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Press TV

US behind Russia plane crash: Russian military intelligence org.

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Russia's military intelligence organization (GRU) believes that Washington was behind the crash of a Russian Sukhoi Superjet 100 plane in Indonesia earlier in May, which killed 45 passengers onboard.

"We know that they have special equipment that can cut communications between an aircraft and the ground or interfere with the parameters on board," Christian Science Monitor quoted a GRU general as saying, without mentioning his name.

The Superjet, which was crucial to Russia's hopes of becoming a major player in the modern aviation market, took off from an airport in the capital Jakarta on May 9 on a demonstration flight, but it lost radio contact and vanished from radar screens 50 minutes later.

The general further noted that the electronic jamming of the jet's onboard equipment is the most plausible explanation for the plane's slamming into the side of a dormant volcano in the Indonesian province of West Java.

Russian intelligence forces have long been watching the activities of US military electronic experts at the Jakarta airport, the senior GRU officer added.

The examination of the aircraft's black box cockpit voice recorder has reportedly shown that there was no systemic problem or functional failure during the minutes before the crash.

The most curious question about the incident is why the plane's pilot, Alexander Yablontsev, who is one of Russia's most experienced test pilots, asked for permission to reduce altitude amid a rainstorm in a dangerously mountainous area, and why a ground controller in Jakarta gave the go-ahead.

"On the other hand, we don't rule out the possibility that this was deliberate industrial sabotage to drive our aircraft from the market," said an unnamed official with the jet's manufacturing company, Sukhoi.

The demonstration flight in Jakarta was part of an Asian tour to promote the aircraft. Sukhoi Superjet 100 had been to Myanmar, Pakistan, and Kazakhstan, and was due to visit Laos and Vietnam after Indonesia.

Such accusations have on certain occasions been borne out by facts. In 2004, a former member of the United States Air Force who was a special advisor to former US President Ronald Reagan disclosed in a book titled *At the Abyss, An Insider's History of the Cold War*, that in the 1980s, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) engaged in cyber warfare to sabotage the project of a pipeline that transferred gas from the former Soviet Union to western Europe.