

Transcript of Russia's President Vladimir Putin's V-Day Speech: 70th Anniversary of "Victory in the Great Patriotic War"

Today, when we mark this sacred anniversary, we once again appreciate the enormous scale of Victory over Nazism. We are proud that it was our fathers and grandfathers who succeeded in prevailing over, smashing and destroying that dark force.

Hitler's reckless adventure became a tough lesson for the entire world community. At that time, in the 1930s, the enlightened Europe failed to see the deadly threat in the Nazi ideology.

Today, seventy years later, the history calls again to our wisdom and vigilance. We must not forget that the ideas of racial supremacy and exclusiveness had provoked the bloodiest war ever. The war affected almost 80 percent of the world population. Many European nations were enslaved and occupied.

The Soviet Union bore the brunt of the enemy's attacks. The elite Nazi forces were brought to bear on it. All their military power was concentrated against it. And all major decisive battles of World War II, in terms of military power and equipment involved, had been waged there.

And it is no surprise that it was the Red Army that, by taking Berlin in a crushing attack, hit the final blow to Hitler's Germany finishing the war.

Our entire multi-ethnic nation rose to fight for our Motherland's freedom. Everyone bore the severe burden of the war. Together, our people made an immortal exploit to save the country. They predetermined the outcome of World War II. They liberated European nations from the Nazis.

Veterans of the Great Patriotic War, wherever they live today, should know that here, in Russia, we highly value their fortitude, courage and dedication to frontline brotherhood.

Dear friends,

The Great Victory will always remain a heroic pinnacle in the history of our country. But we also pay tribute to our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition.

We are grateful to the peoples of Great Britain, France and the United States of America for their contribution to the Victory. We are thankful to the anti-fascists of various countries who selflessly fought the enemy as guerrillas and members of the underground resistance, including in Germany itself.

We remember the historical meeting on the Elbe, and the trust and unity that became our common legacy and an example of unification of peoples – for the sake of peace and stability.

It is precisely these values that became the foundation of the post-war world order. The United Nations came into existence. And the system of the modern international law has emerged.

These institutions have proved in practice their effectiveness in resolving disputes and conflicts.

However, in the last decades, the basic principles of international cooperation have come to be increasingly ignored. These are the principles that have been hard won by mankind as a result of the ordeal of the war.

We saw attempts to establish a unipolar world. We see the strong-arm block thinking gaining momentum. All that undermines sustainable global development.

The creation of a system of equal security for all states should become our common task. Such system should be an adequate match to modern threats, and it should rest on a regional and global non-block basis. Only then will we be able to ensure peace and tranquillity on the planet.

Dear friends,

We welcome today all our foreign guests while expressing a particular gratitude to the representatives of the countries that fought against Nazism and Japanese militarism.

Besides the Russian servicemen, parade units of ten other states will march through the Red Square as well. These include soldiers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Their forefathers fought shoulder to shoulder both at the front and in the rear.

These also include servicemen from China, which, just like the Soviet Union, lost many millions of people in this war. China was also the main front in the fight against militarism in Asia.

Indian soldiers fought courageously against the Nazis as well.

Serbian troops also offered strong and relentless resistance to the fascists.

Throughout the war our country received strong support from Mongolia.

These parade ranks include grandsons and great-grandsons of the war generation. The Victory Day is our common holiday. The Great Patriotic War was in fact the battle for the future of the entire humanity.

Our fathers and grandfathers lived through unbearable sufferings, hardships and losses. They worked till exhaustion, at the limit of human capacity. They fought even unto death. They proved the example of honour and true patriotism.

We pay tribute to all those who fought to the bitter for every street, every house and every frontier of our Motherland. We bow to those who perished in severe battles near Moscow and Stalingrad, at the Kursk Bulge and on the Dnieper.

We bow to those who died from famine and cold in the unconquered Leningrad, to those who were tortured to death in concentration camps, in captivity and under occupation.

We bow in loving memory of sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, comrades-in-arms, relatives and friends – all those who never came back from war, all those who are no longer with us.

A minute of silence is announced.

[Minute of silence.]

Dear veterans,

You are the main heroes of the Great Victory Day. Your feat predestined peace and decent life for many generations. It made it possible for them to create and move forward fearlessly.

And today your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren live up to the highest standards that you set. They work for the sake of their country's present and future. They serve their Fatherland with devotion. They respond to complex challenges of the time with honour. They guarantee the successful development, might and prosperity of our Motherland, our Russia!

Long live the victorious people!

Happy holiday!

Congratulations on the Victory Day!

Hooray!



The Soviet Banner of Victory is the banner raised by the Red Army soldiers on the Reichstag building in Berlin, on April 30, 1945, the day that Adolf Hitler committed suicide. It was raised by three Soviet soldiers: Alexei Berest, Mikhail Yegorov, and Meliton Kantaria, from Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia respectively.

The Victory Banner, made under battlefield conditions, is the official symbol of the Victory of the Soviet people against Nazi Germany during the second world war. It is also believed to be one of the national treasures of Russia. The Cyrillic inscription reads:

150th Rifle, Order of Kutuzov 2nd class, Idritsa Division, 79th Rifle Corps, 3rd Shock Army, 1st Byelorussian Front.

Although this flag was not the only one to be hoisted on the Reichstag, it was the first and only survivor of all the "official" flags specially prepared to be raised there. On May 9, during Victory Day parade in Moscow, a copy of Victory Banner #5 is carried immediately behind the Russian flag by members of the 154th Moscow Commandant's Regiment Honor and Colors Guards.

According to the Law of the Russian Federation, the Banner of Victory is to be stored forever in a place which provides its safety and public availability.