

Putin's Spokesman Calls Litvinenko Inquiry a 'Quasi-Investigation'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 21, 2016

The  **Moscow Times**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the British inquiry into the murder of Alexander Litvinenko — a former Federal Security Service (FSB) agent poisoned in London in 2006 — a “quasi-investigation” and said it may “poison” bilateral relations between Russia and the U.K., the Interfax news agency reported Thursday.

A report into Litvinenko's death based on a public inquiry was published earlier on Thursday. It alleged that Litvinenko was poisoned with highly toxic isotope polonium 210 by two Russians — current State Duma deputy Andrei Lugovoi and entrepreneur Dmitry Kovtun — that were “probably” acting under the instructions of the FSB, which were “probably” approved by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's Foreign Ministry deemed the inquiry “politically motivated.” The Kremlin will not

take the inquiry seriously, because it is based on “probabilities” and uses the word “probably,” according to Peskov.

“Such terms are not allowed in our legal proceedings, or the legal proceedings of other countries, and we can't perceive it as a court's verdict,” he was quoted by Interfax as saying. “Russia was hoping for cooperation with the British in investigating this case. Unfortunately, the British froze not only the cooperation, but the dialogue in other spheres, too,” Peskov added.

“These 'quasi-investigations' we are talking about today surely can poison the atmosphere of our bilateral relations even more,” he said.

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