

**Russian envoy dismisses US' charge, cites Iraq
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MH17 Russian Ambassador to Malaysia Lyudmila G Vorobyeva has dismissed claims of the United States that it has proof of Moscow's hand in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.

Vorobyeva pointed out that Washington made similar claims before, which never materialised.

"Let them show the evidence. In Iraq, the US government promised to give evidence on weapons of mass destruction possessed by (then Iraqi president) Saddam Hussein.

"We are still waiting for it," she told a press conference at the Russian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

In 2003, US invaded Iraq on the premise that the country possessed weapons of mass destruction but failed to produce any such evidence after the invasion.

Vorobyeva said Moscow did not want to blame anyone for the downing of the aircraft until the investigation is completed.

However, on a personal note, she believes that pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine were not responsible for the attack.

"I am convinced they (separatists) do not have any means to do it," she said, adding that Russia also did not provide surface-to-air missiles to the separatists.

"I am not a military expert but Buk (missile system) is a very sophisticated system and you need special training to operate it.

"The rebels do not have any Buk or the qualification to operate it," she said.

Recordings are 'fake'

Vorobyeva also dismissed the audio and video recordings which have been used to accuse the separatists of being responsible for shooting down Flight MH17 as "fake".

She cited a Russian Defence Ministry briefing earlier today that it was Ukraine which had Buk missiles in the vicinity of the Flight MH17 crash site.

Furthermore, she claimed, a Ukrainian fighter jet was detected on Russian radar to be

within a 3km-5km range of Flight MH17 during the incident.

However, Vorobyeva said, she was not insinuating that Kiev was responsible but was merely presenting "facts".

Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko has denied the allegation in an interview with CNN, insisting that all Ukrainian aircraft were on the ground when Flight MH17 was downed.

Prior to the press conference, a recording of the Russian Defence Ministry briefing on the Buk missiles was played to the journalists present.

Vorobyeva also reiterated the Russian Defence Ministry's stance that Flight MH17 had deviated from its original flight path despite MAS insistence that its aircraft was on the right track.

She said the reason for the deviation was unknown but Moscow was prepared to share this information with Malaysia.

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