As the wreckage of Malaysian flight MH-17 laid scattered in eastern Ukraine, and many days before the first investigators even arrived on scene, the US had already blamed Russia and separatists it accused of aiding for the tragic downing of the passenger plane and the loss of all 298 people on board.

It would be a July 31, 2014 article by the BBC titled, "Ukraine MH17: Forensic scientists reach jet crash site," nearly 2 weeks after the aircraft's downing that would announce the arrival of forensic scientists at the crash site. Yet as early as July 21, more than a week before investigators arrived, Newsweek in its article, "U.S. Report Outlines Evidence That Rebels Downed Flight MH17," was already claiming:

*The U.S. State Department has outlined the evidence behind its assertion that Russia-backed separatists are responsible for the missile strike that downed Malaysia Airlines flight MH-17. In a statement posted on the website of the U.S. embassy to Ukraine, it said the flight was "likely downed by a SA-11 surface-to-air missile from separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine."

The assertions made within the report were a summary of accusations the US leveled against Russia even earlier still.
An Australia's ABC would report a day before the investigators' arrival in eastern Ukraine that the US and EU had already leveled additional sanctions against Russia, spurred on by US accusations regarding MH-17.

The article, "MH17: US and EU to impose broad sanctions on Russia over support for Ukraine rebels; fighting keeps investigators from Malaysia Airlines crash site," would note:

*The measures mark the start of a new phase in the biggest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the Cold War, which worsened dramatically after the downing of MH17 over rebel-held territory on July 17. German chancellor Angela Merkel, who had been reluctant to step up sanctions before the crash because of her country's trade links with Russia, said the EU measures were "unavoidable".*

Washington's accusations and its rush to leverage their impact on public and political circles at the time to pass further sanctions against Russia fits a pattern not of an impartial investigation or search for truth, but a cynical propaganda campaign carried out at the expense of both.

**A Familiar Lack of Evidence...**

The subsequent Joint Investigation Team (JIT) assembled to supposedly ascertain the truth behind the airliner's downing included among its member states, Ukraine. As others have pointed out, Ukraine was and still is a prime suspect.

Ukraine's decision not to close airspace over contested areas where military aircraft were already being shot down alone makes Kiev at least partially culpable for the loss of MH-17.

Expectations of honesty and cooperation from Kiev (berated by even its Western sponsors as being corrupt, abusive and inept) are unrealistic and their inclusion within the JIT undermines its credibility and any conclusion they reach, especially if that conclusion lacks substantial evidence to support it.

The fact that no convincing evidence has been produced by either the JIT or the nations using it as a vehicle to target Russia years after the incident and that the JIT itself cited "social media" as an "important part of the investigation," further illustrates the political motivations of the team.

Mentioning the use of "social media" as evidence points toward NATO-backed propaganda platforms like "Bellingcat" which, again, represent "investigators" and "experts" on the payroll of and working with potential suspects in the downing of MH-17 itself.

If it would be unreasonable to place Russia at the center of such an investigation, it is likewise unreasonable to place those who benefit most from Russia being found "guilty" at the center of it as well.

**...And a Familiar Lack of Motivation**

Russia and any separatists it was backing in eastern Ukraine at the time had nothing to gain by shooting down a civilian airliner. At best, if separatists did launch the missile that allegedly brought down MH-17, it would have been an accident with Ukrainian military aircraft undoubtedly their intended target.

Conversely, the US and its allies had everything to gain by either allowing a civilian airliner to stray over territory knowingly putting it at risk, or shooting it down themselves as part of a false flag operation.

It is already admitted fact, even across the Western media that Ukraine failed to close airspace over eastern Ukraine. This is despite Ukraine losing several military aircraft to separatist air defenses in the weeks leading up to MH-17’s downing.

The BBC just days before the MH-17 downing would report in their July 14, 2014 article, "Ukraine military plane shot down as fighting rages," that:

*A Ukrainian military transport aircraft has been shot down in the east, amid fighting with pro-Russian separatist rebels, Ukrainian officials say.*

Despite this incident and others like it leading up to the loss of MH-17, Kiev has claimed it did not believe civilian airliners would be at risk.
A Reuters article titled, "Ukraine defends not closing airspace where MH17 shot down," would claim:

Ukraine on Tuesday defended its decision not to close airspace in the east of the country where a Malaysian passenger plane was shot down, saying it was unaware that anti-aircraft weapons were being used in the area and that planes could be under threat.

How the JIT is moving forward with a "trial" implicating Russia while Kiev's overt negligence remains not only unpunished, but now unmentioned, further illustrates the politically motivated nature of the JIT and the nations involved.

It should be noted however that Malaysia, a member of the JIT, has (to say the least) expressed skepticism over the JIT's latest move to begin trials implicating Russia and Ukrainian separatists.

Malaysia's PM Doubts the JIT's Credibility

The BBC in its article, "MH17 crash: Malaysia PM Mahathir denounces murder charges," would note:

A day after the MH17 plane crash inquiry team announced murder charges against four men, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has condemned the decision as "ridiculous".

The article also noted:

"From the very beginning it became a political issue on how to accuse Russia of wrongdoing," Mr Mahathir said.

Of course, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is absolutely correct. As we've seen, the US and its allies accused Russia of MH-17's downing before any investigation began, let alone any evidence was in hand. The conclusion was reached as MH-17's wreckage still smoldered.

For the JIT, the Truth Doesn't Matter, Just People's Perception of it

If it is possible that Russia or separatists mistakenly identified MH-17 as a Ukrainian military aircraft (the only possible explanation if Russia or separatists were responsible) it was only because Ukraine itself intentionally left dangerous airspace its own military aircraft were being shot out of open to invite just such a disaster. They did so with every intention to politically exploit any potential tragedy to target Russia. It is also possible that Ukraine and its US-NATO sponsors took advantage of their strategic losses on the ground and the growing tempo of lost military aircraft overhead by shooting down MH-17 themselves, also meaning that even before MH-17's downing, they fully intended to frame Russia. The entire "Skripal affair" follows the same pattern, complete with a crime blamed on Russia but lacking any conceivable motivation for Moscow to have carried it out. In fact, in both cases, either with the downing of a civilian aircraft at the height of separatist victories in eastern Ukraine or the alleged poisoning of the Skripals on British soil at the onset of the Russian-hosted World Cup, only Washington and London had anything to gain from either crime. The immediate accusations made before investigations even began and the politically motivated nature of the investigations that followed, along with their predictable lack of evidence and their equally predictable conclusions only adds insult to injury for the victims of MH-17 and any notions of actual justice. The truth and justice have been openly turned into pawns to the point of the Malaysian prime minister himself, whose nation is on the JIT, calling out this politically motivated circus for what it is. We may never know what really happened on July 17, 2014 over eastern Ukraine because those with the power to find out have already long since decided the truth doesn't matter. What matters is only how manipulating public perception regarding that day's events benefits them politically, strategically and geopolitically. With the JIT's "trials" set to begin, their charges and trials will be cited as "evidence" Russia did it, rather than any actual evidence proving it did. This leaves us with another example of the West's so-called rules-based international order and maybe gives us a little more insight into why so many have lost faith in it or why it is no longer sustainable. We have to wonder though, do the people in Washington, London or Brussels stop and think about this when considering why their rules-based international order no longer inspires confidence and as it begins to fade? Gunnar Ulson, a New York-based geopolitical analyst and writer especially for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.