

US Intelligence Says Turkish Warplane Downed in Syrian Waters

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

On June 29, the [Wall Street Journal](#) headlined “Doubts Cast on Turkey’s Story of Jet,” saying:

US intelligence contradicts Ankara. Turkey’s “warplane (was) shot down....by shore-based anti-aircraft guns while it was inside Syrian airspace, American officials say, a finding in tune with Syria’s account and at odds with Turkey.”

Ankara falsified its account. An unnamed senior US defense official also said:

“We see no indication that it was shot down by a surface-to-air missile....”

If a missile struck the plane, Damascus would have ordered it. Anti-aircraft fire suggests “a local commander” spotted the plane and acted “on his own initiative,” according to US officials and analysts.

The Journal said anti-aircraft fire suggests Turkey’s plane “was flying low to the ground....(It) likely came closer to the Syrian shoreline than Turkey says, US officials say.”

A former unnamed US official with close ties to Turkey said Ankara didn’t act by mistake. He stopped short of what he knows was a willful provocation, whatever other reasons were involved.

One official said both countries test each other’s air defenses. They’re “testing how fast they get picked up and how fast someone responds. It’s part of training.”

In fact, Turkey’s provocation went far beyond a normal exercise. Flying low and fast clearly shows hostile intent.

Journal writers said discrepancies in Ankara’s account could strain relations with Washington. Don’t bet on it.

Turkey is a valued ally. It’s a NATO country. American missile shield installations will be

based there. It shares a common border with Syria. It provides safe haven territory for insurgents. It supplies them with weapons. It runs cover for Washington. It participated in its Libya war. It's ready for more against Syria if asked.

On July 3, Turkey's [Hurriyet](#) daily headlined "NATO chief backs Turkey," saying:

NATO Secretary-General Fogh Rasmussen condemned Syria's downing a Turkish warplane as "unacceptable." He also "indirectly criticized a Wall Street Journal report which contradicted Turkey's claims that its jet was shot down in international waters."

He told a Brussels news conference that "unnamed sources should not be trusted." His comments came a day after Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the Wall Street Journal of "biased journalism."

He wants sources used named.

On July 3, [AFP](#) headlined "Assad regrets Syrian downing of Turkish plane," saying:

"I would have wished 100 percent that we had not attacked it."

"The plane was flying in an air corridor used three times in the past by the Israeli air force."

"A country at war always acts like this, this plane was flying at a very low altitude and was shot down by anti-aircraft defences which mistook it for an Israeli plane, which attacked Syria in 2007."

"If this plane had been shot down in international airspace (as maintained by Ankara) we would not have hesitated to apologize."

"We have nothing to gain in attacking a Turkish fighter jet."

Syria acted in self-defense. It forces won't be sent to Turkey's borders, he said, despite Ankara militarizing it days earlier.

"If was communication between our armies," this wouldn't have happened. At the same time, he said, he believes Turkey "has an inclination for war with Syria, but the Turkish people absolutely" don't want it. War would harm both countries. He'll use all his influence to avoid it.

Nonetheless, he accused Turkey of "destroying everything we have built" together. "We are aiming to maintain" good relations. But the Turkish government" undermined the

relationship.

He added that soldiers who shot down the plane had no radar. They couldn't identify its country of origin. He sent condolences to the families of two downed pilots. They haven't been found. They're presumed dead.

As for international and opposition element calls for him to step down, he said:

"I would, of course, leave if millions didn't want me. Why would I stay? I've never had any interest in this (presidential) seat."

"I would not stay as a president for even a single day if the salvation of my nation and country depended on my departure."

At the same time, he insists Syrians alone must decide who'll lead them. International law supports him. No nation may interfere in the international affairs of others except in self-defense.

His [full interview](#) can be read on Syria's SANA state media.

Syria threatens no one. No nation claims it with a straight face. Externally-generated conflict is lawless. It's naked proxy aggression.

Assad and most Syrians want it ended peacefully. Washington spurns efforts to do it. No end of violence looks likely. Geneva discussions solved nothing. Syria and Iran weren't invited.

Kofi Annan claims he's "ready to support any honest effort to solve the situation." In fact, he and Ban Ki-moon are reliable imperial tools. Their pro-Western marching orders mandate it. They're stalking horses for war.

Geneva's final communique called for establishing a "transitional governing body" with "full executive powers. It could include members of the present government and the opposition and other groups and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent."

