

MIG Arrangement

by stephen hastings-king

Yesterday afternoon, I was puzzled about the MIG arrangement. I still am. Specifically, I am puzzled about why us internet plankton know about the MIG arrangement. Doesn't us knowing about it undermine the point of having the arrangement part of the MIG arrangement? I mean, I understand why there might be such an arrangement. But I do not understand why I know about it. I do not think it is good that I know about it and I do not think it good that you, any of you, know what I mean when I say "MIG arrangement."

I mean....and this is obvious yes?...the kind of sanctions regime "we" are rolling out isn't that far from the shooting war. Arming one of the belligerents in that shooting war (no matter what you think of that belligerent) is even less far from the shooting war. Arming one of the belligerents (no matter what etc.) by the transfer of an entire fleet of fighters, even old ones, an arming that requires the MIG arrangement, is even more less far from the shooting war. Making the fact of the MIG arrangement public while also transferring the MIGs that required the MIG arrangement would bring us even more less far than the already not very far from the shooting war that we were before the arrangement was made public. Zeno-far.

Maybe it isn't what it looks like. But I only know what it looks like.

The fact of the MIG arrangement indicates that everyone involved with the arrangement knew/knows that the situation was one of being very close to a shooting war while also not wanting a shooting war to show up. In such a situation, in order to transfer something big, a fleet of fighters for example, an arrangement like the MIG arrangement would have to be made. Because all the satellites that everyone has whizzing around overhead, seeing everything, photographing everything. All those satellites expand the range of activities that require face-saving cover.

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Come to think of it, the transfer of an entire fleet of MIGs would probably have required some face-saving cover even before there were so many satellites whizzing around overhead. But that does not matter because, now, there are so many.

The myriad other transfers of weapon systems that appear to be happening can only appear to be happening because they can be done far from the satellites' prying cameras. That is, presumably, why they are more OK than would be a fleet of MIGs, even old ones, so long as everyone is as one in not really wanting an expanded shooting war, at least not right now, even as, in some other ways, certain of the parties might be seen as operating at cross purposes. In such a situation, I would think it quite easy for everyone to pretend the myriad other transfers of smaller weapon systems aren't happening. They're smaller. They move about hidden beneath tarps on trucks or barges. In the hiding of things, a measure of respect is paid. Sensitivities are acknowledged and respected---and that makes the transfers of smaller weapon systems OK until they aren't.

But a fleet of fighters, big and shiny and fighter-shaped fighters, a whole fleet of them, a fleet of MIGs even old ones...

I understand why there had to be a MIG arrangement. But I had assumed, because Fight Club, that part of any MIG arrangement, including this one, is that no-one talks about the MIG arrangement. On reflection, I suppose it's possible that my bafflement follows from an unwarranted generalization. Maybe large-scale weapon system transfers in real life are governed by rules different from those I found out about in Fight Club or, rather, I found out about by hearing about Fight Club, because, for a while, everybody was telling everybody else about Fight Club and it went on and on to the point where I felt like I had already seen it when I hadn't. So, I never did. See Fight Club I mean.

There. I said it.

But even if the rules that govern arrangements for clandestine transfers of large-scale weapon systems in real-life surveillance-saturated geographies do not correspond point-for-point with the rules of Fight Club I still think there is something wrong about the fact everyone knows what is meant by “the MIG arrangement,” everyone to the remotest edges of internet plankton in its invisible vastness---but not because our knowing about the MIG arrangement is necessarily like our knowing about knowing the Berghain. Our knowing about the MIG arrangement might well be different from that. By the time people like me found out about the Berghain the scene had already been dead for some time. That people like me knew about it was proof. But the people who were part of that scene did not know they were already dead. They danced minimal or went upstairs Saturday nights through Sunday mornings despite having been dead for some time. Then people like me showed up outside. We knew where we were. We wanted to get in. We were older and misshapen. We were not very good dancers and wore embarrassing clothes. Of course, the doorman wouldn't let us pass. But we stood in line. We were hopeful. The damage was done. The people of the scene filed fabulously by: as they did, we could see the realization taking shape by their faces:

If these people are here, then we must already be dead.

The scene vanished into the air. The doorman too. That is how I was able to get through the doors. I saw the marvelous Funktion-One sound system. But only people like me were there. No sound pulsed through the speakers.

Q. How might knowing about the MIG arrangement resemble people like us knowing about the Berghain?

A. Maybe someone inside the Polish government opposed the MIG arrangement and announced it so as to kill it. Maybe someone got fed up with US micromanaging everything and decided to end it by exposing it. Our knowing about it via either route means the arrangement is already dead. It may not yet know it is already dead, but experience tells us that, once the realization comes, the arrangement will disappear.

Q How might knowing about the MIG arrangement differ from knowing about the Berghain?

A. Maybe someone fucked up. Maybe there is no MIG arrangement. Maybe all or none of the above. In any of these cases, our knowing about the MIG arrangement is irrelevant to the arrangement.

