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Russian State Duma to Probe Navalny's Poisoning for Foreign Interference

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State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

A top Russian lawmaker has ordered a probe into whether prominent Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's suspected poisoning was a "provocation" by foreign countries aimed at fueling tensions inside Russia.

State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said Monday that German Chancellor Angela Merkel and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell's statements urging investigations into the apparent poisoning "point to the underlying cause of what happened."

Related article: No Need to Investigate Navalny's 'Poisoning,' Kremlin Says

"Merkel and Borrel's subsequent statements make us look at this situation in a different light and wonder whether this is a German or another EU country's provocation designed to accuse our country of something new," Volodin said.

Volodin said he'll instruct the Duma's security committee to "analyze what happened to understand whether this was an attempt by foreign states to harm the health of a Russian citizen in order to create tensions within Russia."

The Duma is scheduled to return from summer recess on Sept. 14.

Navalny, a fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin, fell suddenly ill on a Tomsk-Moscow flight last Thursday, forcing an emergency landing in the Siberian city of Omsk.

Doctors there said they found no signs of poisoning and diagnosed Navalny with metabolic disease. The German hospital where Navalny was evacuated Saturday said its tests indicated that Russia's de facto opposition leader was poisoned.

A senior Omsk doctor has suggested that the Berlin hospital's diagnosis may be "disinformation."

Following calls from Navalny's aides and Western countries to open a criminal probe into Navalny's apparent poisoning, the Kremlin said there was no need to launch an investigation until the poisoning was "proven as fact."

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