

Was The Shootdown Of The Ukrainian Airplane Near Tehran Intended, A Screw-Up Or A 'Mistake'?

January 12, 2020

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After the shoot down of the Ukrainian flight PS752 the big question within Iran and within its military and political circles is what went wrong.

An analysis of the circumstances under which the incident took place unfortunately shows that nothing went wrong. The strategic and tactical decisions that were made were all rational and made sense. But unfortunately shit happens even when everything else works as it is supposed to work.

The *Iran Front Page* has now published a [full English language transcript](#) of the press conference by IRGC Aerospace commander Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh. It also provides [a video with English subtitles](#) of the talk. The narration he gives is highly plausible and has no contradictions within it.



[bigger](#)

A detailed reading of his talk also clears up some misconceptions in the earlier reporting and comments:

Regarding the details of the incident, I should say; well, you know the region's conditions remained tense and the risk of conflict was high for over a week. It was really unprecedented compared to what we saw in previous years, even since the 1979 Revolution. The risk of conflict was very high; both the Americans and the Iranian Armed Forces were on highest alert. The Americans had also threatened to hit 52 sites in Iran.

This is a main point one must keep in mind. There really was a threat from the U.S. and everyone thought that war would break out within the next minutes or hours. Decisions made under such stress are more prone to be wrong:

What we know from our investigations and from what our friends

explained is that, well, at that night, for example from [Tuesday] evening, the level of preparedness was at wartime conditions; the highest alert level communicated by the integrated air defence to all systems. Under such circumstances, a number of air defence systems was **added** to Tehran's air defence ring. The first system – which was behind the incident – was deployed in Bidganeh in western Tehran.

An integrated air defense system provides a full picture of the air situation to all connected units. Fixed radars, defense missile units and command and control centers are connected by secure landlines, not by radio.

But the mobile Tor M1 system responsible for shooting down the Ukrainian airliner was added as a stand alone system. It is an relatively old system. Its operators only had a voice radio connection to other parts of the network. If they had a data connection at all it was also via radio and with very little throughput. The system did not have the full picture of the air situation. Its own radar has [a maximum detection range](#) of 25 kilometer (16 miles). In most practical situations it will be a lot less than that. Bidganeh, where the system was deployed, is a strategic missile [production](#) and [test](#) facility some 30 kilometer away from Tehran airport. The Tor operator did not know that a civil airplane had just taken off:

At several stages, the Alert Level 3, which is the highest level, is communicated and emphasized to the entire network. So all air defence systems were at highest alert level. For several times, these systems including the one involved in the incident were notified by the integrated network that cruise missiles have been fired at the country. For a couple of times, they receive reports that 'the cruise missiles are coming, be prepared'.

This is the normal 'fog of war' situation in which misinformation, or electronic interference, causes false alarms and where confusion sets in.

So you see the systems were at the highest alert level, where you should just press a button. They had been told cruise missiles were coming, and the air defence unit engaged in this incident and fired a missile. Now we have arranged an interview with this operator, which will be released soon as part of the plan to publicize the issue. He says in this interview that "we requested for several times that the country's airspace be cleared of [civilian] flights.' At the Alert Level 3, this is normal; such requests are made; well **our dear brothers didn't follow up the issue for certain considerations**. So the planes fly despite the wartime situation.

This the major political issue, not a military one.

Iran's strategic intent after the U.S. assassination of its national hero Qassem Soleimani was to project defiance to the U.S. Its revenge missile barrage on the U.S. base in Iraq was fired despite harsh U.S. warnings and threats of war against Iran.

The pin point hits on the selected targets, mostly maintenance shacks, was a warning that demonstrated Iran's capabilities. I think it was necessary and worth the risk.

The political level decided that by leaving the airspace open and by showing normalcy it would further its strategic objective. Closing the airspace would have allowed the U.S. to claim that Iran is fearing its response and that it had shown weakness. The decision to not close the airspace was, I believe, strategically

correct. But it had tactical costs which turned out to be high.

In those moments when the incident happens, this air defence unit realizes that there is a target – which it identified as a cruise missile – at a distance of 19 kilometres. [...] Given the information sent to this operator – that it is a wartime situation and a cruise missile has been fired – this poor guy identifies it as a cruise missile.

The Tor M1 was developed in 1991. The radar signals it generates are shown on an analog tube-screen. The radar's 'hits' on the screen are difficult to discriminate. At best one has speed, distance and direction of the target and must draw conclusion from that. The Boeing jet broadcast the usual civil [ADS-B signal](#) but one has to expect that a U.S. cruise missile can and would do the same. The speed of the still climbing Boeing 737 was [about](#) 250 knots or 460 kilometers per hour (286 mi/h). That is within the range of the speed of a typical cruise missile. The plane needed a bit less than 8 seconds to fly one kilometer. That left little time for the Tor operator to decide and react.

Well at such a situation, he was obliged to contact, get approval. This is where this operator makes the mistake; but at that moment, his communication system was apparently disrupted – whether because of jamming systems or the high traffic. For that reason, he fails to contact [his commanders]. He had 10 seconds to decide; he could hit or not hit [the target]. Under such circumstances, he decides to make that bad decision; he engages, the missile is fired, and the plane is hit at this place. Then it returns through this track, and here's the point where it hits the ground.

Radio communication can be unreliable. The people at the other side of the operators call may have been talking to someone else or could not react immediately. Air defense personal is trained to always presume electronic interference by enemy forces. The U.S. has publicly [bragged](#) about its cyber-attacks on IRGC systems. U.S. air attacks typically come behind a wave of electronic countermeasures.

Under these circumstances - highest possible alarm level, current warnings of hostile cruise missiles, unknown target flying towards a presumably military objective, lack of communication, little decision time - the operator of the Tor system did what he was trained to do.

As a former military officer I can not see any fault in what the man did. That is why I find [this statement](#) by Iran's President Rouhani to be wrong:

In a separate statement, Rouhani called the missile launch an “unforgivable mistake,” and he said officials must “address the weaknesses of the nation’s defense systems to make sure such a disaster is never repeated.”

Iran's strategic intent is to withstand U.S. pressure and to show defiance. Closing the airspace would have contradicted that objective. The shooting down of flight PS752 happened during a tactical engagement by a small mobile unit which did what it was supposed to do. Communication fuck-ups happen all the time during war like situations. They often cause casualties but are unavoidable.

The general in his press conference claimed that his organization [is guilty](#):

Our dear brothers at the Aviation Organization categorically rejected the possibility of a missile hitting the plane; they acted based on what

they knew. I must say they were not guilty and have nothing to do with this. All the blame is on us; they're innocent. **The plane was also on its track, it made no mistake. It did the right thing, as did the Aviation Organization. Everyone did the right thing. Only one of our forces made a mistake. Since he is under our command, we are responsible for that. We must be accountable.**

It is the right thing to say public relation wise. But the incident itself is not a military error or mistake.

What one can and should criticize is the slow reaction of the Iranian military command after the incident happened. It launched an internal investigation and told everyone to be silent about it. It took the generals three days to look for an excuse that was impossible to find because everything that had happened did happen for rational reasons. The air defense systems have to be dispersed to make them less easy to attack. Communication failures are to be expected during a war. The soldiers are trained to act autonomously when comm-failures happen. They did what they had to do.

It is sad that this incident happened and that 176 lost their life. But if one wants to find a person guilty for it one must look for the person who caused the whole situation. That person is not the lowly sergeant who pressed the button. That person is U.S. President Donald Trump.

Posted by b on January 12, 2020 at 18:08 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

"It is sad that this incident happened and that 176 lost their life. But if one wants to find a person guilty for it one must look for the person who caused the whole situation. That person is not the lowly sergeant who pressed the button. That person is U.S. President Donald Trump."

b, your statement above is the "bottom line truth". The rest is speculation that may never answer our other questions...

Posted by: ben | Jan 12 2020 18:18 utc | [1](#)

Indeed. I keep in mind has the US not bombed Iraqi PMU on the Iraqi/Syrian border and then killed Soleimani none of this would have happened. I hope Iran will show mercy to the man who pulled the trigger and that the Iranian Generals will learn a lesson about this too. Iranian military is very capable. This is no way screams incompetence to me.

