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Behind the crisis



[Fisotra](#). Few Czechs had heard of it until they read about it in today's newspapers, but it has been taking a bite out of their pocketbooks every time they fill up their tanks. It's a Swiss-based trading company that controls Russian crude-oil sales into the CR. Vladimir Putin indirectly blamed it yesterday for the recent shortfall in oil deliveries to the CR. Putin found himself in the unlikely role of Yulia Tymoshenko, who battled a similar murky trading-company set-up in Ukraine. Coincidentally, the Kremlin's new [foreign-policy strategy](#) - released almost simultaneously with the oil disruption - sets as a priority to "actively develop a dialogue" with countries that are consumers of Russia's energy resources. That means, for example, the CR. This clever little oil crisis killed two birds with one stone. It sent a warning to the radar-happy Czechs, and it gave Russia an excuse to tighten its grip over its oil exports.