

Beat: News

Obama Talks To Putin, Asks Aides For Plane Reports

MH17 Crash

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USPA NEWS - WASHINGTON (AP) "" President Barack Obama is asking his advisers to keep him updated on reports of a plane shot down over Ukraine. But the White House says it can't confirm the reports. White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Thursday that Obama spoke to Russian President Vladimir

Putin before leaving on a trip to Delaware and New York. But Earnest could not say whether it was before or after Obama was aware of reports that the plane was shot down. An adviser to Ukraine's interior minister says a passenger plane carrying 295 people was shot down near the Russian border. Malaysian Airlines said it lost contact with one of its flights over Ukrainian airspace. Earnest says Putin requested the call to discuss new sanctions imposed on Russia Wednesday. The aircraft, which other sources said was a Boeing 777 flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, came down near the city of Donetsk, stronghold of pro-Russian rebels, Anton Gerashchenko said, adding that it was hit by a ground-to-air missile.

Gerashchenko was quoted as saying: "A civilian airliner travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur has just been shot down by a Buk anti-aircraft system "1 280 passengers and 15 crew have been killed."2 Interfax-Ukraine quoted another Ukrainian official as saying the plane disappeared from radar when it was flying at 10,000 metres (33,000 feet), a typical cruising altitude for airliners. It came down at Torez, near Shakhtersk, some 40km from the Russia border. The area has been the scene of fighting between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels. Ukraine has accused Russia of taking an active role in the four-month-old conflict in recent days and accused it earlier on Thursday of shooting down a Ukrainian fighter jet "" an accusation that Moscow

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