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Commercial Satellite Imagery Shows Russia Lied In Its Cruise Missile Assessment

David Olliver · Friday, April 14th, 2017

Duane Norman via [Free Market Shooter](#)

Recently, Free Market Shooter published a “cost-benefit” battle damage assessment (BDA), detailing whether or not the cruise missile strike was actually worth it. However, the article itself didn’t incorporate an *actual* BDA, instead relying on estimates based on both US and Russian reports.

Notably, the Russians reported that the US attack “inefficient”, claiming that only 23 of the 59 missiles hit the Shayrat Air Base in Syria:

Only 23 missiles flew to the Syrian air base and just 6 MiG-23s were destroyed there along with a radar station, spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry, Major-General Igor Konashenkov, [said at a briefing](#). Where the remaining 36 cruise missiles have landed is “unknown,” he said.

However, a quick glance over commercially available satellite imagery shows that the Konashenkov has been caught red-handed peddling some serious fiction with his statement.

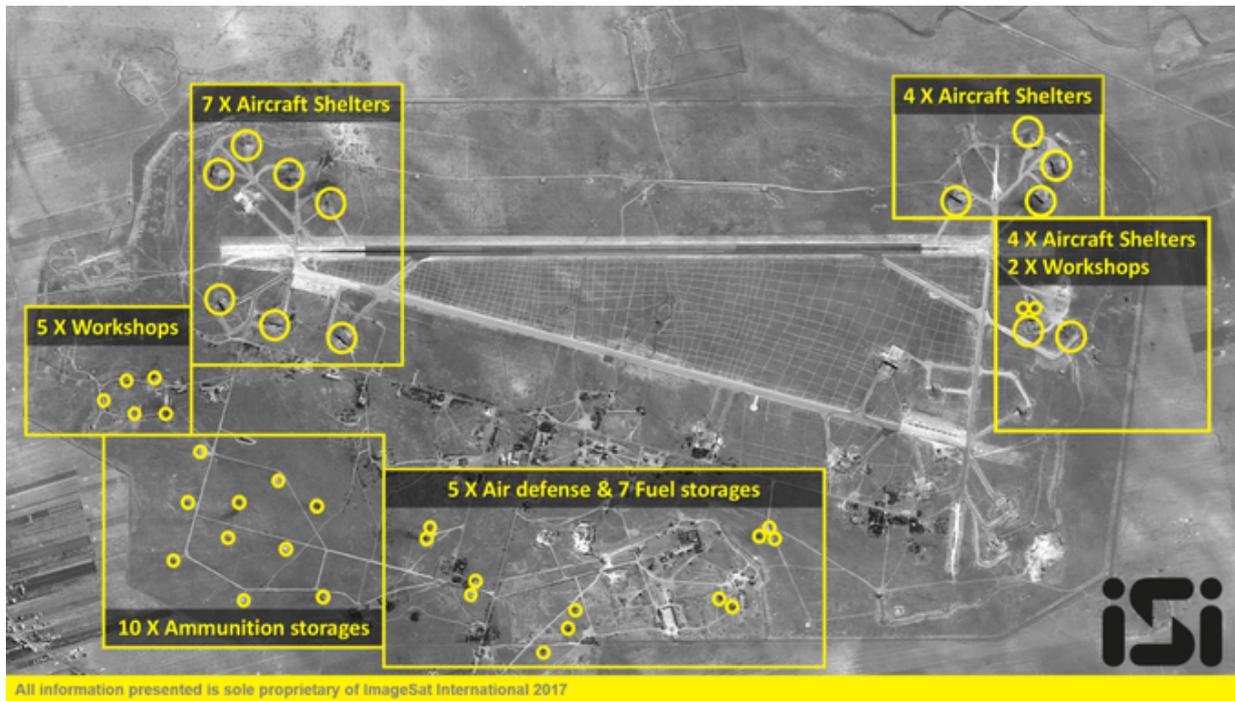


Image Sat International, which operates its own satellites, [released an article shortly after the missile strike](#) detailing the damage to the Shayrat Air Base. Even their commercially available technology directly contradicts the Russian military statement:

ISI very high resolution satellite imagery was able to reveal the results of the Tomahawk cruise missiles attack on the Al-Shayrat Air Base. According to ISI experts, the total of 44 targets hit. Several targets may have hit twice. Photo and analysis of the attack were carried out within 10 hours of the attack.