Posted by: Annie | Jan 12 2020 18:20 utc | [2](#)

The fog of war....yes, indeed! Excellent article...thank you!

Posted by: Gregory | Jan 12 2020 18:21 utc | [3](#)

It must have been tough to admit such a terrible mistake but they did admit it unlike the US that makes gigantic mistakes causing immense suffering, death, and destruction without a second thought.

Posted by: AriusArmenian | Jan 12 2020 18:25 utc | [4](#)

deeply appreciated b, You are unsurpassed.

I will email this post to little justin of Canada. He asked for "clarity" needs "to know was it a mistake."

Mind you, his drama brain may interdict comprehension. He may return with another question: what is a tactic?

Posted by: Likklemore | Jan 12 2020 18:25 utc | [5](#)

“address the weaknesses of the nation’s defense systems to make sure such a disaster is never repeated.”

Well, this would give great cover for the sale of S-400 to Iran - a modern defense system that could be projected to reducing risk a civilian aircraft shoot down.

Thoughts?

Posted by: Jimbob | Jan 12 2020 18:27 utc | [6](#)

Imo it is the mistake of said political goals that result in this tragedy. The US would blame Iran even if they did the right and none the wrong things so lets say in situation that they find themselves locked in air battles with US over Iranian skies and that result in US themselves shooting down a civilian aircraft by accident, what would the US say ? It is the Iranian fault for not clearing the skies out of civilian aircraft prior to their military operation.

When military are engaged it is their duty to keep everyone safe themselves and the citizens. Why complicate their works when it come to it for uncertain political goals ?

Posted by: Lucci | Jan 12 2020 18:28 utc | [7](#)

I guess I get to repost what [I wrote here](#) three days ago, as it may be closest to the truth.

WHO PRESSED THE BUTTON?

Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. The third time it's enemy action.

– Auric Goldfinger

I find the evidence on social media quite convincing. It seems that two Tor M1 missiles were fired at the Ukrainian plane.

People have asked why the cameraman [was filming](#) the empty sky at 6 AM? Maybe he saw the first missile hit and started filming the second missile 30 seconds later. The cameraman may be a night guard. There is some kind of guard house at the street corner from where the video is filmed. It is also seen on the video.

The question to ask is "who pressed the button?" Unless it was pure incompetence there are two other options.

1. US electronic warfare created fake radar targets for Iranians to shoot at.
2. Americans had hacked into the Tor system. Maybe they took over the control link between the Tor TLAR and the command unit and were able to issue false fire commands. Or maybe they

inserted some Stuxnet type malware into the system. If so, this implant may have been waiting for years to be activated.

Americans have lately been bragging about the malware that they have implanted in Russian strategic systems and the cyber attacks they are planning against Russia. There is every reason to believe they are engaged in a similar war against Iran.

Does Ukraine have Tor M1 systems? I am sure they gave all the necessary information to Americans.

Posted by: [Petri Krohn](#) | Jan 12 2020 18:36 utc | [8](#)

Hi b, I would request that you consider adjusting the title. In passing, someone reading "Was The Shootdown Of The Ukrainian Airplane Near Tehran Really A 'Mistake'?" might believe that you are suggesting they intended to shoot down the airliner, which is clearly NOT the point you are making. Feel free to delete this comment if you think that is appropriate.

Posted by: Lysander | Jan 12 2020 18:38 utc | [9](#)

Jimbo | Jan 12 2020 18:27 utc | 6

The Iranians probably have enough S-300/400 type systems. The solution should be a lot cheaper than that, better radios and IADS interface for their mobile SAMs.

Posted by: JohninMK | Jan 12 2020 18:38 utc | [10](#)

Why are not the TorM1 team aware of the civilian flight times and flight paths ? When you placing them so near to airport are not there any 2nd validation ? It seems odd.

Posted by: KD | Jan 12 2020 18:39 utc | [11](#)

The general staff conducted an investigation and put out a statement.

<https://ifpnews.com/iran-finally-admits-its-air-defence-unintentionally-hit-ukrainian-plane>

Part of that statement... "3- Under such sensitive and critical circumstances, the Ukrainian airline's Flight PS752 took off from Imam Khomeini Airport, and when turning around, it approached a sensitive military site of the IRGC, taking the shape and altitude of a hostile target. "

This differs somewhat to the IRGC Generals statement. "The plane was also on its track, it made no mistake. It did the right thing,"

At the bottom of the General staff statement.. "5- The relevant authorities at the IRGC were also instructed to appear on state TV and give detailed explanation of the incident as soon as possible."

The result of 5 is the television appearance of IRGC Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh

Iran needs to investigate more to see if they were set up by the US, with the US deliberately bring about condition where Iran would down a civilian aircraft as Israel did with Syrian air defence and Russian plane.

Other than that they need to keep sticking it to the yanks, get them on the back foot because Trump wont be easing up. As b says, in war shit happens.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Jan 12 2020 18:39 utc | [12](#)

"b"

Excellent analysis. Parses nicely "the fog of war".

Posted by: Red Ryder | Jan 12 2020 18:39 utc | [13](#)

There's no way that it can be excused as an unavoidable communications cock-up in a war situation. Iran showed with its attack on the Ayn al-Asad air base that it is capable of detecting targets accurately hundreds of kilometers away. But it's too much to expect it to detect a harmless huge civilian aircraft flying overhead, soon after it departed the main airport of its capital city? It should not have been possible for an incident like that to happen if the army had any discipline at all.

Posted by: Brendan | Jan 12 2020 18:46 utc | [14](#)

Great detailed article.

Posted by: Alexandre Yazdi | Jan 12 2020 18:48 utc | [16](#)

The Iranians did two things right:

1. By delaying and not immediately acknowledging responsibility they allowed the technical investigation to proceed without interference. The Ukrainian investigators independently found the pieces of shrapnel and the shrapnel holes. There can now be no questioning of the technical aspects of the crash.
2. By openly acknowledging responsibility they now force the international investigation to focus on outside interference on the decision making process.

Posted by: [Petri Krohn](#) | Jan 12 2020 18:49 utc | [17](#)

Thank you b for this report and your presentation of the facts as given.

Yes indeed, during such tense occasions accidents (assuming that the Occupiers of Palestine and the US did not actually help to cause the situation) happen. And the Iranians have the moral strength to accept their responsibility and apologize for what happened - quite unlike, e.g., the Americans regarding the 290 Iranian passengers and crew shot down by the crew of the US Vincennes and totally unlike the Israelis and their using a civilian plane to hide their military aircraft from Syrian-Russian air defenses.

Does anyone else think it rather convenient (for the FUKUSI-NATO and MSM crowing pundits) that not 24 hours after the Iranian government told the world what had happened, those "anti-government protests" resumed their fervor in Iran? To my mind it shrieks US-IS-MEK provocations/support/initiation...

Posted by: AnneR | Jan 12 2020 18:51 utc | [18](#)

b. this is rubbish. Rouhani's statement is correct.

1) To add a system as you describe near an airport in a situation well known to be full of electronic interference is madness.

2) A leadership that prefers good PR (not having to close the airport) to civilian death makes people's life unsafe instead of safe - their raison d'etre is to make their people's life safer.

3) If you had been my commander with the calculations above i would have turned around with my gun firing.

Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 18:51 utc | [19](#)

So the main aspects of this incident have been factually resolved in a couple days... and we are STILL waiting for the truth about the deliberate shootdown of MH-17 by a Uki-jet to be acknowledged and apologized for by the Kiev junta and their US/ZATO/CIA/Mossad masters.

The post-crash "protests" the US is crowing about in Iran will soon be revealed as being paid regime-change ploys by the US/ZATO, just like Hong Kong, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Venezuela.

Posted by: A P | Jan 12 2020 19:01 utc | [20](#)

b, absolutely correct rational.

No doubt it was a tragedy, but the Iranian soldier operating the AA not connected to the bigger National picture did what he was trained to do. There is also the aspect of supposedly flight change by the Ukrainian 737, as per Elijah Magnier, this issue has no explanation so far, maybe the BB will tell something different on the airplane route.

