save them. John Brennan knows perfectly well what the real results of Russia’s actions in Syria are. The Defense Ministry presented them in a year-end collegium for the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies.”

The biggest result of Russia’s military intervention in Syria, the Kremlin says, is the joint agreement recently reached with Turkey and Iran about a ceasefire and peace talks between the Assad regime and Syrian opposition forces.

For good measure, Konashenkov also reminded Washington that the U.S. Air Force dropped nuclear bombs on Japan in the Second World War, attacked Laos and Vietnam with chemical weapons in the 1960s and 1970s, and “unleashed wars” in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Yugoslavia “thanks to false intelligence” from the C.I.A., ruining these countries’ infrastructures. The Defense Ministry spokesman then accused the Pentagon and C.I.A. of corruptly hiring insider firms to manage rebuilding efforts in places devastated by the U.S. military.

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