Syrians must "determine the future of the country."

According to Annan:

"The government will have to re-form by discussion, negotiation and by mutual

consent, and I will doubt that the Syrians who have fought so hard for their independence....will select people with blood on their hands to lead them.”

Assad is more victim than villain. Annan represents Western interests responsible for thousands of Syrian deaths. His hands drip with blood. So do Ban's.

Mutual consent excludes foreign interests. Elements stoking violence have no legitimacy in any future government. Washington and key NATO allies want Geneva language interpreted to mean Assad must go.

They want pro-Western puppet leaders replacing his government. They'll interpret Geneva language as authorization for war. Libya 2.0 looms. It's coming.

Libya today is violent, chaotic, and dysfunctional. War assures replicating similar conditions in Syria. Isolating Iran is key. The road to Tehran runs through Damascus. New sanctions took effect July 1. More on that below.

Iran conducted missile drills. Foreign Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said they're intended to convey a message of sovereignty and preparedness.

Deputy Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Hossein Salami said they serve as a “firm response” to looming threats. They aim “to demonstrate the Iranian nation's political resolve to defend (its) vital values and national interests.”

Three days of Great Prophet 7 missile war games began on Monday. They're intended solely for defense. Iran threatens no one. Its neighbors know it. So do hostile Western and Gulf states.

Weapons involved include the Shahab (Meteor) 1, 2, 3, Khalij Fars (Persian Gulf), Tondar (Lightning), Fateh (Victor) and Zelzal (Quake) as well as Qiam (Uprising). Drills involved firing them at mock targets.

On July 3, Mossad-connected [DEBKAFfile](#) (DF) headlined “US military strength beefed up at Hormuz as nuclear talks with Iran fade,” saying:

Obama officials released new details. They claim it's “to fend off any Iranian attempt to endanger international shipping by blocking or planting mines in the Strait of Hormuz.”

Washington also said current Istanbul talks are “probably the last.” Technical experts are meeting to determine if enough common ground exists for full-fledged discussions. Don't expect it. Washington won't tolerate breakthroughs. Confrontation is policy.

“Tehran has refused to give way on the key issues of the 20-percent grade enrichment of uranium and the closure of its underground nuclear facility at Fordo,” said DF.

Tehran, of course, won't yield to unreasonable demands. It's nuclear program is peaceful. No evidence suggests otherwise. Claiming it is cover for regime change.

DF suggested Iran's missile tests showed hostile intent. They “simulat(ed) attacks on 'enemy air bases.' ” In fact, they were against mock targets.

DF claims “Tehran had US air bases in the Persian Gulf and Middle East, including facilities used the US Air Force in Israel and Turkey, well within the sights of its missiles. It was stressed that short-, medium- and long-range missiles were being put through their paces.”

All nations test weapons. Doing so doesn't reflect hostile intent. Most Western and Israeli tests aren't reported. Tehran's draw rebukes.

US regional land, sea and air forces threaten Iran. Double the number of “fast warships....are capable of instantaneously responding to Iranian moves (to close the) Straits of Hormuz.”

Minesweeper numbers were also doubled. Several squadrons of F-15s and F-22 stealth technology aircraft are present. Combat forces are positioned Iraq, Kuwait, and elsewhere in the region.

According to a Defense Department official:

“Don't even think about closing the strait. We'll clear the mines. Don't even think about sending your fast boats out to harass our vessels or commercial shipping. We'll put them on the bottom of the Gulf.”

On July 2, Iran's parliament tabled a motion to close the Strait. The measure hasn't passed. Its purpose is to show Tehran's resolve. Closure would be a last resort.

DF said “US, Saudi and other Gulf armies (are) on high alert....on two counts:”

- escalated Syrian violence, and

- Iran's potential Hormuz threat.

Washington and Gulf state buildups represent “a fraction of the (concentrated) strength” challenging both countries.

Large numbers of US troops are involved. Contingents were flown to two strategic islands: Masirah off Oman's east coast and Socotra, the largest of four archipelago islands by the same name in the Indian Ocean.

Whether saber rattling or something more serious is involved remains to be seen. Washington and Israel are spoiling for war. Expect it to erupt sooner or later. It's coming.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled "How Wall Street Fleeces America: Privatized Banking, Government Collusion and Class War"

<http://www.claritypress.com/Lendman.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."
<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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