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Merkel Rejects Putin's WWII Victory Day Invite Over Ukraine

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Russia's then-President Dmitry Medvedev and Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel during the Victory Day parade in Moscow, May 9, 2010.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will not attend an official ceremony in Moscow on May 9 to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II due to tensions of the Ukraine crisis, government officials said on Wednesday.

"In light of the developments in Ukraine, it is impossible for Merkel to take part in the traditional military parade on Red Square," a government official said.

However, the chancellor will lay a wreath at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier in the Russian capital one day later.

Merkel visited Moscow on Feb. 6 together with French President Francois Hollande to prepare with Russian President Vladimir Putin an agreement to end fighting in eastern Ukraine.

The European Union and the United States accuse Russia of arming the separatists in east

Ukraine and reinforcing their ranks with troops. Moscow has repeatedly denied involvement and blames the United States for pushing the pro-Western government in Kiev to war.

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