Posted by: Canthama | Jan 12 2020 19:02 utc | [21](#)

There's no way that it can be excused as an unavoidable communications cock-up in a war situation. Iran showed with its attack on the Ayn al-Asad air base that it is capable of detecting targets accurately hundreds of kilometers away. But it's too much to expect it to detect a harmless huge civilian aircraft flying overhead, soon after it departed the main airport of its capital city? It should not have been possible for an incident like that to happen if the army had any discipline at all.

Posted by: Brendan | Jan 12 2020 18:46 utc

Did you or didn't you read the article prior to commenting ?

Posted by: Lucci | Jan 12 2020 19:02 utc | [22](#)

Considering how convenient is this incident for the neocons and the whole hegemonic cabal I still have doubts if it was just human error.

Pompeo tweeting support for Tehran protest which follows today's announcement. British ambassador arrested amid participation in it, Trump tweeting in Farsi, Bolton gloating incident as regime change opportunity. MEK and Pahlavi all together try to hijack this situation for their agenda.

Iran just delivered successful, precise strike against US forces in Iraq. That's quite big event itself. But not only that. This year, in October, Iranian weapon embargo ends. Iran will be able to buy whatever it needs. All of this can't be just coincidence.

I have no doubts that Iranian air defence really downed the airliner. But was it really a mistake, as the article asks? It's not outside the realm of possibilities that it was a sabotage. Mole within air defense unit stationed nearby Tehran's civil airport. Bear in mind that both, the US and Israel, have the history of downing civilian airliners behind...

So I think, under the current circumstances, it's less damaging for Iran to take

responsibility for the tragedy then admit that the internal security was severely breached and infiltrated by hostile forces. Not even mentioning that claims about sabotage no one would take seriously...

Posted by: [KneelB4Zod!](#) | Jan 12 2020 19:02 utc | [23](#)

b- The title of this article caught my attention but I thought it was going in a different direction.

Without any factual knowledge the following can only be presented as hysterical speculation, as most 'analysis' is framed ...

Regardless, the suggestion in your title might also be read as "not mistake equals intentional". — I think your description of a plausible scenario of a bad decision by the launch operator would in fact be characterized a mistake.

Let's step back and gather some dots. For instance, who was on the plane? Spies, high-ranking Iranian defectors, business people leaving with plundered Iranian wealth? Then let's consider the plane's country flag as an entity involved in some murk surrounding American elections. Or Canadian adventurism. Or perhaps an actual target of terrorism in which civilians are killed to express hatred for America and its constellation of influence, with a deluxe weapon not available to most homegrown actors. Or whatever rubbish one might throw in.

Nonetheless, from a historical perspective, who would characterize Iranian armed forces as sloppy and unrestrained? Accidental shootdowns are accepted as an inevitable by-product of active defense systems. When the Iranian defense spokesman, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, spoke contritely admitting responsibility, he managed to slip in the premise that American adventurism inflamed tensions that factored into the shootdown. I would take it one step farther and translate his statement into "Look what you made us do." Which leads us to the Trump regime as the party to blame, not the lowly sergeant freaking out at the little green blip on his radar display.

As to the protests, you have reports of Iranians protesting their governments coverup, Iraqis protesting about their struggles, etc. Washington is enjoying the political charade of blaming Trump for escalating tensions while the warhawks are getting exactly what they want.

For all of the competing interests involved, I cannot say that I believe the shootdown was intentional, but I can't **NOT** believe it either. This makes for one very expensive dead contractor in Iraq.

Sacramento Bee –

The death of Sacramento resident Nawres Waleed Hamid is cited as one of the reasons the U.S. government killed Soleimani, sparking concerns of a potential war with Iran. The U.S. government defends its actions saying Soleimani planned to attack U.S. troops.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Mark Milley, told reporters Monday he had personally seen the intelligence outlining the threat. On Tuesday, in a news conference with reporters, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the attack had been expected to occur within days.

Posted by: [Stumpy](#) | Jan 12 2020 19:03 utc | [24](#)

Big elephant in the room is this: airspace should be closed for all civilian planes as

soon as attack started. This is the *only* mistake.

Ground AA crews shooting down unknown air target in situation of expected attack - this is not a mistake, it happens in war.

Posted by: Abe | Jan 12 2020 19:04 utc | [25](#)

somebody 19

One thing from the generals presentation. He said the commander of the Tor unit had asks for the airspace to be closed down Although he had only been there a few hours, planes were leaving the airport in quick succession so a number would have already flown out past his position.

What was it that differentiated this plane from the others on his radar screen. From the presentation, his unit was sent to the position at midnight or 00.00hrs The Ukrainian flight was the eighth flight out after that time.

<https://www.flightradar24.com/blog/ukrainian-flight-ps752-crashes-shortly-after-take-off-from-tehran/>

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Jan 12 2020 19:05 utc | [26](#)

@Jimbob 6

Iran has S-300but it can't cover the entire country.

Posted by: BraveNewWorld | Jan 12 2020 19:08 utc | [27](#)

Honestly, I see 2 issues here:

- having a system that isn't connected and can't see farther than a few km (specially when you put it next to an airport and next to a common flypath for civilian airliners

- not shutting down civilian flights over Iran

And in my opinion, the latter is the most glaring mistake - one worse than a crime, as Talleyrand would say. This one is close to a braindead decision, specially since there were serious odds of a shooting war with US and Iranian jets or missiles flying around. Even if strategically it makes sense, the one who actually decided to allow civilian planes to keep on flying should resign or be fired at once. And it's quite clear that Hajizadeh thinks that was the wrong decision - but he can't really openly blame his political civilian hierarchy, even if, like in plenty of other countries, they seem not to grasp what military issues are about.

Posted by: Clueless Joe | Jan 12 2020 19:13 utc | [28](#)

But if one wants to find a person guilty for it one must look for the person who caused the whole situation.

It's to be expected that the Iran government's apologetic posture includes rhetorical vows to fully investigate the catastrophic event and appropriately "punish" the (Iranian) "culprits".

I'm sorry that I didn't note the sources, but I've been skimming through so many reports that I can't keep track of such details; I know that one or more Iranian officials have used those loaded terms. Again, I know that after debacles large and small, parties make vehement promises to "get to the bottom of it" and hold wrongdoers accountable as a rhetorical expression of contrite good faith.

It may be a minor concern in the scheme of things, but I truly hope that Iranian leaders don't feel compelled to scapegoat lower-level members of the military, including line officers following established procedures in chaotic circumstances, for international public-relations purposes. As B. notes, making an honest judgment call that proves wrong or incorrect after the fact is not a crime, or even willful misconduct.

Scapegoating subordinates is SOP for faithless, corrupt, and mendacious Western governments after controversial incidents: make a pretense of investigation, promptly declare that the catastrophe/crime was actually an unfortunate "merry mixup", but for good measure apportion blame to hapless low-level functionaries just to reinforce the impression that the authorities acted in good faith. (The Epstein melodrama is a clear example of this heinous chicanery.)

I hope the Iranian government is better than that.

Posted by: Ort | Jan 12 2020 19:13 utc | [29](#)

Canthama

I doubt we will ever see what the black boxes recorded. US france ect refused to send the software required to decode the recordings and after finding that air defences had downed the aircraft, Iran was no longer concerned on holding onto the flight recorders and sent to france. I think that was a mistake.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Jan 12 2020 19:17 utc | [30](#)

Likklemore 15 - It's been longer than since 1953, it's been at least since the British Navy switched from coal to oil - Iran wanted to remain neutral in both WWI & WWII, and both times was invaded by the Western Alliance.

Another factor in the heightened state of alert was the certainty that Iran also knew of the failed assassination attempt in Yemen, so there was some seriousness to Trump's "52" tweeted threat.

Posted by: Enrico Malatesta | Jan 12 2020 19:20 utc | [31](#)

"It should not have been possible for an incident like that to happen if the army had any discipline at all." --Biffy

So, Biffy, what is your recommendation? Perhaps the Iranian military has no discipline. That doesn't seem to be the case, but what is it to you? What's your point? Or are you and your comments pointless?

