

Tire Blamed in Mexico Crash

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MEXICO CITY, May 22 — A fire caused by the explosion of a tire in the landing gear was the cause of the crash March 31 of a Mexicana Airlines Boeing 727 in central Mexico, which killed all 167 people aboard, the Mexican Government said tonight.

An announcement by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications said a seven-week investigation by a team of Mexican aviation experts had ruled out the possibility that explosives had caused the accident.

The ministry said a tire blowout, which occurred 14 minutes after the

flight left Mexico City en route to Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlán and Los Angeles, ruptured fuel, hydraulic and electrical lines and air conditioning ducts that passed near the wheel well.

Sufficient heat was present in the wheel well to ignite the jet fuel that apparently was pouring out of the ruptured fuel lines, it said.

The ministry said there have been such tire explosions before, but that this was the first to cause a fatal crash.

The investigators said there were indications the explosion was caused by overheating of brakes.