

# Controversy over History of World War II. Russia Marks 75 Years, Military Parade

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*The world celebrates the year 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism during the World War II. For the first time in history, Russia postponed its military parade traditionally held on Moscow's Red Square on May 9 due to the coronavirus pandemic. As the pandemic subsides, Russia will now mark this historical event on June 24 as decreed by President Vladimir Putin.*

For Russia, the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War is unique and has its historical importance and therefore must necessarily be commemorated.

The Head of State explained he had chosen this date because June 24 was the day when in 1945 the legendary historic parade of victors took place, when soldiers, who fought for Moscow and defended Leningrad, who stood their ground for Stalingrad, liberated Europe and stormed Berlin, marched on Red Square, and provincial cities throughout the Russian Federation.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** told President Putin's meeting with permanent members of the National Security Council that 12 leaders had confirmed they would attend the event in Moscow.

"We confirmed that all invitations are still active for all those invited to the parade [initially] planned for May 9. We already received confirmations from 12 heads of state, most of whom are [heads] from the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]," Lavrov informed during the video link.

While contributing to the discussion, Putin further noted that the pandemic had made substantial adjustments to preparations for that event, including the work with foreign colleagues.

"We certainly need to ensure the full safety of our guests," Putin said.

**Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu** assured the meeting with the permanent members of the National Security Council: "Everything is definitely ready for the parade." During preparations ahead of the parade, "all people were tested and all medical measures taken," he added.

The Victory Parade on Moscow's Red Square on June 24 will bring Russian troops for the parade, a mechanized column and flyover of military jet fighters and host military

demonstrations of its strength and artillery firework displays. The same form of activities are expected in the regions throughout the Russian Federation.

For the Moscow parade, only part of the details were made public by the Defense Ministry.

“The mechanized column comprised 232 modern and advanced weapon systems, including 20 items of military hardware will take part in the military parade for the first time,” the Defense Ministry said on its website.

Over the years, there has been some controversy about the war history. The evolutionary and development processes of the war are in public reference libraries, and are available for any analytical research. According to Russian officials, Europe and the United States have, in the past, attempted to erase or distort the history of the World War. Understanding the evolution, the concepts and consequences, prompted Putin to pen an article that aims at straightening the historical records.

Russian news agencies reported that President Putin has written an article about World War II, could be published before the Victory Parade on June 24. He first revealed his plans to write this article about the developments of the war during his annual end-of-year news conference in December 2019. His article is based on archive materials. The president has been mentioning these developments, including the so-called Munich Betrayal, or Munich Agreement, and the role of individual European states, Poland in particular, in many of his speeches. Putin has repeatedly stressed the inadmissibility to falsify the history of WW II.

Quite recently, Russia’s State Duma Chairman, **Viacheslav Volodin**, also noted that denying the role of the USSR in the common Victory in some states is inappropriate and it is important to transfer historical memory and truth to children and grandchildren.

“We should do everything to protect those who are no longer able to protect themselves, but they gave us the opportunity to live,” said the Chairman at the meeting of the CSTO PA Council and added “we should do everything to ensure that the attitude to Victory, to World War II, is based on the principles of honesty and objectivity.”

“We should not stand to see defamation of memory of the victorious soldiers,” said Volodin and stressed that it is necessary to protect those who are no longer able to protect themselves – 27 million people who died: our grandfathers, great-grandfathers, relatives.

“We should ensure that no one undermines the contribution of the Soviet Union to the Great Victory, a country with many nationalities, a country that had united all of us. We should do everything possible to prevent such war, but at the same time to respect history and not let anyone rewrite it,” he concluded.

Deputy Foreign Minister and Special Presidential Representative for the Middle East and Africa, **Mikhail Bogdanov**, gave an interview to the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, published on June 9. In this interview, Bogdanov explicitly noted that the current tendencies to revise history are alarming.

“We have been seeing this cynical historical aggression for years, unleashed

by certain groups abroad. Undoubtedly, this is done for political and opportunistic purposes – they are launching campaigns to rewrite history and demonize the Soviet Union’s and the Red Army’s actions before World War II, during the war and after it ended. Certain countries’ attacks on the monuments and memorials erected earlier as a tribute to those who fought against Nazism and fascism look especially cynical,” he told the Al-Ahram.

He further said that Russia is confident that all countries, as heirs of the Great Victory, have a duty to preserve the truth about the events of that period of time that happened in the European, Asian and African theatres of war, paying tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the triumph of the ideals of humanity.

In line with efforts at the United Nations to combat the glorification of Nazism and the distortion of history, Russia annually submits to the UN General Assembly the resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

An official statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization on the 75th Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War also condemned various attempts to the distortion of history.

“It is with deepest gratitude that we remember the courage and valiance of all those who gave their lives for the freedom of future generations. Any distortion of the historical truth about those events demeans the memory of those who had suffered the cruelty of the war. Any attempts to rewrite history and misinterpretation of the events that had led to the world war are hindering the awareness of and response to the challenges and threats facing all of us and are fraught with a repetition of the tragic mistakes made in the past,” according to a document released on May 26.

The document was signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Tajikistan.

For the CSTO member states, this is a special commemorative date of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of the peoples of the Soviet Union, whose contribution became decisive in the outcome of the entire World War II. The deed in a war that claimed the lives of more than twenty-seven million will forever remain in memory. Diminishing the significance of their deed is unacceptable.

Being conscious of the enormous debt owed to the fallen in the fight against Nazism and its victims, following on the principles of protecting historical truth, the provisions of international legal acts adopted after World War II, and urged the parliaments of the member states of the Council of Europe to take following measures at the legislative level:

- to counteract the revival and encouragement of Nazism and its manifestations in modern Europe;
- to protect the historical truth about World War II, to combat attempts to revise its results, to diminish the decisive role of the peoples of the Soviet Union in the Victory;
- to prevent the desecration of graves of participants in the fight against Nazism and military burial places, vandalism against monuments to Soviet soldiers-

liberators, harassing of veterans, trampling the honor of those who died and were tortured to death in extermination camps;

- to stop any attempt to justify the Nazis and their accomplices who committed the most serious crimes during World War II, the actions of their followers, the denial or distortion of the decisions of the International Military Tribunal in relation to the prosecution and punishment of the main war criminals of the European Axis Alliance.

The consolidation of the entire international community is crucial for counteracting the resurgence of Nazism. It is the common duty to preserve the memory of the Great Victory, that unites all people who defeated Nazism together. It is important to honor the memory of those without whom the Victory would have been impossible, who gave their lives in the name of the freedom of people and for the sake of the future.

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