

# Moscow Dismisses Accusations in Polish Air Crash Report

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A Russian air crash investigation body on Tuesday dismissed a Polish report saying confusing guidance by Russian air traffic controllers contributed to the 2010 crash of a Polish presidential plane.

Alexei Morozov, chief of an Interstate Aviation Committee panel that investigated the crash, insisted at a news conference that the controllers had given the crew precise guidance.

He also maintained that the airport's radar and lights were functioning normally, contrary to Polish investigators' assertions.

The accident on April 10, 2010, killed President Lech Kaczynski and 95 other people, including the first lady and dozens of senior officials. It was considered the worst Polish disaster since World War II.

Morozov and other Russian experts were responding to Friday's Polish government report that said confusing and erroneous guidance by Russian controllers at the Smolensk airport

had contributed to the crash that killed Kaczynski.

The plane crashed in heavy fog at the rudimentary airport near the western city of Smolensk, 360 kilometers southwest of Moscow.

The Polish report put a portion of blame on the Russians, but mostly blamed Polish officials and procedures. Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich, whose ministry oversaw the training of the crew of the 2010 flight, resigned last weekend.

Morozov reaffirmed his panel's conclusion that the crash occurred because the crew descended below a safe altitude in a desperate attempt to land.

Polish investigators have confirmed that the Polish air force's chief was in the cockpit shortly before the crash but said that did not play a role in the accident. Morozov on Tuesday reiterated that the Russian commission believes that the Polish official put pressure on the crew.

Morozov conceded that there were some equipment flaws and the absence of some flight parameters in the airport control room, but he insisted that played no role in the crash. "The deficiencies in the equipment had no relation to the cause of the crash," he said.

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