Posted by: William Gruff | Jan 12 2020 19:23 utc | [32](#)

Somebody posted in the previous topic's discussion that Wikileaks alleges that Russia gave Israel the codes of the TOR-M1 air defenses system that Russia sold to Iran (in exchange for Israel giving Russia codes for UAVs that Israel sold Georgia).

Given that the TOR-M1 system was involved in the shoot-down of the Ukrainian airliner, this information should be assessed in understanding what happened in the shootdown of UA PS752.

WikiLeaks: Russia gave Israel Iranian system's codes
<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4196367,00.html>

Furthermore, some Iranian officials a couple of years ago have asserted that Russia provided to Israel codes for the S-300 air defense system it sold to Syria.

Iran Charges Russia With Selling Out its Air Defense Secrets to Israel

<https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Report-Iran-accuses-Russia-of-giving-Israel-codes-for-Syrian-air-defenses-484777>

One of the interesting assertions relevant to this Ukrainian airliner PS752 issue is that these "codes" involves the Identify Friend or Foe codes that aircraft transmit to avoid being shot down by their own air defenses.

In addition, if Israel has the TOR-M1 or S-300 codes, it would be naive to believe that it wouldn't share them with America, its closest ally.

The bottom line is: parts of the Iranian air defense system may have been compromised by the Israelis/Americans.

Posted by: ak74 | Jan 12 2020 19:26 utc | [33](#)

PeterAU1 @26

What was it that differentiated this plane from the others on his radar screen.(?)

Nailed it.

Posted by: Stumpy | Jan 12 2020 19:30 utc | [35](#)

This was very well presented, it makes sense. Thank you.

Posted by: Norwegian | Jan 12 2020 19:33 utc | [36](#)

@all -Why was the Tor system placed where it was.

Bidganeh, where it was deployed to, is a strategic missile production and test area.

In 2011 [a large explosion](#) occurred there, likely from Israeli sabotage.

In 2018 there were (false) [rumors](#) that Iran was using the site to build intercontinental missiles.

I have now added this information to the above piece.

It was very reasonable to deploy a system to that site. Unfortunately it lacked the appropriate level of communication.

But while Iran has some modern weapons most are still relatively old. Its military has to work with what it has. Not every MANPAD equipped soldier can have the full picture of the aerial situation. Shit happens.

Posted by: [b](#) | Jan 12 2020 19:37 utc | [37](#)

As for the man who pushed the button, I agree. Not so with regard to the issue of the civil airport shutdown. That should have been done by all means. The advantage - no such disasters - far outweighs the disadvantages. That was a clear mistake.

I still have questions about the course of the 737. Was it absolutely normal, as certain people claim, and therefore distanced itself from the airport, or did it fly an unusual loop before being hit, as other statements suggest? Why isn't this a subject of discussion?

PS: The title of your piece is clearly misleading. Change it please.

Posted by: Pnyx | Jan 12 2020 19:42 utc | [38](#)

Allowing civil flights to proceed in those circumstances was an unforgivable blunder. Ditto MH17 being directed over a conflict zone resulting in its destruction.

Civil flights should have zero entitlements in peak conflict times. The airspace managers at Teheran air traffic control made the poor judgement.

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jan 12 2020 19:44 utc | [39](#)

Since the beginning, b has decided to white washing the Mullahs of any sin. Before it was a plot, the videa, edited contents, the site buldozz a rumour. But still my favourite mullah all tile is that mullah that raped a girl and then had it hanged for extra-marital sex. Just dig at Amnistry a bit you'll find plenty of it. Ah of course, this is evil plot of CIA, everybody know Amnistry in on CIA payroll. Dam-it, I was distracted.

Posted by: murgen23 | Jan 12 2020 19:52 utc | [40](#)

Posted by: b | Jan 12 2020 19:37 utc | 37

That does not make it any better. If it was such an important site it should have had a decent air defence all along, surely? And - after all - what is to defend at an "important military site" - equipment? If it is people, just empty the site.

But why oh why do you assume b. that Iranian military is all competent?

Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 19:57 utc | [41](#)

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jan 12 2020 19:44 utc | 39

Agree. I am not sure who was responsible for it, as the military clearly "asked" but was refused. I suppose they had a crisis center for decisions, and this was run mainly as a PR campaign.

But, BUT, western airlines eg Lufthansa flew under these circumstances. You have to ask them what they were thinking.

Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 20:01 utc | [42](#)

Ort @29

Scapegoating subordinates is SOP for faithless, corrupt, and mendacious Western governments after controversial incidents: make a pretense of investigation, promptly declare that the catastrophe/crime was actually an unfortunate "merry mixup", but for good measure apportion blame to hapless low-level functionaries just to reinforce the impression that the authorities acted in good faith

You give the PTB way too much credit. The US is more likely to go after the whistleblower than the criminal. Or just laugh it off. SOP is receive or provoke an incident, then target the uninvolved third party. As far as Iran is concerned, though, I share your hope for better, but not too optimistic about it.

Posted by: Stumpy | Jan 12 2020 20:02 utc | [43](#)

Jerusalem Post quoting Liberman on New York Times reporting.

[How Israel benefits from US media linking it to Soleimani hit - analysis](#)

“First of all I think that anyone who talks about this is making a grave mistake,” he said. “We need to stay as far away from this story as possible. When The New York Times publishes something like that it is generally basing it on Israeli sources. I think we should check who those Israeli sources are.” Asked if he was aiming his arrows at Netanyahu, and that Netanyahu may have had an interest at this time in it being reported that he was the only leader informed of the hit in advance, Liberman replied: “I have a lot of experience with these types of reports, particularly in The New York Times, and they always come from Israeli sources. I think it is a grave mistake. Ambiguity and silence is the best thing we can do.”

Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 20:05 utc | [44](#)

@Somebody:

1) +

2) +

To gamble with the lives of civilians in the hundreds with not closing public air traffic only to show strength, is just madness, and sadly shows that a small and not decisive strategic decision trumped the lives of those dead Iranians.

For years we have attacked Ukraine because they did not close their air space for civilians flights, and now we do the opposite when it is the IRGC?

What the Fuck!

Posted by: DontBelieveEitherPr. | Jan 12 2020 20:07 utc | [45](#)

What benefit do posters gain from promoting the narrative that Iran's military is incompetent? Why is this so important to them? Do they really hope that Iran's military preparedness for dealing with imperial provocations is improved and Iran becomes even better able to defend itself? Or has their arrogance been punctured by Iran's "*slap*" and so they are just trying to re-inflate their now flaccid egos?

The question is of course rhetorical as I am sure we all already know the answer to it.

Posted by: William Gruff | Jan 12 2020 20:09 utc | [46](#)

Many thanks for this post, b.

I had decided to ask you to apply your own military training/ expertise to this incident and provide a personal assessment of the probable range of formal and informal choices faced by Iran when it occurred.

You have pre-emptively provided a thoughtful and informative answer.

P.S. I like the way you think.

P.P.S. Is it time to resurrect the term Rent-a-Crowd as shorthand for US-UK shit-stirring in other people's countries?

There's apparently no limit to the self-righteous sleaziness of Token Christians.

Posted by: Hoarsewhisperer | Jan 12 2020 20:12 utc | [47](#)

@ somebody 41

That does not make it any better. If it was such an important site it should have had a decent air defence all along, surely? And - after all - what is to defend at an "important military site" - equipment? If it is people, just empty the site.

You are in shoulda coulda mode. It is a war zone. People die. Its called collateral damage. FFS.

"different day, different shit"

Big shit happens in war.

Posted by: Likklemore | Jan 12 2020 20:13 utc | [48](#)

Jackrabbit: indeed, I've been wondering if the plane has been hit by Iranian missile at the moment and place where the transponder went silent, or if something else happened, and then Iranian air defense saw an uncommunicative flying object that did NOT follow the normal paths of civilian planes. Because if the Boeing turned right, was then spotted by the defenses, and then shot down, way after the comms were cut off, then what did happen? Fool play? Technical issues? Because if it's a technical issue, it might be of interest for the global air traffic to be informed of this.

