

**From:** Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>

**To:** [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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These conspiracy theories are an aberration and an insult to the memory of the crash victims, including the late President himself. As a Pole who *is* at least somewhat aware of the politics and economics of Poland, and a journalist who follows world politics and news developments daily, I am severely disappointed at the number of people that are flocking to these conspiracy theories, and academics and professionals who propagate such ideas should themselves feel ashamed.

Firstly, there is absolutely no proof that there was any sabotage or subterfuge by *either* the Russians *or* the Prime Minister's political allies. Such accusations, then, without presenting any credible evidence, are slanderous.

Also, there would be no political or diplomatic capital gained by either of the "accused"... there would be little for the Russian government to gain - it would be a huge diplomatic embarrassment for the Russian government to be found guilty of essentially assassinating a head of state. Kaczynski was one of the strongest allies of the U.S. among European leaders, and even Russia with its assertive diplomatic policies would not risk a complete breakdown with the U.S. by killing a close ally. International condemnation would also follow, and the President - perhaps even the Prime Minister - would have to resign and wave good-bye to any political career in the foreseeable future. Yes, "even in Russia."

Similarly, for the Prime Minister's party, if he were actually complicit in the crash, that would mean he - or his allies - committed a coup d'etat. Also, there will be early presidential elections in June, which might actually go in favor of the President's party because of a sympathy vote. The "acting" Presidency is in the hands of his party for only two months... so, again, the Prime Minister and his allies have nothing to gain and potentially everything to lose in the June vote.

### **Conspiracy-monging cheapens a national tragedy**

Political profit or loss questions aside, however, the conspiracy-monging seems to be taken as a way to discover who's responsible for the tragedy and thus somehow bring them justice. However, it is not a healthy way to deal with the tragedy. It is not conducive to national or personal healing. Furthermore, it disgraces and taints the memory of those who died.

It only cheapens the tragedy and, sadly, may foreshadow what's to come in the coming presidential campaign - the tragedy may be used by certain groups or individuals to propagate their own agenda and assume the presidency.

It is not so different than what has been going on in the U.S., with the "birthers" claiming Barack Obama is not legally the President because he is not actually a citizen, or even natural-born citizen. Not as morbid, of course, but still, in my honest opinion, ridiculous.

Baseless, nonsensical conspiracies simply destroys the ability of the nation and people of Poland to move on and honor the memory of those lost, and cheapens the tragedy that has been felt by Poles as far away as Chicago as well, and commented on with deep sorrow and respect by U.S. politicians from Mayor Daley to President Obama himself.

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