

How Did the Kiev Regime Really Lose Its US-made F-16?

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Global Research, September 08, 2024

Region: [Europe, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence, Militarization and WMD](#)

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Mere hours after [I wrote an analysis](#) on the possibility that the first NATO-sourced F-16 in Ukraine was destroyed, [a definite confirmation came](#). For much (if not most) of the last week, there was a lot of speculation on this development and it was hardly surprising when the news broke. Expectedly, the Kiev regime and its US/NATO overlords did all they could to ensure that confusion persists, as this unpleasant “surprise” ([we all knew it was inevitable](#)) came just a few weeks after the first F-16 was declared operational by the Kiev regime forces. The idea was to deny any credit to the Russian military, all in order to avoid ruining the US-made jet’s reputation. The actual fate of the F-16 is yet to be confirmed, [but there are several possible scenarios of what happened](#).

Firstly, we know that **Lieutenant Colonel Oleksii Mes** (call sign Moonfish), [one of the first pilots to complete training for the US-made jet](#), was killed on August 26. Mes originally served in the 204th Tactical Aviation Brigade, stationed at the Lutsk Air Base in northwestern Ukraine. The 204th uses the Soviet-era MiG-29s (specifically the MU1 variant) and was slated to switch to F-16s once the training was done. Mes was reportedly [one of the few Ukrainian pilots with a good command of English](#), so he was immediately chosen for training. It’s unclear where exactly Mes was killed, as it can only be expected that the Neo-Nazi junta had to ensure constant rotation of pilots (and possibly jets) in order to avoid getting caught by Russian ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) assets.

As previously mentioned, the exact circumstances of his death are yet to be disclosed. Currently, there’s speculation that he was killed in a missile strike, downed in a friendly fire incident involving a “Patriot” SAM (surface-to-air missile) system or possibly in air-to-air combat. For the time being, nobody’s mentioning [Russian long-range air defenses](#), but this possibility certainly shouldn’t be rejected. If the first scenario is true, there’s a good chance that an F-16 was destroyed on the ground, as on August 26, oblasts (regions) with major tactical aviation bases, including Khmelnytsky, Volyn and Ivano-Frankivsk, were targeted by Russian long-range precision strikes. [According to military sources](#), the Kremlin also targeted the Starokonstantinov Air Base.

It should be noted that [this airbase is home of the 7th Tactical Aviation Brigade](#), known for operating the modernized Soviet-era Su-24M/MR tactical strike jets (converted to carry various NATO-sourced weapons, including the Franco-British “Storm Shadow”/SCALP-EG stealthy, air-launched, long-range cruise missiles). Immediately after Russian missiles and drones were detected entering the Kiev regime’s airspace, fighter jets (including F-16s) took off and loitered above various areas at low altitudes, [reportedly for two to three hours](#). It’s very possible that Moscow’s forces then waited for these fighter jets to return to their

airbases and then immediately launched new strikes, the result of which was the possible destruction of at least one F-16.

The friendly fire scenario involving a “Patriot” battery was [first brought up by Mariana Bezuglaya, a Member of the Verkhovna Rada \(Parliament\)](#). She claims that Lieutenant Colonel Mes was shot down by Ukrainian forces “due to a lack of coordination between the [military] units”. Bezuglaya also slammed the high command for falsely describing the destruction of the F-16 as “a crash”, adding that “[the culture of lies](#) in the [Air Force Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine](#), as well as in other higher military headquarters, leads to the fact that the system of managing military decisions does not improve on the basis of truthful, consistently collected analytics, but deteriorates and even collapses, as is happening in the other directions”.

She lamented that no high-ranking officer suffered the consequences over the incident. It seems this spooked the Kiev regime frontman **Volodymyr Zelensky**, [so he promptly fired his air force chief, Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk](#). However, Bezuglaya’s surprisingly honest description of [the actual state of the Neo-Nazi junta forces](#) doesn’t mean that the friendly fire scenario is necessarily true, [at least according to the Pentagon’s deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh](#), who said she couldn’t confirm the reports. It seems the only consensus that the political West and its Kiev regime puppets can achieve is that the Russian military “didn’t destroy” the ill-fated F-16. However, military sources from Russia, Turkey and Ukraine itself suggest that this is anything but true.

There are multiple scenarios of how the Kremlin could’ve shot down the overhyped US-made jet. The most obvious one is that Russian long-range SAM systems destroyed the F-16 from afar.

The S-400 is particularly effective in this regard, as it uses extremely long-range missiles such as the 40N6E (maximum range 400 km) or the hypersonic 48N6 (depending on the variant, maximum range up to 250 km). Another possibility is that it was an air-to-air kill by either [the unrivaled Su-35S air superiority fighter jet](#) or the [superfast, high-flying MiG-31BM interceptor](#), both of which can carry the now legendary R-37M hypersonic air-to-air missiles (maximum speed Mach 6-7). However, what’s even more intriguing is the possibility that [the new Su-57 is the most likely “culprit”](#).

Namely, [according to John Helmer](#), who has been based in Russia since 1989, making him the longest-serving foreign correspondent in the country, the Russian military is keeping operational silence, “but there are hints from the Ukraine, as well as from [Russian military bloggers](#)”, that Lieutenant Colonel Mes was likely killed in his F-16 by an air-to-air missile fired by the Su-57. [Mr Helmer also mentions](#) that another possibility is a Russian long-range missile strike on the Kolomyia Air Base, 350 km south of Lutsk. Although officially derelict since 2004, this was one of the several major airbases in the USSR, housing advanced aircraft such as [the MiG-25 interceptors](#), the fastest armed military aircraft in history. Thus, Kolomyia certainly could’ve accommodated F-16s.

Located in [the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast](#), the airbase is over 600 km west/northwest of the closest Russian-held territory, meaning that it could give the F-16 a modicum of safety while still being close enough to allow missions over Odessa. This is where the potential long-range air-to-air engagement comes into play. Namely, the entire southern part of former Ukraine is heavily contested and packed with SAM systems on both sides. This makes it

much more difficult for the current generation of fighter jets to engage enemy targets without being detected and possibly shot down. Thus, using the Su-57 would be the best way to circumvent air defenses and engage hostile aircraft within range. [The latest reports about it also reinforce this notion.](#)

[While most media](#) keep reporting that the Su-57 uses the same weapons as the Su-35S, Su-30, MiG-31BM, etc., military experts I've had the honor of speaking to provided ample evidence that Russia developed a number of new weapons for the "Felon". [For instance, Major Irbis](#) says that instead of the regular R-77 variants, the Su-57 now uses the Izdeliye 180 (or R-87 in some military sources), a highly advanced scramjet-powered hypersonic air-to-air missile (top speed over Mach 5). In addition, he posits that the regular R-37M (Izdeliye 610M) cannot fit in the Su-57's internal weapons bay, prompting the development of a more advanced missile known as the R-97 in Russian military sources (or code name Izdeliye 810). Both weapons are hypersonic.

With a top speed of Mach 6-7 and a massive 400 km range, this missile effectively turns the Su-57 into a "flying S-400". The similarly capable [R-37M broke several world records in Ukraine](#), shooting down enemy fighter jets from distances in excess of 217 km, a fact that even the [pathologically Russophobic](#) United Kingdom [doesn't deny](#). The Su-57's R-97 might even have superior characteristics, giving it absolutely unrivaled air-to-air capabilities among stealthy, next-generation fighter jets anywhere in the world. The Russian military would certainly [capitalize on such a massive advantage](#) against any opponent, but particularly the political West and its Neo-Nazi puppets, meaning the F-16 could've indeed been shot down by [the Su-57](#) at extreme range.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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