

Eight Years on from Malaysia Airlines MH17 Destruction: A Clear Lack of Evidence that Moscow Was Behind It

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This tragedy perhaps has relevance once more, as it is being widely covered in the Western media at present, and they usually fail to mention some of the details which I’ve outlined below.

Eight years ago, on 17 July 2014, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) was shot down approximately 30 miles from the Ukrainian-Russian border, while fighting raged below between Western-supported groups and Moscow-backed separatists.

During late afternoon local time 298 people, including crew members, lost their lives when the scheduled passenger aircraft was blown out of the sky. In the following time, some of the dead were found scattered in the surrounding sunflower fields.

Many reports later emanated from Western media, without necessary supporting evidence, claiming that “Russian-sponsored militants” were responsible for firing a Buk surface-to-air missile at the plane. Buk missile systems are in fact under possession of both Moscow and Kiev.

Almost 200 of those killed were of Dutch nationality – with the aircraft itself, a 64 metre long Boeing 777-200ER, having intended to reach Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s capital, after departing Amsterdam about three hours before.

Also among the dead were dozens of Malaysians and Australians, along with smaller numbers of deceased from Indonesia, Britain, Germany, etc. One should firstly question the planning involved behind allowing a civilian airliner to fly, however high, over one of the world’s most volatile war zones; while over preceding weeks, several warplanes had been

blasted down in nearby areas. Such is the relentless advancement in military technology that little is out of harm's way.

The fighting that erupted in the east of Ukraine can be traced to a US-instituted coup d'état of February 2014 – confirmed by president Barack Obama on CNN a year later when [he confided](#) that Washington had “brokered a deal to transition power” in the country, forcing Viktor Yanukovich from office.

Notwithstanding who was culpable in shooting down MH17, there would have been little chance of such a tragedy had the US not consistently interfered in a nation which shares a thousand-long kilometre border with Russia to the east. One can imagine the response were Moscow destabilizing a government in Mexico.

American intrusion in Ukrainian state affairs was taking place for many years. As the Soviet Union crumbled, the United States made moves to enter Russia's traditional “backyard”. Victoria Nuland, a then US Assistant Secretary of State, confirmed as much in a December 2013 interview when [she said that](#),

“Since the declaration of Ukrainian independence in 1991” the US has “invested more than five billion dollars to help Ukraine”.

Also in December 2013, US Senators John McCain and Christopher Murphy were immersed in the “Maidan protests” taking place in Kiev, actively encouraging the marchers; which constituted flagrant interference by foreign elected representatives in a sovereign country, let alone one sharing a broad frontier with a nuclear superpower in Russia.

What's more, many of the protesters comprised of armed far-right gangs belonging to fascist parties like Svoboda and Right Sector. Among those was the neo-Nazi Dmytro Yarosh, a future and current Ukrainian member of parliament (MP), who in the past was briefly placed on Interpol's international wanted list. Yarosh is a long-time admirer of the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera.

Nuland herself assisted in the Maidan protests' organization, whose aim was the quick departure of president Yanukovich, while she remained in contact with McCain and Murphy in Kiev. Furthermore, Nuland visited the Ukrainian capital during December 2013 where she met with among others Oleh Tyahnybok, leader of the far-right Svoboda party. Tyahnybok was another key figure amid the supposedly democratic-minded Kiev protesters, that Western audiences were so often informed of.

The reality was different. One local observer to the clashes occurring in Kiev's Maidan Square [remarked that](#),

“I think's it's very funny to see European politicians make grandiose statements about 'Maidan' and democracy, when virtually all these types facing the police in the streets are fascists. It is one big hypocrisy. The Euro-Atlantics are willing to work with anyone as long as this contributes to weakening Russia”.

The true identity underlying much of those protesting either went unreported or was

misrepresented by journalists; who are presumably not permitted to write unequivocal terms like “neo-Nazi” and “fascist”, instead using obscure descriptions such as “ultra-conservative” or “maverick”.

In addition, during February 2014 Nuland participated in choosing Yanukovych’s potential successor, such is the extent of control Washington has in the Ukraine. When Nuland was informed of European ambivalence in provoking Moscow regarding Ukrainian government institutions – due to Europe’s economic reliance on the Kremlin – [she replied](#), “F*ck the EU”.

Despite a clear increased risk of nuclear war between America and Russia, as was surely known beforehand, the coup underwent prompt implementation. Ousted was Yanukovych, an unpopular but democratically elected leader, to be replaced with Petro Poroshenko, an even worse figurehead. Poroshenko would receive a bare minimum of criticism and scrutiny while serving his appointed role as US proxy leader.

In the more than five years since elapsing, what followed was a remarkable willingness from the West to support, arm and overlook the far-right elements of Kiev’s regime. Relating to MH17, it is hardly surprising that from the beginning suspicion was diverted from US-backed elements, in spite of their dubious links.



The MH17 aircraft was destroyed over a region in which the Battle of Shakhtarsk was unfolding below, as part of the War in Donbass. During this clash, among those fighting in the Western-supported Ukrainian forces was the Azov Battalion, which is a fully-fledged neo-Nazi regiment.

The Azov Battalion, donning Hitlerite insignia on its equipment and armoured vehicles, was at the time led by Andriy Biletsky, its founder. He is a rather formidable white supremacist, who has been working as a Ukrainian MP since November 2014. Earlier in 2014 Biletsky [outlined that](#) their “mission” is “to lead the white races of the world in a final crusade for their survival. A crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen [sub-humans]”.

