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## The MH17 Shootdown

... by Michael Shrimpton

[ **Editor's Note:** We are obviously going to be following this fast-moving story and posting multiple articles with multiple sources and a variety of time periods to gather and analyze the material.

This is not all going to knit together into a nice simple picture, and you will see the words "provisional" and "unconfirmed" used to remind the readers that this is a work in progress.

But we do have a major tragedy crisis team of very experienced career professionals in all aspects for the event in question, from the pilots, the air to ground and air to air missiles, the radar capabilities, and what the satellites can catch.

We can already conclusively tell you that major information is being withheld by one or more major governments, so they can exploit the deaths of these murdered people for a geopolitical advantage. That is a hint as to who is behind the tragedy... and all of the others really.

*As we have been reporting here consistently at VT, if the loyal people in our Intelligence and security services do not step forward to expose and hunt down all of those involved in this AND the past attacks, they will continue to happen. Based on what we have been able to learn, we know that most of the top people realize that compromised elements within various countries are running these operations... alone, or in conjunction with partners.*

As long as they are left unexposed publicly, it is putting those withholding the information in an aiding-and-abetting complicity position. That this information is being classified to hide it is no longer a kosher item as protecting anyone's national security. It is quite the opposite.

There are working elements hunting them down and who have learned a great deal that will be put to good use. Of course this will be done at great risk, as it is going to make some very powerful people very unhappy, who have the capacity to reach out and touch someone, as do others.

A large national security threat is being allowed to continue on, unaddressed, while the taxpayers spend a fortune to have all of their own communications hoovered up for storage and analysis, ... such dereliction of duty would be viewed by many as treason... [Jim W. Dean](#) ]

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To paraphrase the late, great Oscar Wilde, to lose one Boeing 777 is a misfortune. To lose two starts to look like carelessness. On July 17, at around 1415 Zulu, yet another Malaysian Airlines 777-200ER was shot down, over the eastern Ukraine. This time it was the fate of 9M-MRD, Captain Eugene Choo Jin

## **Leong in command.**

Unlike MH370 the flight was full to capacity and there were 295 souls aboard. Tragically all were lost. I give the airline another two years at best. As with PanAm after the DVD brought down that 747 over Lockerbie it will be a slow death.

**People are already cancelling flights** on Malaysian, their insurance premiums will skyrocket faster than a Chinese SAM and their cashflow will go south, unlike MH370.

**At this time my provisional conclusion** is that MH17 was shot down by an air defense battery of the Ukrainian army, from Ukrainian territory, using an SA-17 Buk missile. I respectfully associate myself with the statements of the Russian federal government on the issue.

My estimate is that a 9M317 single-stage, solid fueled missile was used, in semi-active homing mode. The 317 uses a radar proximity fuse and a direct hit can probably be ruled out. That is to say the warhead probably detonated away from the hull, perhaps as much as 50 feet away.

That is consistent with the eyewitness evidence, which is of the plane falling from the sky more or less intact, and breaking apart on impact, and the tight debris field.

Although there was a post-crash fire most of the unfortunate victims seem to have died from negative G-forces whilst strapped into their seats.

The fact that most passengers were strapped in suggests that Captain Leong had time to warn his passengers of impending missile impact. There is some evidence that he took evasive maneuvers, correctly diving the aircraft to increase speed and mitigate damage due to explosive decompression.

MH17's assigned altitude, by Ukrainian air traffic control, was FL330, or 33,000 feet. I suspect that Captain Leong or his first officer saw the incoming and, as indicated, dived, so that interception was at a lower altitude.

**There is no evidence** that the target fireballed at altitude, which rules out a direct hit on the fuel tanks, although we may find some shrapnel damage.

**The mainstream media, who are rushing to blame Russia, or pro-Russian separatists, are showing typical aviation illiteracy, of the sort on display after MH370 was shot down. On that occasion, as regular readers of this column will recall, they did not understand that aviation fuel is light and evaporates. That basic technical deficiency led them to confuse the diesel slick from the sunk Chinese SSK with fuel from the downed airliner.**

On this occasion they are reporting at one and the same time, sometimes on the same page, that the airliner was 'blown out of the sky' yet fell to the ground intact and broke apart on landing. In the UK the *Sun* is leading the race to come up with the silliest reporting, with respect. Its front page today was asinine. Its journalistic standards are in freefall to *New York Times* levels.

If the stricken airliner did not fireball and had time to take evasive action, it also had time to broadcast a Mayday message. The fact that it did not suggests that its radios were being jammed. We will probably find that its ACARS reporting system failed as well, as with MH370. I find it highly significant that there is a media blackout on the status on the ACARS system.

**If the ACARS was disabled**, or the radios were jammed, then the pro-Russian separatists can safely be ruled out, although as I explain below they can be pretty much ruled out anyway, as they lack the capability.

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### **The SA-17**

**The SA-17, which also has a naval variant**, originally entered Soviet service in 1979, but it has been developed considerably since then, indeed the latest, SA-17, versions have a different Pentagon classification.

It is fired from either a Transporter-Erector Launcher (TEL), with four missiles, or a Transport-Erector Launcher And Radar (TELAR), which I think can carry up to six missiles, depending on version. It is a highly capable system, in service with both the Russian and Ukrainian armed forces.

Some of the technology may have been transferred from the US during the Soviet period by DVD assets in Washington. The SA-17 is similar to the excellent Standard missile, indeed it is sometimes jokingly referred to as the “Standardski”.

