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## Despite Hysteria on Malaysia Airlines MH17, Little Solid Evidence

By Jason Ditz

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Shock over the crash of Malaysia Airlines MH17 in eastern Ukraine, and speculation about whether it was shot down, has morphed into outright hysteria, not so much about the 298 people who died on board, but about who was responsible.

There is a shocking amount of speculation at this point, and a lot of it is based on incredibly flimsy evidence, with the assorted players in the region all crossing their fingers and hoping the blame eventually falls on someone convenient for them.

The latest “smoking gun” out of Ukraine’s SBU spy agency is a video purporting to feature an intercepted call of rebels discussing the shoot-down. While everyone is saying the “authenticity could not be verified,” the doubts seem even bigger than that, with the primary basis of the video having a creation time-stamp suggesting it was created a day before MH17 was even shot down.

The time-stamp error isn’t proof either way, but adds further questions to the authenticity of the video, and adds to speculation that it may well have been a “doctored” version of an intercept related to the downing of Ukrainian military transport planes recently, which the rebels were confirmed to have done, and which wouldn’t be nearly as controversial as shooting down a civilian airliner.

The Obama Administration continues to assert a “preliminary assessment” of a shoot-down, but even that seems to be speculative, as what evidence they provided Congressional intelligence committee members at a briefing yesterday left the likes of Saxby Chambliss (R – GA) unclear on whether a missile was even involved, or if the plane just coincidentally crashed.

Ukraine has supplied a further video claiming to show a 9k37 vehicle with a “missing” missile in rebel possession, and en route to Russia. The authenticity of this is similarly in doubt, and indeed the ability of the rebels to even operate such a complex vehicle is unclear.

The big problem is that the plane crashed in a warzone, and evidence isn’t readily obtainable so far, though the Ukrainian rebels active in the area insist that they have already allowed OSCE and Ukrainian investigators onto the site to investigate, and would allow other international groups access to the site.

The fate of the black boxes is also up in the air, as the rebels reported having recovered them and that they were being sent to Moscow, though the Russian Foreign Ministry insists they don’t intend to take possession of them, and that it is up to the International Civil Aviation Organization to analyze the recorders themselves.

Right now, everyone is denying responsibility for the shoot-down, and the desperate array of dubious evidence pointing in a million different directions makes it impossible to know the truth. That investigators from Ukraine et al. seem focused primarily in shifting the blame to a politically convenient target only adds to the difficulty of getting an honest assessment of the incident.