

Cover-Up? Why Have the Media and Obama Administration Gone Silent on MH17?

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The deafening silence of the US media and government about the investigation into the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 one month ago reeks of a cover-up.

In the hours and days immediately after the crash, without a single shred of evidence, US officials alleged that the passenger jet was shot down by an SA-11 ground-to-air missile fired from pro-Russian separatist-held territory in eastern Ukraine. They launched a political campaign to obtain harsh economic sanctions against Russia and strengthen NATO's military posture in Eastern Europe.

Picking up on the scent, the CIA attack dogs in the US and European media blamed the crash squarely on Russian President Vladimir Putin. The cover of the July 28 print edition of German news magazine *Der Spiegel* showed the images of MH17 victims surrounding bold red text reading "Stoppt Putin Jetzt!" (Stop Putin Now!). A July 26 editorial in the *Economist* declared Putin to be the author of MH17's destruction, while the magazine ghoulishly superimposed Putin's face over a spider web on its front cover, denouncing Putin's "web of lies."

Anyone comparing the media's demonization of Putin with their treatment of Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi had to conclude that Washington was launching a campaign for regime change in Russia like those it carried out in Libya and Iraq—this time, recklessly pushing the United States towards war with a nuclear-armed power, Russia.

Having built up the crash into a *casus belli* against Russia, however, the US media suddenly dropped the matter completely. The *New York Times* has not found it fit to print a word on the MH17 crash since August 7.

There is no innocent explanation for the sudden disappearance of MH17 from the media and political spotlight. The plane's black box has been held in Britain for examination for weeks, and US and Russian spy satellites and military radar were intensively scanning east Ukraine at the time of the crash. The claim that Washington does not have detailed knowledge of the circumstances of the crash and the various forces involved is not credible.

If the evidence that is in Washington's hands incriminated only Russia and the Russian-backed forces, it would have been released to feed the media frenzy against Putin. If it has not been released, this is because the evidence points to the involvement of the Ukrainian regime in Kiev and its backers in Washington and the European capitals.

From the outset, the Obama administration presented no evidence to back up the incendiary charges that Putin was responsible for the MH17 crash. In his press briefing on

July 18, the day after the crash, President Obama stated that it was still “too early for us to be able to guess what the intentions of those who might have launched this surface-to-air missile might have had.”

While cynically exploiting the crash to pressure and threaten Russia, Obama warned that “there will likely be misinformation” in the coverage of the crash. In a backhanded acknowledgment that he had no evidence to support his claims, he said: “In terms of identifying specifically what individual or group of individuals or personnel ordered the strike, how it came about those are things that I think are still going to be subject to additional information that we’re going to be gathering.”

In the event, the misinformation on the MH17 crash came from the Obama administration itself. Secretary of State John Kerry went on a media blitz on July 20, arguing that the pro-Russian separatists and the Russian government were responsible for the shoot-down.

The sole evidence he presented were a few, dubious “social media records” posted to the Internet. He presented unauthenticated audio recordings of separatists speaking of a plane crash, edited and released by Ukraine’s SBU intelligence agency, which works closely with the CIA; YouTube video clips showing a truck moving unidentified military equipment along a road; and a retracted social media statement claiming responsibility for shooting down a plane attributed to separatist leader Igor Strelkov.

Very quickly, the US government’s story line on MH17 began to collapse. At a press briefing on July 21, State Department spokesperson and former CIA Middle East analyst Marie Harf declared that the Obama administration’s conclusions regarding the downing of the plane were “based on open information which is basically common sense.” Challenged by reporters to provide the evidence, she admitted that she could not: “I know it’s frustrating. Believe me, we try to get as much out there as possible. And for some reason, sometimes we can’t.”

After a month during which Washington has failed to release evidence to support its charges against Putin, it is clear that the political offensive of the NATO governments and the media frenzy against Putin were based on lies.

If pro-Russian separatists had fired a ground-to-air missile, as the US government claims, the Air Force would have imagery in their possession confirming it beyond a shadow of a doubt. The US Air Force’s Defense Support Program utilizes satellites with infrared sensors to detect missile launches anywhere on the planet, and US radar posts in Europe would have tracked the missile as it shot through the sky. These satellite and radar data have not been released, because whatever they show does not fit the storyline concocted by the US government and media.

What has emerged, instead, is a drumbeat of evidence pointing to the US-backed regime in Kiev’s role in the MH17 shoot-down. The day after Kerry made his remarks, the Russian military presented radar and satellite data indicating that a Ukrainian SU-25 fighter jet was in the immediate vicinity and ascending towards MH17 as it was shot down. This claim has not been addressed, let alone refuted by the American government.

NSA whistle-blower William Binney and other retired American intelligence agents issued a statement at the end of July calling into question the social media data presented by Kerry, and demanding the publication of satellite imagery of the missile launch. They added, “We

are hearing indirectly from some of our former colleagues that what Secretary Kerry is peddling does not square with the real intelligence.”

On August 9, the Malaysian *New Straits Times* published an article charging the Kiev regime with shooting down MH17. It stated that evidence from the crash site indicated that the plane was shot down by a Ukrainian fighter with a missile followed by heavy machine gun fire.

While it is too early to say conclusively how MH17 was shot down, the preponderance of the evidence points directly at the Ukrainian regime and, behind them, the American government and the European powers. They created the conditions for the destruction of MH17, backing the fascist-led coup in Kiev this February that brought the current pro-Western regime to power. The Western media then supported the Kiev regime’s war to suppress opposition to the putsch in east Ukraine, turning the region into a war zone in which MH17 was then shot down.

After the murder of the 298 people aboard MH17, in which they played an important if as-yet unexplained role, Western governments and intelligence agencies seized upon the tragedy in a reckless and sinister maneuver to escalate war threats against the Putin regime. Silence denotes consent, and the deafening silence of the Western media on the issue of Kiev’s involvement in the MH17 crash testifies to the criminalization not only of the foreign policy establishment, but also of its media lackeys and the entire ruling class.

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