Biletsky is merely one of a range of extremists elected as MPs since the “pro-democracy revolution” of early 2014 took hold. Many other far-right figures were sworn to office in the following months, from Dmytro Yarosh and Ihor Mosiychuk to Boryslav Bereza, Semen Semenchenko and Volodymyr Parasyuk.

In Germany, images of Azov Battalion soldiers kitted out in helmets emblazoned with Nazi swastikas were shown on national television. German viewers were appalled that such groups were associated with the West, as past visions came flooding back.

There were no calls to investigate as to whether the Azov Battalion, or other far-right regiments, could have been responsible for shooting down MH17; the finger was pointed with little hesitation at pro-Russian rebels and their Kremlin guardians, while Azov Battalion members [were portrayed](#) by the Washington Post as “battle-scarred patriots”.

The Pentagon aim in Yanukovych's toppling was obvious enough, as it included removing the Ukraine from Russia's orbit of influence and incorporating it into the West. These regions bordering Russia are also rich in natural resources from high profit agriculture to oil and shale gas.

A resurgent Kremlin is incompatible with the policies of NATO (meaning the US), which this century has expanded to Russia's actual frontiers – once more leading to a growing chance of nuclear war erupting, but policies which have been broadly accepted. NATO enlargement on its own performed a considerable role in the build-up to the Ukraine crisis.

Regarding the shoot-down of MH17, one can only wonder what benefit this act would have had for the Kremlin. Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that no convincing cause can be attached to the Russians deliberately pursuing such an action.

The MH17 aircraft held no links to the fighting then spreading in eastern Ukraine, or likewise to separate foreign policy initiatives that Moscow was embroiled in. Yet five years on, the New York Times continues holding the Kremlin to account, [describing the](#) MH17 incident as “murder committed by men acting on Moscow's orders in a proxy war against Ukraine”.

Not mentioned in the New York Times' editorial, is the July 1988 shooting down of Iran Air Flight 655 by the USS Vincennes, a large American warship – which had previously earned the nickname of “Robo Cruiser” due to its aggressive behaviour. On this occasion 290 people died, 238 of them Iranians, and it ranks as a war crime in which there was no doubt as to the perpetrators.

Air Flight 655's taking down occurred at the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), in which the Reagan administration was backing Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein; and in opposition to an Iran which had dislodged itself from Washington's control in the 1979 revolution.

Rather than the guilty being held to account, they were later decorated with awards for unrelated exploits in the Persian Gulf, including the Vincennes' commander, William C. Rogers III, who was distinguished with “especially meritorious conduct”. In this instance, the New York Times' reaction was somewhat different as the newspaper described the aircraft's destruction as “an accident” and that “it was hard to see what the Navy could have done to avoid it”.

David Carlson, captain of a US warship stationed a short distance from the Vincennes, disagreed with the Times' analysis. Carlson wrote in the US Naval Proceedings that he “wondered allowed in disbelief” as “The Vincennes announced her intentions” to attack a civilian airliner on its normal flight path. Carlson surmised that the Vincennes “felt a need to prove the viability of Aegis in the Persian Gulf”.

The Aegis radar system was then the most advanced in the world, which could easily discern a passenger aircraft from that of a warplane.

At the time that Air Flight 655 was struck it was flying at an altitude of 13,500 feet, while MH17 was cruising at a height of 33,000 feet. By comparison, Mount Everest's summit stands at 29,000 feet. Those culpable for bringing down MH17 may not have been certain that it was a civilian airliner to begin with.

A Dutch-led inquiry into MH17, with Australian assistance, has in recent weeks found Russia “liable” and “responsible” for the plane's demise. It is only natural that the Netherlands'

government would feel aggrieved at the deaths of nearly 200 of its citizens – yet the evidence is far from clear-cut that Moscow is either directly or partly responsible for MH17's loss.

Russian analysts have been excluded from the inquiry, and it is left to speculation as to why this is the case. When accused of a crime one should surely have the chance to defend oneself, and provide possible proof to the contrary.

Last month, Dutch prosecutors issued international arrest warrants to four men – three Russians and a Ukrainian – despite the chief prosecutor Fred Westerbeke admitting that,

“The possibility also exists that they wanted to shoot down a Ukrainian military aircraft. However, we still hold them responsible”.

Westerbeke has confirmed the men in question are not even accused of firing the weapon, but [are instead](#) “just as punishable as the person who committed the crime” under Dutch law.

Nearly two weeks ago another man, Ukrainian citizen Vladimir Tsemakh, was arrested but he is not suspected of attacking MH17; and is instead reported to be a “valuable witness” while his relatives purport that Kiev plans to “frame” him. Tsemakh is under suspicion too for “creating a terrorist group” which could result in 15 years’ imprisonment.

It would be unwise to overlook the likely US government influence behind much of what is transpiring here. The Dutch investigation of MH17 has been consistently supported by Washington officials like Heather Nauert.

In international affairs, the major powers and their interests routinely dictate the actions of smaller nations. This is particularly the case with diminutive states that enter into unions dominated by the strongest countries.

Dutch accession in 1949 to NATO, the US-run military organization, has significantly undermined their independence for a number of decades. Most serious is that the Netherlands is a de facto nuclear power, and has in fact held this status since April 1960, when the country first began accepting US nuclear weapons as part of NATO strategy.

Australia's involvement in the MH17 proceedings also merits a degree of wariness. In recent years, following the West's lead, Australian administrations have engineered and expanded a range of sanctions against Russia – relating from the March 2014 Crimea takeover to the Kerch Strait incident of last November.

US-Aussie relations have long been collaborative, and are growing closer in an attempt to offset rising Chinese power in the Pacific region. Australian governments sanctioned military engagement alongside US forces in the highly destructive wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq.

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