

Former US intelligence personnel challenge Obama to present evidence of Russian complicity in MH17 crash

Our reporter
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In a memorandum to President Barack Obama, a group called Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) has demanded that any actual evidence of Russian involvement in the downing of Malaysia flight MH17 over Ukraine is made public.

The memorandum was prepared by the VIPS Steering Group, headed by William Binney, the former Technical Director, World Geopolitical & Military Analysis of the National Security Agency and including some senior NSA, CIA, State Department and military personnel with “a cumulative total of 260 years in various parts of US intelligence.”

The analysts warn Obama that “US–Russian tensions are building in a precarious way over Ukraine, and we are far from certain that your advisers fully appreciate the danger of escalation.”

The memorandum speaks for sections of the intelligence apparatus that are concerned that the behavior of the Obama administration threatens not only to provoke war, but to discredit the American state both internationally and at home.

“Twelve days after the shoot-down of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, your administration still has issued no coordinated intelligence assessment summarizing what evidence exists to determine who was responsible—much less to convincingly support repeated claims that the plane was downed by a Russian-supplied missile in the hands of Ukrainian separatists,” the memorandum states. “Your administration has not provided any satellite imagery showing that the separatists had such weaponry... Washington’s credibility, and your own, will continue to erode, should you be unwilling—or unable—to present more tangible evidence behind administration claims.”

The analysts say they are “troubled by the amateurish manner in which fuzzy and flimsy evidence has been served up—some of it via ‘social media’. As intelligence professionals we are embarrassed by the unprofessional use of partial intelligence information.”

The evidence released to date on MH17 “does not bear close scrutiny,” the memorandum states. “[I]t does not permit a judgment as to which side is lying about the shoot-down of Flight 17.”

Secretary of State John Kerry is described as being “particularly definitive... His statements seem premature and bear earmarks of an attempt to ‘poison the jury pool,’ before drawing a parallel with “the behavior of the Reagan administration in the immediate aftermath of the shoot-down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 over Siberia on August 30, 1983.”

Expressing the hope that Obama “will come to see merit in preventing ties with Moscow from falling into a state of complete disrepair... [a] strategic danger [that] dwarfs all other considerations”, the analysts note that “the Reagan administration used its very accomplished propaganda machine to twist the available intelligence on Soviet culpability for the killing of all 269 people aboard KAL007. ... To make the very blackest case against Moscow for shooting down the KAL airliner, the Reagan administration suppressed exculpatory evidence from US electronic intercepts.”

The media joined in the propaganda offensive at the time, the memorandum noted: “ABC’s Ted Koppel noted with patriotic pride, ‘This has been one of those occasions when there is very little difference between what is churned out by the US government propaganda organs and by the commercial broadcasting networks’.”

“Apparently, not much has changed,” the memorandum states; “*Time’s* cover this week features ‘Cold War II’ and ‘Putin’s dangerous game.’ The cover story by Simon Shuster, ‘In Russia, Crime Without Punishment,’ would merit an A-plus in William Randolph Hearst’s course ‘Yellow Journalism 101’.”

Various examples of previous lies by Kerry are listed, centred on his claim made on August 30, 2013, “no fewer than 35 times, that ‘we know’ the government of Bashar al-Assad was responsible for the chemical incidents near Damascus nine days before” in order to push for military action against Syria.

Given Kerry’s record, they write, “We suggest you call a halt to this misbegotten ‘public diplomacy’ offensive. If, however, you decide to press on anyway, we suggest you try to find a less tarnished statesman or woman... If the US has more convincing evidence than what has so far been adduced concerning responsibility for shooting down Flight 17, we believe it would be best to find a way to make that intelligence public—even at the risk of compromising ‘sources and methods.’ Moreover, we suggest you instruct your subordinates not to cheapen US credibility by releasing key information via social media like Twitter and Facebook.”

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



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