



Smolensk Disaster Commemoration Committee

National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA

P.O. Box 481, Bensalem PA 19020

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The Committee:

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Maria Szonert-Binienda

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*„Thank You for Your
Service” Foundation*
Kraków, Poland
Lt. Karol Cierpica

Polish Cultural Foundation
Clark, NJ
Tomasz Szybowski

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

As representatives of a major Polish-American constituency, ahead of your milestone visit to Poland, we ask you and your administration to assist the Polish state in its efforts to recover from Russia the wreckage of the TU-154M presidential aircraft, which crashed in Smolensk in 2010, along with any evidence and voice recordings withheld by Russia.

Our Committee includes members of various Polish-American organizations. We speak for large sections of the Polish community that voted for you and remain hopeful about your pledges that addressed their key issues. Chief among them is your campaign promise to help recover the TU-154M wreckage. An integral part of the Committee is the Clubs of Gazeta Polska, a prominent community movement in Poland and around the world including the US – advocating a complete, objective examination of the Smolensk disaster belongs to its principles. We reach out to you once more in this matter. We feel encouraged that you appreciate the growing importance of Poland as an ally, and that your administration shows a strong resolve demonstrated by recent American military involvement in spite of opposition from Russia.

A comprehensive and unobstructed examination of the Smolensk crash and the circumstances surrounding it is one of the most important issues for Poland and the Polish people. The current Polish government appointed a new committee in February 2016 to conduct a proper investigation. Findings of the governmental committee released this past April as well prior scientific conferences on the Smolensk crash disproved the official Russian report from 2011. Collected evidence and data have shown that the Smolensk air control had given wrong guidance to the pilots, there was a series of critical engine related technical failures in the final seconds of the flight, the airplane began to disintegrate in air before it hit the ground, and it had no contact with the infamous birch tree which had been cited by Russia as the primary cause of the crash.

A recent, important development is that the latest findings have forced the Russian side to change its account presented in the Interstate Aviation Committee's report. In early June of this year, the Russian commission chair, Alexei Morozov, admitted for the first time that a number of engine related system failures onboard the presidential aircraft preceded the crash, and that the aircraft began to disintegrate in the air.

However, Russia remains uncooperative and continues to withhold key evidence including the wreckage, against international agreements. Poland asks for assistance in obtaining access to this evidence and in reclaiming its property.

An apparent attempt by Russian President Vladimir Putin to implicate late President Lech Kaczynski, and to create a false narrative in order to attack the credibility of the Polish state, highlights the urgency of this issue. At his annual press conference in December 2016, President Putin maintained that the wreckage will not be returned in the near future, citing a vague continuing Russian investigation as an excuse. In addition, he



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talked about a nonexistent, purported cockpit conversation, contradictory to what has been determined about the crash, insinuating that President Kaczynski's staff pressured the pilots to land. Furthermore, recent exhumations of the Smolensk disaster victims - ordered just last year due to a prior unwarranted arrangement not to examine the bodies sealed in coffins in Russia - have revealed an appalling treatment of the dead in Moscow, including wrong identities, mixed up major body parts of different persons, or bodies placed in disposal bags along with pieces of trash and debris.

Withholding of the wreckage by Russia violates international regulations since Russia had already published its report in 2011, and President Putin sees no need for further investigation. We fear that the Russian side is attempting to discredit the renewed Polish investigation, which has progressively revealed new facts and findings on the Smolensk disaster and its aftermath. Russian government's activities resemble the manipulation of public opinion that followed the massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn forest in the 1940s. Also, the Smolensk disaster falls in a sequence of hostile actions by Russia towards its neighbors, preceded by the aggression on Georgia and followed by one against Ukraine.

The Polish people are thankful for your promise to help recover the remains of the presidential airplane as well as for the diplomatic effort and inter-governmental discussions since 2016 on this subject. They are placing a lot of trust in your administration. As Polish-Americans, we ask the United States to take an active role on this very important matter for Poland, for European security, and for the American relationship with Poland and other NATO partners. We hope your administration will put pressure on Russia to abide by the rules of the international community.

Sincerely,

Tadeusz Antoniak,
Chairman - the Smolensk Disaster Commemoration Committee, in the name of the Committee and its member organizations

Maciej Rusinski,
Coordinator for the Clubs of Gazeta Polska in the United States and Canada