

Poland Says Crash Probe Incomplete

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WARSAW — Russia's report into the plane crash that killed Poland's president is "incomplete" and Warsaw wants further talks with Moscow on the matter, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Thursday.

In its report, Russia's Interstate Aviation Committee put the blame for last year's crash squarely on the Polish pilots and said they had come under psychological pressure to land from Polish officials on board the plane.

Tusk, who faces elections this year, is under pressure from the right-wing main opposition party to reject Russia's report, but he does not want to upset a fragile improvement in economic and other ties with Russia.

"From the Polish point of view ... this report is incomplete," Tusk told a news conference. "We will ask the Russian side to hold talks on the final version of the report. ... If these talks fail, we may resort to international specialists."

Tusk said he accepted that the Polish side bore the main responsibility for the crash, which killed President Lech Kaczynski and 95 others.

But Warsaw also argues that Russian ground controllers and the state of infrastructure at the Smolensk airport where the crash occurred may also have contributed to the disaster.

"If I am concerned by anything, it is by the political context of Russia's investigation," said Tusk, apparently implying that Russian officials may have tried to cover up aspects of the investigation. "But there is no alternative to good Polish-Russian relations," Tusk said, his measured tone contrasting with that of some other officials.

Jaroslav Kaczynski, the late president's twin brother and leader of the opposition Law and Justice party, branded the Russian report a "joke against Poland" on Wednesday.

Earlier Thursday, the widow of Poland's air force commander Andrzej Blasik, who died in the crash, accused Moscow of slandering her husband's name by saying he had been drinking and may have contributed to the crash.

Ewa Blasik also attacked what she called the Tusk government's "passivity" and its failure to defend the honor of Polish officers.

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