As for allowing civilian planes, I said that the Iranian political leader who didn't want to shut down the whole business was guilty as charged. That said, I also think - like said above - that the companies and pilots of the flights who took off after the missile strikes were quite foolish as well; I can understand the urge to get out of dodge in the case the US reatliates and bombs Tehran, but frankly, the risk of flying when air defenses are paranoid or when missiles and jets might fly all around you is just as huge. All around foolish decisions.

Posted by: Clueless Joe | Jan 12 2020 20:15 utc | [49](#)

A clear example of the unintended consequences of war. Good analysis.

The one conclusion I would question is the reason you surmise for not closing airspace.

Iran's strategic intent is to withstand U.S. pressure and to show defiance. Closing the airspace would have contradicted that objective.

Maybe so, but I don't think its the whole story.

After the strike on the air bases the Iranian government was expecting a military response from the U.S. Trump even said as much.

There really was a threat from the U.S. and everyone thought that war would break out within the next minutes or hours

In that very tense period with Iran's air defense on high alert I could imagine somebody high up deciding not to close the airspace for the simple reason that this would complicate matters for the U.S. if they were planning a retaliatory strike. Because if a civilian plane got hit in the cross-fire, much of the world would blame the U.S. And rightfully so.

Posted by: Carciofi | Jan 12 2020 20:15 utc | [50](#)

Posted by: Jackrabbit | Jan 12 2020 19:28 utc | [34](#)

The transponder stopped transmitting WELL BEFORE the point that IRGC says the missile hit.

The plane was at the start of the runway at 06:12 and data transmission ended 06:15, roughly 3 minutes later (seconds not provided in the information I have).

During that time the plane was accelerating. Looking at an overlay image <https://posting.cc/yJQBNbvX> where the flightradar24 and IRGC paths are compared, we must conclude they agree up to the time the communication was cut off, but the plane was hit somewhat later, maybe 30 seconds later. A more detailed analysis is required to give a better time estimate.

Posted by: Norwegian | Jan 12 2020 20:15 utc | [51](#)

It's been a long, long time since I was a military air traffic controller, but I remember very clearly a number of the military and civilian traffic control regulations we were required to memorize word for word.

Several of those regulations – dealing with a number of different possible situations – went like this: “In the event of (such-and-such situation) the controller will always do (so-and-so) *except when, in the opinion of the controller, an alternative course is deemed advisable.*”

So, either way, in the event of something going horribly wrong, the controller could get the blame.

I don't know if that was also true for those manning AA or missile batteries, nor do I know if that's still true for controllers, nor do I know whether or not that's the rule in the Iranian military. But those were the rules under which I operated.

Perhaps someone a few centuries younger than me can enlighten us about today's rules.

Posted by: AntiSpin | Jan 12 2020 20:19 utc | [52](#)

Brendan@14

"It should not have been possible for an incident like that to happen if the army had any discipline at all."

Really? So the Captain of the USS Vincennes who gave the orders to shoot down an Iranian civilian airliner flying inside Iranian airspace was totally lacking in discipline?

How old are you?

By the way it was 12 years before the U.S. admitted it shot down Iran Air Flight 655 and even then refused to apologize.

Posted by: Carciofi | Jan 12 2020 20:28 utc | [53](#)

@Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 19:57 utc | 41

b's reasoning is accurate.

It is common philosophy in the military that it is better to be judged by 12 than carried by six.

b4real

Posted by: b4real | Jan 12 2020 20:33 utc | [55](#)

Thanks b for this article, but as various people have said there is a distinct possibility that this was a set-up. (The following is just my speculation, - that we

are only at the start of a distinct manoeuvre for "regime change" in Iran, and the way it is developing)

For confirmation of that you will have to look at the "coincidences" as well as the number and "quality" of the targets for assassination just before the plane flight. ie 2 Hezbollah commanders and their command posts, two Kaitb hizbollah, one failed attempt in Yemen, another in Iran and then Soleimani. All in quick succession. There maybe more. This looks a bit like a prelude to a bigger attack, where all the Iranian forces would be under threat or reduced in efficiency together.

Both Netanyahu and Trump needed a distraction (warlike) for problems in their home countries

The Anti-governmental manifestations in Iran had been stopped by cutting off the internet and a subsequent crackdown.

Where I think the US/Israel miscalculated was the spontaneous solidarity shown after the killing of Soleimani. Millions came out and even other countries have shown their displeasure (even though most of them no longer mention him, possibly due to US pressure).

So, I think the "plan" would have been to shoot down the plane *immediately after* what were "estimated" as going to be smallish funeral crowds. Followed by a MSM campaign, and in turn followed by more manifestations with snipers and the usual "regime change" scenario.

The second miscalculation was the rapidity of the Iranian ripost after Soleimani's funeral and the accuracy of the missile strikes **which were not aimed to kill**. The plane attack was three hours later.

We are now back at the classical "regime change" with Trump tweeting that the Iranians should not shoot their own citizens (open invitation for the MEK to do so)

(Extras; The video of the Missile/hit seemed not to be hand held but "fixed", ie pre-directed. It may even have been "improved" afterwards as I do not remember seeing the trail of the missile in early versions. Unfortunately I cannot confirm that. The other widely used photo of the warhead did not have any signs of impact in the ground. The luncheon box was cut out of the versions shown on MSM. Luckily there is no sign as yet of a "stand-up comic" like Guaido (venezuela) proclaiming himself as "President" or "supreme leader" but it is still early days.)

Posted by: Stonebird | Jan 12 2020 20:35 utc | [56](#)

excellent b.. your last lines in particular - "But if one wants to find a person guilty for it one must look for the person who caused the whole situation. That person is not the lowly sergeant who pressed the button. That person is U.S. President Donald Trump."

Posted by: james | Jan 12 2020 20:36 utc | [57](#)

I also have military experience and believe that to have air traffic in that situation was plain stupid.

Posted by: Victor J | Jan 12 2020 20:37 utc | [58](#)

@56

I should perhaps not have said "shoot down" as this could be misunderstood - there I should have stuck more to the point of the main article which also suggests various scenes enticing or otherwise pushing the Irans into a tragic mistake.

Posted by: Stonebird | Jan 12 2020 20:41 utc | [59](#)

“ Closing the airspace would have allowed the U.S. to claim that Iran is fearing its response and that it had shown weakness. The decision to not close the airspace was, I believe, strategically correct. But it had tactical costs which turned out to be high.”

b,

Thank you for the analysis. I have to disagree with you on this point. Not closing the airspace was a grave mistake, politically, militarily and strategically. This event has overshadowed the assassination and was like pouring cold water in the whole thing. And, it was the event the west needed to spin like a washing machine non-stop and deflect from their atrocities and be able to effectively shift the blame. Plus, the night of the attacks was anthesis of normalcy. That was war without declaring it formally.

Iran had the momentum and now it is on the defensive, domestically and internationally. At a time when Iran had the sympathy of the whole world, they had to think of all possibilities and react accordingly to keep this goodwill. Who knows when they will recover from this?

Unfortunately, the west controls the narrative and the media message worldwide and this sort of mistakes cannot be made, regardless of what kind of message a closed airspace might convey.

I have to applaud the courage and honesty of the Iranian government on being forthright though. An attitude in very short supply in the west as they never do anything wrong and any atrocity is turned into a national victory through lies and propaganda, a la USS Vincense.

Posted by: Alpi | Jan 12 2020 20:43 utc | [60](#)

Re the comparison between Ukraine and Iran. Ukraine was in the midst of a civil war in the aftermath of a US regime change operation. A number of planes had already been shot down. Also planes were overflying the area simply to take the shortest route.

In Iran, although there was the possibility of US attack and air defence was on alert, there had been no attack and there was no war raging.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Jan 12 2020 20:48 utc | [63](#)

Follow up to my post @ 60. Here is the case in point:

<https://www.rt.com/news/478082-us-establishment-support-iran-protests/>

The assassination brought out the pro-government people and the nationalist in droves. The anti-government crowd stayed home quiet. The downing of the Ukrainian plane completely reversed this situation. And that is all US, Israel, UK and MEK needed to pour fuel into the fire that will be hard to extinguish.

b, you and I and the rest of the educated barflies here know that Iran was and is on a righteous path, but now, what about the rest of the masses and the sheep. They have already forgotten about the assassination and the atrocities in the West Asia

and only focused on this event through propaganda. Not to mention the wrath of the anti-government crowd in Iran, contrived or not.

