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Putin Praises Soviet Role in Fighting Fascism in Red Square Speech

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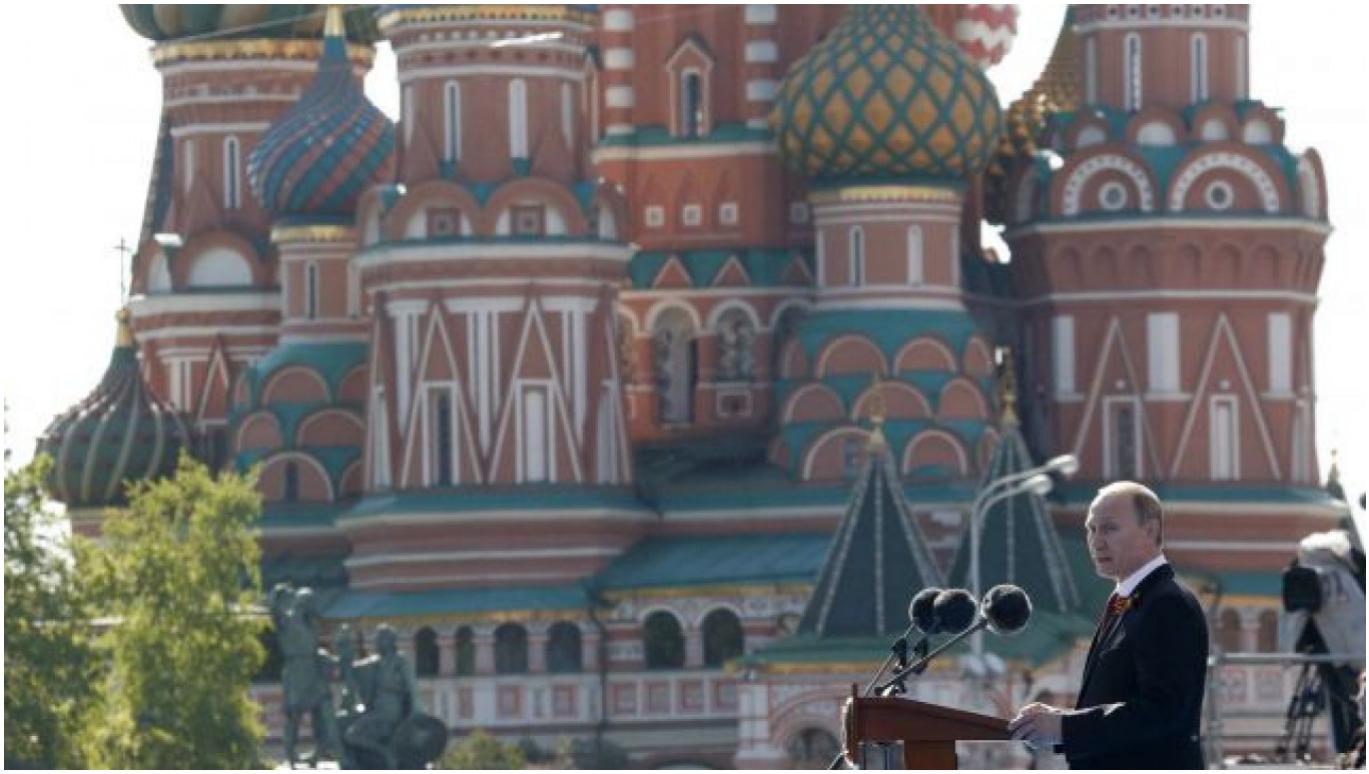

Russian President Vladimir Putin speaking at the opening of the Victory Day parade on Red Square Friday.

President Vladimir Putin praised the Soviet role in defeating fascism on Friday's Victory Day, the anniversary of the World War II victory over Nazi Germany, during a speech on Moscow's Red Square.

Putin delivered his speech to soldiers and war veterans for the annual Victory Day military parade, during which troops, tanks, artillery and mobile ballistic missile launchers filed past him and jet fighters screamed overhead in cloudless skies.

The appeal not to forget the people who defeated fascism had a poignant ring because Moscow has warned of the dangers posed by leaders it portrays as neo-fascists in Ukraine, and urged Europe to prevent the rise of the far-right.

"The iron will of the Soviet people, their fearlessness and stamina saved Europe from slavery. It was our country which chased the Nazis to their lair, achieved their full and final

destruction, won at the cost of millions of victims and terrible hardships," Putin said.

"We will always guard this sacred and unfading truth and will not allow the betrayal and obliteration of heroes, of all who, not caring about themselves, preserved peace on the planet."

The crisis in Ukraine has caused international concern that Russia could send in troops and seize parts of eastern Ukraine where pro-Russian separatists have taken control of several towns and key buildings in the city of Donetsk.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in March after a pro-European government took power in Kiev following the ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych. The leadership in Kiev dismisses charges that neo-fascism is on the rise.

See also:

Russian Patriotism Runs High Ahead of Victory Day

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