The distinction between the TEL and the TELAR is important, because it is being said that Russian separatists captured a Buk launcher, although the evidence consists only of social media reports, a dubious source of information at best. The evidence, such as it is, is equally consistent with the Ukrainians setting the rebels up. The separatists themselves have strongly denied any high-altitude interception capability.

The Buk represented a significant improvement over the SA-6 Gainful which preceded it. There is no doubt that TELAR vehicles can both acquire and launch but significant doubt that a TEL on its own has any target acquisition capability.

So far as I can tell a TEL is basically a launch on visual confirmation of target system, i.e. pretty basic, rather like a shoulder-launched MANPAD. You see the target, point your missile in its rough direction and shoot, relying on the missile's onboard target acquisition system (typically infra-red with MANPADs and semi-active with the Buk) to achieve lock-on, hoping another target does not get in the way.

The SA-17 is designed to be fired from a command vehicle, that is to say it is not so very different from the SA-6, where you needed three vehicles (radar, command vehicle and launcher). There is not the slightest evidence that the separatists acquired a command vehicle, indeed there is no reliable evidence that they acquired a TELAR. The most they might have got – and I am not buying even that – was a TEL.

**If the most they have is a TEL then we can rule them out completely for a beyond visual range engagement, as happened yesterday. Even if they had a TELAR there is no evidence that they have anyone trained on the Buk. I do not buy the argument that it can be used by your average separatist, many of them no brighter than the average journalist or MP (no offense intended), without specialist training. There are no reports at all of the separatists having fired any training rounds, i.e. if it was them they achieved a long-range kill first time they fired the weapon. Not buying.**

Missile speed for the 317 version is around Mach 4, giving Captain Leong no chance at all, given that his radars were switched on and no one showed him my work on MH370.

An SA-17 warhead is typically around 70 kilos, or 154 pounds (there are different versions of the missile), enough to down a 777. It's a big bird, around 18 feet long, weighing in at just over 1,500 pounds. It's large enough for one of the pilots to have spotted its approach in broad daylight, given the good visibility. The solid fuel rocket engine has a burn time of around 15 seconds and leaves a highly visible exhaust trail.

**The 317 has a range of about 27-28 miles. That is significant because MH17 was shot down about 25 miles from the Russian frontier. That is getting close to the limit of system capabilities for a launch from Russian territory. US intelligence sources are being quoted today as saying that the missile was fired from within the Ukraine, which makes sense to me, and is one of the reasons why I conclude, provisionally, that the Ukrainians were responsible.**

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### **Kiev Must Have Known It Was MH17**

**The next thing to note about the SA-17** is that it has a sophisticated phased-array fire control radar, capable of target differentiation. Assuming, as I am prepared to assume, that it was the Ukrainian army, then they must have known that it was MH17. A freely available phone app was all they would have needed to tell them where the flight was.

The target was flying along a designated airway at a typical altitude for a civilian airliner, probably with an active transponder until it was taken down after entering Ukrainian airspace. It was not maneuvering, at least not until it saw the incoming, and could not conceivably have been confused for a military aircraft, not least as it had been directed to the kill zone by Ukrainian air traffic control.

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### **Why MH17?**

**It seems that the motive was to discredit Russia**, and that nice man President Putin in particular. The Ukrainian attack on MH17 was obviously planned well in advance.

The preparations may have included fake entries on social media websites to the effect that the rebels had acquired an SA-17 launcher. So far as is known there were no persons of interest on board the plane, unlike MH370, save for the poor AIDS researchers.

It is wildly improbable that it is a coincidence that both shot down aircraft were Malaysian. Someone is making a point. Malaysian Airlines are being taken down. If you have any frequent flyer miles on Malaysian use them up now, preferably on a partner airline.

The Administration has also rounded on the Russians and the rebels. Its claim that the rebels were to blame is obvious nonsense, which is unlikely to have been supported by professional intelligence officers, who would have had access to pretty much the same ELINT as the Russians.

**I entirely support Moscow's claim** to be in possession of ELINT data indicating that the target was painted by Ukrainian fire control radar, probably the organic fire control

radar of a Ukrainian SA-17 battery.

**The total inability of the Administration** to give the co-ordinates of this alleged rebel-controlled SA-17 launcher is telling. All that President Obama could say today was that the missile was fired from within a rebel-held area.

That, with respect, is an obvious lie, since the NSA would have overheads, as well as the ELINT data. If the attack genuinely came from a rebel-held area then you can bet your bottom dollar the Administration would be handing out the evidence.

It is likely that the attack was cleared by Kiev in advance, high up the payroll, with both Berlin and the White House. The FAA, which is penetrated and was implicated in helping to set up the Turkish Airlines DC-10 Paris Air Disaster, seems to have helped in setting up the rebels as patsies. The presence of only one US citizen on board carried obvious political attractions for the White House.

One must recall that the covert German DVD intelligence organisation has thoroughly penetrated the Obama Administration, at a senior level, and is in effective control of the German federal government. It is the world's only intelligence agency which regularly attacks commercial airliners.

The Russians have never knowingly shot down a civilian airliner on a designated airway. I leave out of account KAL007 and the earlier KAL Boeing 707 incident, as those aircraft were well off course, were intercepted at night and had violated Soviet airspace without authorisation.