

Are Ukraine and Gaza both Part of the Same war?

U.S. Government Backs Some War Crimes, Not Others

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The same day that [Israeli tanks](#) crossed into Gaza, to continue killing civilians and the occasional Hamas fighter, [MSNBC](#) decided to ignore the Israeli invasion in favor of wall-to-wall coverage of the presumed shoot-down of Malaysian Airliner MH17 over eastern Ukraine. Why would MSNBC make a choice that looks so much like propaganda? The last time the Israelis invaded [Gaza, in 2009](#), more than 100 Palestinians died for each Israeli killed. The 13 dead Israelis were soldiers on the attack, the 1,400-plus dead Palestinians were mostly civilians with nowhere safe to go. That hasn't changed much.

The last time someone in [Ukraine shot down](#) a civilian airliner, on October 4, 2001, the Kiev government [killed 78 people](#) on a Russian plane flying in an international airway to Russia from Israel. [Kiev denied](#) the shoot-down for nine days before acknowledging that it was probably responsible for "an accidental hit from an S-200 rocket fired during exercises" in Crimea. Ten years later, Kiev issued a [report denying](#) this explanation, without offering a new one.

What's happening these days in both Ukraine and Gaza shares some ugly and dangerous aspects. In both places, quasi-proxies of the United States are on the offensive. The Kiev government's assault on separatist-held areas has been as lethal for civilians as Israel's assault on Gaza (but the war in Ukraine goes almost unreported). Both the governments of Ukraine and Israel prefer to use force against weaker opponents, rather than mediating long-standing, legitimate issues on both sides. Both Ukraine and Israel are protected by the same patron, the U.S. government, with its apparent determination to dominate both regions, at whatever human cost is necessary to those who live there.

Even the propaganda spinning through much of the media is the same for both, focusing on a demonized caricature of an enemy, whether Hamas or Putin/Russia.

What do we know, and how do we know it with any certainty?

The MH17 shoot-down story broke with a quote from Ukraine president Petro Poroshenko calling it a "[terrorist attack](#)." Any time someone uses the word "terrorist" to characterize anything, it's a red flag signaling manipulation. In Poroshenko's mouth, "terrorist" is also routine Kiev propaganda that always refers to the Ukrainian separatists as "terrorists," and usually "pro-Russian" as well. Despite the obvious unreliability of accepting any Kiev version of events as accurate, the U.S. government (including president Obama and vice president Biden) and American media ran with unconfirmed and unconfirmable formulations.

MSNBC especially reiterated the Kiev story about Russian missiles and how the Russians must have either done it or trained the separatists to do it. As MSNBC's Rachel Maddow and others presented it, there was no other possibility. Not even asked was the question: does the Kiev government have the same surface to air missile capability? That seems like a pretty basic question to go unasked in the midst of a story developing with little reliable evidence. Especially since the answer is that Kiev has the same missiles.

Why hasn't Kiev released air controller conversations with MH17? Kiev released dubious tapes of purported Russians taking credit for the shoot-down. Why hasn't the U.S. (or anyone else with satellites) released satellite coverage of the shoot-down? One reason, posed by [Robert Parry](#), might be:

What I've been told by one source, who has provided accurate information on similar matters in the past, is that U.S. intelligence agencies do have detailed satellite images of the likely missile battery that launched the fateful missile, but the battery appears to have been under the control of Ukrainian government troops dressed in what look like Ukrainian uniforms.

The source said CIA analysts were still not ruling out the possibility that the troops were actually eastern Ukrainian rebels in similar uniforms but the initial assessment was that the troops were Ukrainian soldiers.

This is the sort of careful, information-based speculation that Parry regularly takes mainstream media to task for avoiding. Using the conventional means-motive-opportunity analysis, the Kiev military quickly becomes one of the obvious suspects. Not only has the Kiev military shot down an airliner before, shooting down MH17 and blaming it on the separatists could prove useful.

Additionally, the Secretary of the [National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine](#), the man in charge of the military, is [Andriy Parubiy](#), who achieved his position after the Kiev coup in February. Parubiy was among the [more militarized](#) elements of the Euromaidan protests and has a long history of [neo-Nazi](#) activity. (As Parry pointed out, the Washington Post quoted Parubiy as a source without mentioning any unpleasant truth about him.)

Is there enough evidence yet to indict anyone?

A week after the shoot-down, it's not at all clear who's responsible, or even if it was a deliberate act.

The Russian government is maintaining a relatively low profile, while seeming to behave appropriately - calling for a neutral investigation, voting with everyone else at the United Nations (despite Samantha Power's over-the-top ranting and raving and all but banging her shoe on the table).

Nobody calls the [Donetsk People's Republic](#) government particularly competent, or even much of a government, but they've managed to get some things right - retrieving and properly refrigerating most of the bodies, turning over the black boxes (which are red) to the Malaysian government, allowing increased access to international investigators ([including Australians](#)). To get the black boxes, the Malaysian government entered into discussions with the government of the Donetsk People's Republic- something even the Russians haven't done.

The Kiev government has both withheld relevant evidence and put out scare stories unsupported by evidence. Given that MH17 went down in a war zone where the Kiev government has been on the offensive, one might expect Kiev to call for a ceasefire to allow for a safer clean-up. Instead the offensive continues, on the ground, in the air, and out of the mouth.

The U.S. government continues to fulminate and froth, but can't seem to think of anything actually helpful to do, unless withholding evidence is helpful.

Kiev air controllers [diverted MH17](#) about 200 miles to the north, over the [Donetsk war zone](#). When the pilot asked to fly at 35,000 feet, the air controllers [ordered him](#) to fly at 33,000 feet. Part of the political attack on Russia is the claim that Russia provided [the missiles](#) that shot down MH17, which Kiev and Washington say they knew in advance. This raises the question of why MH17 was ordered to fly within range of known missiles with a range up to 70,000 feet.

The conventional international lemming view still being pushed by the U.S. [and others](#) is that somehow Putin is responsible for whatever happened and Putin can fix it. This is even less credible than arguing that Obama is responsible for whatever Ukraine or Israel does, and Obama can fix that.

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