Posted by: Alpi | Jan 12 2020 21:02 utc | [64](#)

@Posted by: William Gruff | Jan 12 2020 20:09 utc | 46

Amongst your rhetorical questions you have forgotten considering that they are US DoS payed shills, which could be the more plausible possibility, IMV,...They enjoyed a whole previous post to expand themselves at pleasure, while you all regulars were totally absent for a whole day...

I found it quite strange that suddenly all of you decide to take such a long rest...at unison...

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 21:14 utc | [66](#)

@Posted by: somebody | Jan 12 2020 20:05 utc | 44

Yeah..but in spite of "ambiguity and silence".. and "by way of deception", in the end...*todo se acaba sabiendo...*

Looks like we were right: it was #Israel who gave #Trump White House intelligence for assassination of #Iran's #Soleimani & #Iraq's #Mohandis.

Was other "imminent threat" intel from #Netanyahu also?
#IranProtests #TrumpsWarOfMassDistraction #TrumpsWar

<https://twitter.com/21WIRE/status/1216398121099583489>

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 21:20 utc | [67](#)

Pepe Escobar
6 hrs ·

IT AIN'T OVER TILL THE CYBER EXPERTS SING

THE STRIKE ON THE UKRAINIAN BOEING MAY HAVE BEEN THE
CONSEQUENCE OF A CYBER ATTACK

Iranian radars disabled. Coordinates of a civilian Ukrainian aircraft changed – so it would look like an enemy aircraft.

The downing of the Ukrainian Boeing might have been the result of a US cyber attack.

Of course this is a - literally - explosive issue. I've been on it for a few hours now – but it's Sunday, very hard to get any official comment. I sent messages to different players in Iran and Russia, awaiting response. One of them, from Iran, says “no discussion of a cyber-attack”, for now.

And yet IRGC Aerospace Commander Hajizadeh's speech is a dead giveaway. He said a huge “anomaly” impaired Tehran's air defense system, leading to the impression an enemy plane was approaching a sensitive military center – the root of the subsequent “human error”.

He also said that in the hours after the IRGC missile attack on the Ayn al-Asad base, the Americans had multiplied fighter jet flights near Iran's aerial borders.

Not only Tehran was targeted, but other strategic military centers as well.

One can imagine nerves fraying all across the spectrum.

One can read Hajizadeh's explanation as a very subtle description of a cyber attack. Perhaps the IRGC does not have the full intel – yet. Perhaps they cannot reveal the full story of how they fell victim to a cyber attack – and that would explain the long gap between them acknowledging the hit and the Iranian government officially announcing it.

Russian military site avia.pro goes straight to the point. This is their English version, which is not as detailed as the report in Russian.

<http://avia-pro.net/.../prichinoy-unichtozheniya-ukrainskogo-...>

avia.pro are not amateurs. The report in Russian says that if that was cyberwarfare by the Americans, the coup matches point by point the destruction of an IL-20 near Lattakia in September 2018 - which Israeli fighter planes used as a shield.

avia.pro goes for the working hypothesis that the US military cyber attack modified not only the profile of the Ukro-Boeing. The Ukrainian pilot made a U-turn as well. So the cyber attack may have also targeted the Boeing's navigation system. The Americans have done this many times before.

Malign Manatee Pompeo's gloating is an indirect giveaway. He said it was an Iranian missile even before any serious investigation had started. And picking a Tehran-Kiev flight – among so many other flights that day – is a thing of beauty. It carries the possibility of blaming BOTH Iran and Russia (I posted about it; Russia was blamed by Ukrainians). And it carries the possibility of “indirect” collaboration by the Ukro-mafioso system – with US “rewards” showering afterwards.

What about “collateral damage”? There's A LOT of chatter – of course, no smokin' gun – that the Ukro-flight was a RAT FLIGHT, as in containing a planeload of dodgy intel types. The destination of the flight is also a dead giveaway. In previous instances, “Canadians” carrying false Canadian passports usually turn out to be CIA and/or MOSSAD operating in Ukraine.

NOTHING is beyond the appalling Exceptionalist racket – and NOTHING should be excluded from investigation. The Ukro-incident completely eviscerated from the news cycle the immense HUMILIATION suffered by the “greatest army in the history of the universe” in Iraq. In fact it could have been the HYBRID WAR AMERICAN RESPONSE - as it happened only five hours after the immense humiliation itself.

This is far from over: it's an ongoing investigation. Experts are more than welcomed.

<https://www.facebook.com/pepe.escobar.77377/posts/10157820584511678>

Posted by: brian | Jan 12 2020 21:24 utc | [68](#)

'In that very tense period with Iran's air defense on high alert I could imagine somebody high up deciding not to close the airspace for the simple reason that this would complicate matters for the U.S. if they were planning a retaliatory strike. Because if a civilian plane got hit in the cross-fire, much of the world would blame the U.S. And rightfully so.

Posted by: Carciofi | Jan 12 2020 20:15 utc | [50](#)

what a stupid idea...Iran isnt USrael

Posted by: brian | Jan 12 2020 21:25 utc | [69](#)

Test the size of anti-government protests in Teheran...with some videos where you can appreciate demonstrators disguise similar to that of Hk rioters...Some people for what it seems, in a desperate attempt to increase the tiny size of the protests, when the country is at war being attacked by the US/UK imperialists in full display, tried through social media even to use the traffic jam provoked by the protesters as a demonstraion in itself, saying the people were blocking the road for not allowing the police to pass...LOL!

<https://twitter.com/Souria4Syrians/status/1216398822848503809>

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 21:31 utc | [70](#)

@Posted by: Peter AU1 | Jan 12 2020 20:48 utc | [63](#)

And morevoer they were sent request by The Donald through the Swiss on de-escalating and equal retaliation...

Eventhough today nobody trust The Donald, at the end of the day, some still doubt and cocde him a it of credit, like the Russians....In wonder why...

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 21:37 utc | [71](#)

Jackrabbitt @ 34:

There is still a possibility that a technical issue on the UIA flight may have caused the plane to veer away from its flight path or the transponder to turn off before the missile hit.

The second possibility is that the UIA Boeing may have been carrying spy equipment and deviated from the flight path towards a possible sensitive military installation to take photographs of it.

As PavewayIV commented in reply to an earlier comment I had made about UIA on a previous MoA comments forum, [UIA was losing huge amounts of money over the past few years](#) as a result of competition from budget airlines entering the Ukrainian market among other issues. The flight crew had had just three hours of rest between a flight arriving in Tehran and the doomed flight.

UIA is part-owned by Ihor Kolomoisky, a well-known, triple-citizen Ukrainian oligarch (here at MoA anyway) who had been governor of Dnepropetrovsk Oblast at the time the Malaysia Airlines Boeing was shot down. Recall that MH17 [had had contact with ATC in the capital city of the same name](#) in that oblast, who confirmed that the plane should fly at 10,000 metres (30,000 feet).

UIA transport routes connect Kiev with cities in the Middle East, Europe and with Toronto and New York City.

I suppose MoA commenters can read into the Toronto connection all they want. The Canadian Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland represents a riding (electoral district) in Toronto that includes the whole campus of the University of Toronto. Many Canadians on Flight PS752 were probably university students of Iranian background who had been visiting relatives in Iran over Christmas / New Year and returning to Canada and school after a stopover in Kiev. (Gosh, you think? ...)

Posted by: Jen | Jan 12 2020 21:46 utc | [72](#)

The Tor M1 has an IFF interrogator:

The basic component of the system is a combat vehicle mounted on a cross-country tracked chassis of the intermediate weight category. The combat vehicle can detect aerial targets on the move and launch air defense missiles at two highest threat targets from a short halt. The combat vehicle comprises:

- self-propelled armored tracked chassis;
- three-dimensional target acquisition radar;
- digital computer;
- antenna stabilization system;
- ground-based IFF interrogator

The operator would have to override the safety measures to launch, if the transponder had been working. If the transponder had been sabotaged, then it was probably a setup.