An in-depth examination of the damage to the objectives shows that 13 double hardened aircraft shelters (HAS) got 23 hits. 5 workshops got hit. The workshops are not necessarily related to WMD, but to aircraft and their ability to do maintenance and fly.

Ten ammunition storages got hit. Seven fuel reservoirs of the AFB got hit at two sites with eight hits total. Two locations remain untouched. One SA6 Battery utterly destroyed along with its radars and control systems. In total, five SA6 Battery elements hit.

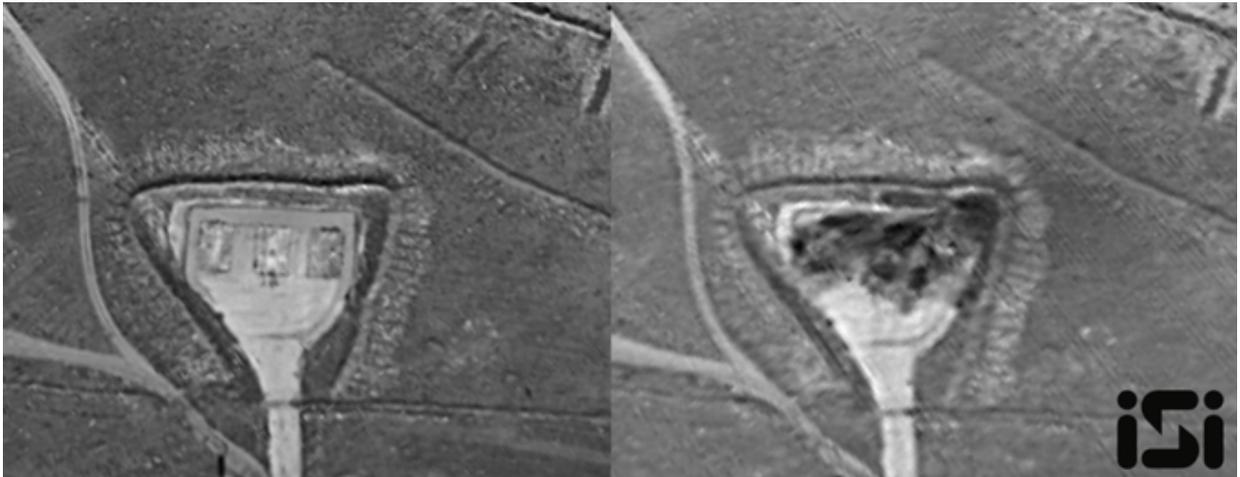
The results show that the target hits were accurate and that the Tomahawks have been used effectively against quality targets. Although 58 missiles hit the base, it seems that the overall damage to the base is limited because the warhead of the Tomahawk is not considered large and weighs about 450 kg.



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Furthermore, [according to “TJ”](#), if you review old Google Earth imagery, the Russian UAV footage of allegedly undamaged aircraft were of old aircraft that have been parked at the airbase for over a decade.

This makes it much more difficult to take the Russian military at its word when assessing the future efficacy of US military strikes. Take note, the original article published by Free Market Shooter on Monday echoed similar doubts as to the Russian’s claims:

Note that the Russians have taken issue with the US Navy claims of 59 successful Tomahawk impacts, [claiming that only 23 reached their targets](#). This is fairly difficult to believe, given how effective the Tomahawk weapons system has been over the years. It seems the Russians are echoing these claims after the US made similar (though far better founded) claims that [Russian cruise missile strikes in Syria in prior years had a high failure rate](#), making a veiled attempt to place a similar level of embarrassment upon the US Navy.

It seems that in their “veiled attempt” to embarrass the US Navy, the Russian military has only succeeded in embarrassing itself. The fact that commercial satellite imagery has so easily disproven the Russian claims is testament to the fact that modern technology has made it far more difficult for governments everywhere to blatantly lie about the facts, thinking that they can use their “trusted status” to get away with it, as they have for so many years.

Going forward, we will need to bear in mind the Russian propensity to lie about US military damage assessments in all future content. Then again... it is not as though the US DoD has always proven itself to be a trustworthy source in the past either. Fortunately, the world has more technology and sources like ISI to tell us who is lying, and when.

It all should make you wonder... who exactly *are* those [“pro-Russian rebels” operating in eastern Ukraine?](#)

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