

In the Shadow of the Downed Russian Passenger Plane: CIA to Provide “Select” Syrian Militants Weapons Capable of Downing Commercial Airlines

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Global Research, November 06, 2015

[Zero Hedge](#) 5 November 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD, US NATO](#)

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Wednesday brought a veritable smorgasbord of “new” information about the Russian passenger jet which fell out of the sky above the Sinai Peninsula last weekend.

First there was an audio recording from ISIS’ Egyptian affiliate reiterating that they did indeed “down” the plane. Next, the ISIS home office in Raqqa (or Langley or Hollywood) [released a video](#) of five guys sitting in the front yard congratulating their Egyptian “brothers” on the accomplishment.



Then the UK [grounded air traffic](#) from Sharm el-Sheikh noting that the plane “may well” have had an “explosive device” on board.

Finally, US media lit up with reports that [according to](#) American “intelligence” sources, ISIS was probably responsible for the crash.



Over the course of the investigation, one question that’s continually come up is whether militants could have shot the plane down. Generally speaking, the contention that ISIS (or at least IS Sinai) has the technology and/or the expertise to shoot down a passenger jet flying at 31,000 feet has been discredited by “experts” and [infrared satellite](#) imagery.

But that’s nothing the CIA can’t fix.

With the Pentagon now set to deploy US ground troops to Syria (and indeed they may already be there, operating near Latakia no less), Washington is reportedly bolstering the supply lines to “moderate” anti-regime forces at the urging of (guess who) the Saudis and Erdogan.

Incredibly, some of the weapons being passed out may be shoulder-fire man-portable air-defense systems, or Manpads, capable of hitting civilian aircraft.

But don’t worry, those will only be given to “select rebels.” Here’s [more from WSJ](#):

The U.S. and its regional allies agreed to increase shipments of weapons and

other supplies to help moderate Syrian rebels hold their ground and challenge the intervention of Russia and Iran on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, U.S. officials and their counterparts in the region said.

The deliveries from the Central Intelligence Agency, Saudi Arabia and other allied spy services deepen the fight between the forces battling in Syria, despite President Barack Obama's public pledge to not let the conflict become a U.S.-Russia proxy war.

Saudi officials not only pushed for the White House to keep the arms pipeline open, but also warned the administration against backing away from a longstanding demand that Mr. Assad must leave office.

In the past month of intensifying Russian airstrikes, the CIA and its partners have increased the flow of military supplies to rebels in northern Syria, including of U.S.-made TOW antitank missiles, these officials said. Those supplies will continue to increase in coming weeks, replenishing stocks depleted by the regime's expanded military offensive.

An Obama administration official said the military pressure is needed to push Mr. Assad from power.

"Assad is not going to feel any pressure to make concessions if there is no viable opposition that has the capacity, through the support of its partners, to put pressure on his regime," the official said.

In addition to the arms the U.S. has agreed to provide, Saudi and Turkish officials have renewed talks with their American counterparts about allowing limited supplies of shoulder-fire man-portable air-defense systems, or Manpads, to select rebels. Those weapons could help target regime aircraft, in particular those responsible for dropping barrel bombs, and could also help keep Russian air power at bay, the officials said.

Mr. Obama has long rebuffed such proposals, citing the risk to civilian aircraft and fears they could end up in the hands of terrorists. To reduce those dangers, U.S. allies have proposed retrofitting the equipment to add so-called kill switches and specialized software that would prevent the operator from using the weapon outside a designated area, said officials in the region briefed on the option.

U.S. intelligence agencies are concerned that a few older Manpads may already have been smuggled into Syria through supply channels the CIA doesn't control.

If that sounds insane to you, that's because it is. Even as US intelligence (which we can only assume emanates from the CIA) indicates that IS Sinai likely brought down a Russian passenger jet with 224 people on board, the same CIA is working with the Saudis to supply "select rebels" with weapons capable of shooting down commercial airliners.



In order to make sure no one ends up blowing a 747 out of the sky, Washington will "retrofit" the weapons with "special" software that makes sure they can only be used in certain areas.

Make no mistake, this has gone beyond absurd and is now bordering on the bizarre. It's apparently not enough that the US is supplying anti-tank missiles to rebels shooting at the very same Iran-backed militias that the US implicitly supports across the border in Iraq so

now, the CIA and Saudi Arabia will give these rebels the firepower to shoot down planes, meaning that in the “best” case scenario they’ll be firing at Russian fighter jets, and in the worst case scenario these weapons will end up in the “wrong” hands and be used to down commercial flights.

It’s difficult to see how John Kerry can attend “peace” talks in Vienna and keep a straight face while chatting with Sergei Lavrov. That’s not to say that Russia bears no responsibility for its role in the conflict (sure, Moscow is supporting a “legitimate” government in Syria but they’re still dropping bombs on populated areas), but the US and the Saudis are arming Sunni extremist groups and encouraging them to shoot at Russian and Iranian forces. For Obama to suggest this isn’t a proxy war is absurd.

Putting this all together, it now appears possible that the US is, i) sending anti-tank weapons to rebels who are shooting at Iranian soldiers, ii) embedding ground troops near Latakia which means they’ll almost certainly be engaging Hezbollah directly, and iii) passing weapons capable of downing a commercial airliner to “select” militants days after a Russian passenger jet exploded in the skies above the Sinai Peninsula.

This is all in conjunction with the Saudis and Erodgan, who just rigged an election in Turkey on the way to rewriting his country’s constitution.

And the Western media reports this with a straight face as though it all makes some measure of sense...



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