Posted by: evilempire | Jan 12 2020 21:48 utc | [73](#)

If there was any doubt who pays this skills traitors...when even the in-law of Reza Pahlevi mourned the dead of Soleimani...

Via Mark Sleboda Twitter...

Students at Tehran's Beheshti university avoid walking on U.S. and Israeli flags painted at entrance.

<https://twitter.com/GEsfandiari/status/1216321586376183811>

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 21:51 utc | [74](#)

War is one big SNAFU after another.

The Teheran Shootdown was caused a series of political and military mistakes starting with the Carter Doctrine that states that the USA will use military force to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf. The World was on the brink of WWII. There is no way China and Russia can avoid being involved in an American Iranian War. Russia is next door and China gets oil from Iran. Yet both the USA and Iran don't act like they are about to blow up the world. The USA should not threaten to destroy 52 Iranian sites if it is impossible for America to win the war. Iran should have shut down its airspace to commercial flights even if it highlights the risks of a total war to Iranians. Ukraine Airlines should have grounded the flight until the situation resolved itself but making money was more important than the potential risk of human lives. Iranian Revolutionary Guard should not have added a standalone vintage air defense system at the last minute to a strategic missile assembly factory outside Tehran. Unlike Soviet officers who didn't launch the missiles, a 30-year Holy War breeds fanatics who believe in Armageddon and will push the red button.

Like MH-17 shootdown, the truth will be buried in a pile of propaganda.

Posted by: VietnamVet | Jan 12 2020 21:54 utc | [75](#)

Too show that the alleged message from the Saudis to negotiate peace with Iran was a trap to kill oleinahi and Al-Muhandis...and that the war and genocide on Yemen is US made thing...(well, nobody would swallow the Saudis and UAE sheiks would have gone to war without US/UK/Israel approval/support...

<https://twitter.com/PressTV/status/1216245428037070849>

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 12 2020 22:00 utc | [76](#)

Escobar certainly makes a good case that the US EW duped the Iranians. It has the ring of truth.

Posted by: casey | Jan 12 2020 22:37 utc | [77](#)

new rule: any of the concern trolls shedding opportunistic tears over this flight must provide proof that they at some point expressed similar concern toward iranians killed by US sanctions. otherwise they can fetch me a steaming hot mug of STFU.

also: if this had been the US military we'd see a presidential [pardon](#) (or [medal](#)) within days.

Posted by: the pair | Jan 12 2020 22:38 utc | [78](#)

lol @ 78... therein lies the difference... exactly... that is another way to tell who is who here..

Posted by: james | Jan 12 2020 22:43 utc | [79](#)

I agree with B's analysis.

It is most important to stress that the UA flight deviated from the specified exit route by nearly 30 degrees, and according to the tracks I've seen, was actually in a starboard hand turn at an altitude of 8000 ft ~ 2500 meters.

The plane would have stopped accelerating and gaining altitude due to the turn.

As stated by others, the transponder stopped transmitting 30 seconds prior to shoot down, while the plane continued to turn and consequently entered the field of view of the AA system... It's important to consider the fact the environment is cluttered with tall buildings, and the plane was at low altitude ~ 2500 meters, and was maneuvering.... turning...

By the time the AA complex saw it, the plane was in a location prohibited to commercial air traffic, not climbing, and inbound, with no normal commercial transponder signal emitted, and had been thus for a very long time, ie: from the time it appeared on his scope until he fired, and until his missile downed it.

There are those who cannot accept this version of events....

Yet... seemingly they don't want to accept that Quassem Soleimani traveled to Baghdad with his entourage at the express invitation of the Iraqi PM for the purpose of bringing Tehran's reply to a missive originating from Riyadh proposing a rapprochement between the two countries. Ie; Soleimani was on a diplomatic mission of peace, and it's likely a foregone conclusion the US knew it, because they initiated the discourse.

This event together with the attempted / completed assassination of other key

Resistance Leaders that very day, was a pre-planned assault on the Resistance, for the benefit of Israel, in which the niceties of Iraqi sovereignty and diplomatic immunity were rubbished.

What I don't understand is why Iran did not choose to destroy KSA - GCC oil production - shipping infrastructure during that same attack, given it's likely they were complicit in the setup of Soleimani to be murdered. BECAUSE had they done so.... nearly 12 mm BBl / day of production would have been trashed..... making sequestration of Iranian oil production.... suicide for the economies of Asia.....

Which the US could not have interdicted.....

INDY

Posted by: [Dr. George W Oprisko](#) | Jan 12 2020 22:45 utc | [80](#)

THE SIMPLE EXPLANATION

There is a lot of [misinformation](#) around on why PS752 was targeted. There was nothing special in the flight path of PS752. The transponder was turned off when the first missile hit and destroyed the cockpit.

The Iranian mistake can be explained very simply: The IRGC failed to state publicly that they had issued Alert Level 3 ie. "the airspace IS CLOSED and anything that moves will be shot down." A military does not need to ask a civilian government for permission to close an airspace. If they can go to Alert Level 3 without political approval they can damned well close the airspace. All that is need is a phone call to the airport and no planes will take off or land.

Military and civilian systems do not communicate. They are simply not designed to operate in the same airspace at the same time. Transponder signals are picked up by "secondary radar". In civilian air control this is a separate rotating radar antenna that picks up the transponder responses on a different frequency. The two signals are combined in a civilian air control radar screen.

Military systems only have a primary radar. They do pick up IFF responses on the same wavelength but these are different from the civilian transponder signals. A Tor radar operator would see all civilian traffic as enemies.

Posted by: [Petri Krohn](#) | Jan 12 2020 23:03 utc | [81](#)

Its not a real protest until you see several million on the streets on the streets of Teheran.

I know I was right in that crowd in 1979,swept along from the Shah Yad.

A Irani friend got me to the Swiss Embassy gate right after the US Embassy was overrun and the SAVAK hidden inside had been torn to pieces by the crowd.

Some years later I found out the CIA contingent had been removed from the embassy days before, after the CIA had put the SAVAK inside it.Only the CIA would gain by letting the Souk know they were hidden inside, that staff didn't suffer the same fate was pure happenstance and extreme bravery by the revolutionary guards.

There is very much another side to the hostage saga.One never told,

Posted by: winston2 | Jan 12 2020 23:04 utc | [82](#)

As for EW, Iran has [admitted](#) that it boosted its retaliatory missiles strikes with Electronic Warfare to bring down the American drones hovering above the base.

This certainly introduces an element that we might want to explore further in the footsteps of Escobar. Source: Farsnews, not necessarily accepted as a reliable source.

Posted by: Jonathan W | Jan 12 2020 23:13 utc | [83](#)

For me, 3 days is a reasonable time to prepare a statement. Denying the US version in the meantime is an acceptable tactic. There would be a cut out between those responsible for the initial denials and those who might have a clear idea what actually happened.

There is an assumption that you can ask questions down the line in Iran and get immediate answers with no stalling despite the embarrassment. I think that would be an unfair assumption of any army, especially any army where punishment might be meted out.

Posted by: Michael Droy | Jan 12 2020 23:19 utc | [84](#)

@34 @54:

That flightradar24 simulation appears to show the flight beyond [what is presented by flightradar24 here](#).

I don't really understand why they differ because it is from the same website/company. Why does one simulation have more data than another?

In addition, I don't see the more pronounced turning that the IRGC demonstration has - until the last second when it jerks to the right and then back to the left (maybe cause by impact of the missile?).

!!

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jan 12 2020 23:28 utc | [85](#)

@ posted by: brian | Jan 12 2020 21:25 utc | 69

what a stupid idea...Iran isnt USrael

Got a better idea (other than "shit happens") why the civilian airspace wasn't closed?

It wasn't closed for a reason!

Posted by: Carciofi | Jan 12 2020 23:29 utc | [86](#)

Jonathan W @83:

As for EW, Iran has admitted that it boosted its retaliatory missiles strikes with Electronic Warfare

I already included this possibility in my post.

