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Kaczynski’s Brother Faults Russia for Jet Crash

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WARSAW — Jaroslaw Kaczynski, leader of Poland's main opposition party, said Wednesday that Russia bore the main responsibility for a plane crash in April 2010 that killed his twin brother, then Poland's president.

Kaczynski's Law and Justice Party, known for its deep distrust of Russia, presented its report into the causes of the crash that killed all 96 on board, including President Lech Kaczynski and his wife, Maria, in Smolensk.

An earlier Russian investigation put the blame solely on the Polish side, but Poland has argued that Russian ground controllers in Smolensk also inadvertently contributed to the crash, which happened while the plane was trying to land in thick fog.

"Given the weather conditions, the Russians should have closed the airport. The Polish pilots were knowingly led to their death," said Antoni Macierewicz, the main author of the report.

"A dramatic conversation between ground controllers and their headquarters, where they [the

controllers] begged for a backup airport to be granted, shows that. But their HQ refused and ordered them to land the plane," he told a news conference.

The report said Russia failed to deliver a compulsory weather forecast to the Poles and had unlawfully withdrawn all security officers designated to protect Kaczynski from the airport. It also accused Moscow of forging or hiding many documents crucial for the investigation.

"The key conclusion is that the main burden of guilt for what happened lies with the Russians, though some share of the guilt, related to the procedures after the crash, also lies on the Polish side," Kaczynski told the news conference.

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