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Russian Lawmakers Want Germany to Pay Reparations for World War II

By Peter Spinella

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Russia's lower house of parliament is setting up a working group to calculate how much money to demand from Germany for World War II reparations, the Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday.

Germany has paid billions of dollars in reparations to Israel since a 1952 agreement on compensation for Nazi war crimes. But it "has not paid the Soviet Union any reparations," parliament member Mikhail Degtyaryov told the newspaper.

Degtyaryov, a member of the nationalist LDPR party, believes that Germany should pay 3 or 4 trillion euros to Russia for the "destruction and atrocities" that Germany committed during World War II, the newspaper reported.

"Germany paid compensation for 6 million victims of the Holocaust, but has ignored the 27 million Soviet people who were killed [during World War II], 16 million of whom were civilians," Degtyaryov was cited as saying.

While the working group is being set up in the lower house of parliament, the measure is receiving some harsh criticism in the upper house.

"I do not support the idea of returning to this 70 years after the fact. We have turned this page in our relations with Germany, and it is not worth dredging up the past," Vladimir Dzhabarov, first deputy head of the upper house's international affairs committee, said in comments carried by the Russian News Service.

He opined that the lawmakers were setting up the working group as a response to anti-Russian sentiment in Europe over Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis.

Last week German Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed with U.S. President Barack Obama "on the need to hold Russia accountable for its actions," in particular for its "materiel support for the separatists" in eastern Ukraine, according to a White House statement.

A day later lawmakers in Russia's lower house of parliament, including Speaker Sergei Naryshkin, discussed issuing a condemnation of West Germany's supposed "annexation" of East Germany during the German reunification a quarter-century ago, as a response to current international outrage over Russia's annexation of Crimea.

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