

Russian army data points to Ukrainian role in Malaysian Airlines MH17 crash

By Alex Lantier
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At a press conference yesterday in Moscow, the Russian Defense Ministry presented detailed radar and satellite data on the movement of forces loyal to the Ukrainian regime in Kiev before Thursday's crash of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17. These data raise the most serious questions about the possible involvement of the Kiev regime and its Western backers in the crash.

The evidence presented by Lieutenant General Andrei Kartopolov, the head of the Russian armed forces' Main Operations Directorate, show that MH17 was being trailed by a Ukrainian fighter jet and was in range of Ukrainian Buk anti-aircraft missiles and fire control radars at the time of the crash. The Russian data confirm Russian and European media reports, citing Kiev air traffic controllers, that Ukrainian fighters and air traffic control were following the plane intensively just before it crashed.

Kartopolov presented radar data showing a Ukrainian jet, apparently a Sukhoi-25 fighter, following the Malaysian jetliner. "A Ukraine Air Force military jet was detected gaining height, its distance from the Malaysian Boeing was 3 to 5 km," he said. "[We] would like to get an explanation as to why the military jet was flying along a civil aviation corridor at almost at same time and at the same level as a passenger plane."

Kartopolov noted that this fighter jet was itself in position to destroy the passenger liner with a missile. "The SU-25 can reach an altitude of 10km, according to its specifications. It's equipped with R60 air-to-air missiles that can hit a target at a distance of up to 12 km, up to 5km for sure," he said.

At the same time as it was being trailed by a Ukrainian fighter, MH 17 "deviated from its route towards the north," Kartopolov reported. "The

maximum deviation was 14 km."

Kartopolov also presented Russian satellite images dated July 14 of Ukrainian Buk surface-to-air missile batteries—the type of missile that Washington alleges brought down flight MH17—stationed near Luhansk and at a Ukrainian radar station near Donetsk.

On July 17, the day of the MH17 crash, however, one of the missile batteries was moved from this area to a location from which it could have fired on and destroyed flight MH17.

This movement of the missile launcher is extremely unusual, as the Ukrainian Buk missiles were being deployed to an area near the main pro-Russian separatist bases. It begs the question of why the Kiev regime would have risked sending a missile battery to such an exposed location. Russian images after the crash, dated July 18, showed that the missile battery had moved back to where it had been previously.

Kartopolov also said that Russian forces had detected increased electronic activity by radar stations providing targeting information to the Ukrainian Buk batteries.

"On July 17 the intensity of Ukrainian radar stations increased to the maximum," he said, adding that seven Ukrainian radar stations were active in the region on July 15, eight on July 16, and nine on July 17. On July 18, however, only four were operating, and only two on July 19.

He also called on Washington to publish the data from a US satellite that Russian forces tracked over east Ukraine at the time of the crash. While US officials have said that their satellites detected the heat signature from the firing of a missile shortly before MH17 crashed, they have until now refused to publish any satellite data or identify specifically who they believe launched the missile.

"According to the statements of US representatives,

they have satellite pictures confirming that the [missile] launched toward the Malaysian plane was carried out by militia. But no one has seen these pictures,” Kartopolov said.

Kartopolov's presentation is a devastating exposure of the mind-numbing propaganda campaign of the Western governments and media, where the claim that is universally accepted that Russia and pro-Russian separatist groups fighting the Kiev regime in east Ukraine are responsible for the crash. This grotesquely one-sided presentation, totally excluding the possibility of foul play by the Kiev regime, is a fraud aimed at keeping the public in the dark on basic facts surrounding the crash.

The detailed evidence presented by Russia and Washington's silence strongly suggests that the data Washington in fact has does not support, but rather undermines its own propaganda campaign against Russia, pointing instead to the Kiev regime.

This immediately raises the questions of the responsibility of the Western imperialist powers, above all of elements of the American state, in the destruction of MH17. The fascist militias and National Guard units Kiev has deployed in east Ukraine work closely with CIA operatives and mercenaries from the US firm formerly known as Blackwater.

Significantly, while Obama has repeatedly spoken on the Ukraine crisis in order to cynically denounce Russia, he has himself never formally taken a position on who ordered the shooting down of MH17.

On Friday, for example, Obama stated: “I think it’s too early for us to be able to guess what intentions those who might have launched the surface-to-air missile might have had... In terms of identifying specifically what individual or group of individuals, you know, personnel ordered the strike, how it came about—those are things that I think are going to be subject to additional information that we’re going to be gathering.”

The US president has not made any more specific statement on the issue of who fired the missile since then. If sections of the US state and its allies in Ukraine carried out the attack on MH17, it is not certain that Obama would have been aware of the operation—a fact that might explain the president’s equivocal and uncertain statements on the matter, even as he escalates threats against Russia.

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