!!

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jan 12 2020 23:30 utc | [87](#)

@ posted by: Petri Krohn | Jan 12 2020 23:03 utc | 81
From the link you posted:

“This is not the first time that, due to direct US actions, civilian aircraft are

displayed as military, and military as civilian. It is very unlikely that Iranian air defense could not distinguish a civilian airliner from a military aircraft. ”, - the expert notes.

Please explain.

Posted by: evilempire | Jan 12 2020 23:41 utc | [89](#)

Possibilities (not meant to be exhaustive):

1. Accidental shoot-down by Iran

This is the best explanation right now. Iran has admitted to the shoot-down and they may have used EW before firing the missile.

2. Purposeful shoot-down by Iran

But why would Iran play into USA narrative that it is a "terrorist nation"?

To kill spies that were leaving? I'm skeptical that they would kill so many innocents to get a few spies.

3. Purposeful disruption by USA to cause a shoot-down by Iraq

USA has EW capabilities - but how could USA EW be implemented so far within Iran territory without detection? Computer hacking might be more likely.

4. A device on board the plane?

This comes to mind because of the ownership of the plane (Kolomoisky) and because I read that the underside of the pilot's cabin is missing. Would the missile have destroyed it so completely?

Could the plane have been under remote control when it turned toward the Iranian base? If so, blowing out the underside of the pilot's cabin might be a way of destroying evidence of a control device.

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Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jan 12 2020 23:49 utc | [90](#)

Can you really call this a mistake?

The incident was one of the many likely consequences, anticipated by the US, of putting Iran under constant pressure with sudden and unexpected bursts of direct attacks-bombings, assassinations etc.

These tactics are well within the range of measures used in 'color revolutions'. They are designed to engage the opponent in order to tempt him to risk killing civilians in a crossfire.

Hence the Maidan snipers who successfully dragged the police into a gun battle-by killing policemen- in which civilians were killed. The entire outcome of the Maidan depended on the use of that tactic. Had those snipers not provoked a 'massacre' (and contributed to it by killing demonstrators as well as policemen) the agreement made the previous day would have gone into effect, there would have been elections and the unpopular fascist thugs would not have got into power. Thousands now dead-mostly in the Donbas and Odessa- would still be living.

The point is that the US is trying to cause accidents, trying to bring the Iranian government into disrepute, trying to shift the entire question into one on the field of propaganda which is the last arena in which the US is still hegemonic.

This was no accident. Nor was it an unintended consequence of Iran defending itself. It was a dream come true for Washington. The best outcome they dared hope for.

Decent people and those personally afflicted by this tragedy should understand that.

And we should understand that while for ordinary people this was a terrible tragedy, for the likes of Freeland, Pompeo, Bojo, Trump, Trudeau and Netanyahu this is the occasion for high fives all round the situation room.

Posted by: bevin | Jan 12 2020 23:49 utc | [91](#)

@Carciofi Why wasn't the Iranian airspace closed? That is a good question. IRGC asked for it but it was declined by the government. One reason might be that the government wanted a human shield against American attacks and if an accident happens Trump would get the blame and he would look real bad in front of world opinion. Another reason might be there was a "save face" agreement (US let the Iranians save face by tolerating a "proportionate" Iranian retaliation against US bases without victims, USA would in response not retaliate) between Iranian and US government and this agreement was not communicated back to IGRC who were on high alert and were expecting a cruise missile any time. I think the Americans lured the IRGC into a trap, USA did not retaliate, but they did interfere with IRGC communication lines and radar (hacking,jamming), this electronic interference pushed the IRGC into making a fatal mistake, the Americans were expecting a possible accident might happen, they had banned their airliners from flying over Iraq and Iran.

Posted by: dave | Jan 12 2020 23:53 utc | [92](#)

I agree with the author's observations that the Iranian missile attack on the civilian airliner was not the fault of the mobile missile unit's operators. And I applaud the Iranian military for admitting to being the direct cause of such a tragedy.

However, the Iranian military command had to have known that the missile unit in question had unreliable communication abilities that left it open to committing such a mistake when Iranian authorities allowed their major airport to continue operations under such high-alert conditions. As a result, these authorities had to make one of two decisions; ensure that such missile units would not fire unless they had direct confirmation from a commander in the more sophisticated integrated network that would have been more than likely to have had more thorough knowledge of the situation in the air or barring this, close the airport until tensions had been reduced.

It is all very well and good to blame the "fog of war" for such a situation as it should be. Nonetheless, Iranian authorities had to know that by keeping the airport open they were taking a very dangerous risk with their lesser modern defense systems as we have seen.

Under such circumstances it is better to err on the side of caution than not. And tragically, the Iranian authorities took too much of a risk without first shoring up the weaker aspects of their defensive systems.

And no doubt, had the idiot president of my nation not committed such an atrocious act of murder in Iraq, such a tragedy as happened would have been most likely averted. And no doubt, Trump could now be considered an "accessory to manslaughter" as he put in place the very conditions that caused the loss of life to 176 innocent passengers on that airliner...

Posted by: Steve Naidamast | Jan 13 2020 0:01 utc | [93](#)

As I mentioned in the last thread people should consider there may be a traitor (s)

within the IRGC who would like to see regime change. Sanctions hurt. Also, as seem in the West elites live far netter with a neoliberal government. Thats why the Soviet party elite disposed of socialism and Chinas party elite did the same in all but name. see this as a sign Iran is fragmenting from within. Maybe Qassem Soleimani was the glue holding the various factions within the military together. The unravelling may be beginning. That was probably the main reason for the assassination

Posted by: Pft | Jan 13 2020 0:02 utc | [94](#)

@pos. The reconstruction in this Medium [article](#) relies on the video posted on Bellingcat and later verified by the NYT and AP (somebody said it was first sent to a Saudi station). Therefore, based on Bellingcat's geolocation, it suggests the missile we see was flying from west to east. Yet, the Revolutionary Guard showed a map in which the missile came from the north, which suggests 1) that the camera must have been facing east and 2) that the plane had already started turning right to the north. Secondly, I cannot figure out how they know that the man who filmed the video was called Mr Ghraeb.

Posted by: Jonathan W | Jan 13 2020 0:06 utc | [95](#)

@Pft You are right i think there are traitors within IRGC and the Iranian ruling elite. I do know there are 2 factions within the ruling elite fighting each other: the radicals and the conservatives. The radicals (IRGC are one of them) want to export their "revolution", the conservatives want to contain their revolution within their own country, it is like Stalin (nationalist) vs Trotsky (globalist). Because of sanctions the radicals are losing ground to the conservatives who want to get rid of the sanctions and only care about their own country.

Posted by: dave | Jan 13 2020 0:08 utc | [96](#)

A better title for this post would be: "Was The Shootdown Of The Ukrainian Airplane Near Tehran Intended, A Screw-Up, Or A Provocation?"

Most of the world--including the agenda-setting media of the West/Anglophone nations--believe either of the first two options: a mistaken or even deliberate shoot-down by Iranian air defenses.

There is, however, a third possibility: this shoot-down was a provocation instigated by the USA and allies like Israel in which Iranian air defenses were compromised or deliberately baited into shooting Ukrainian flight PS752.

Yes, many mainstream people, media, institutions will dismiss this idea as conspiracy theory.

But this third possibility deserves consideration.

There are likely examples of provocations or even false flag attacks involving the use of civilian airliners, notably MH17, KAL 007, and September 11th.

Posted by: ak74 | Jan 13 2020 0:13 utc | [98](#)

@Pft It is the same thing as when Fidel Castro (nationalist) abandoned Che Guevara (globalist), result was Che got killed. Solaymani was a globalist too.

Posted by: dave | Jan 13 2020 0:14 utc | [99](#)

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 13 2020 0:09 utc | 97

Journalist Masih Alinejad received over \$305k in US government contracts.

That important context is missing when she is regularly quoted and interviewed in the mainstream media parroting Trump admin talking points about the Soleimani assassination.

<https://twitter.com/EliClifton/status/1214342478071042049>

Posted by: Sasha | Jan 13 2020 0:14 utc | [100](#)