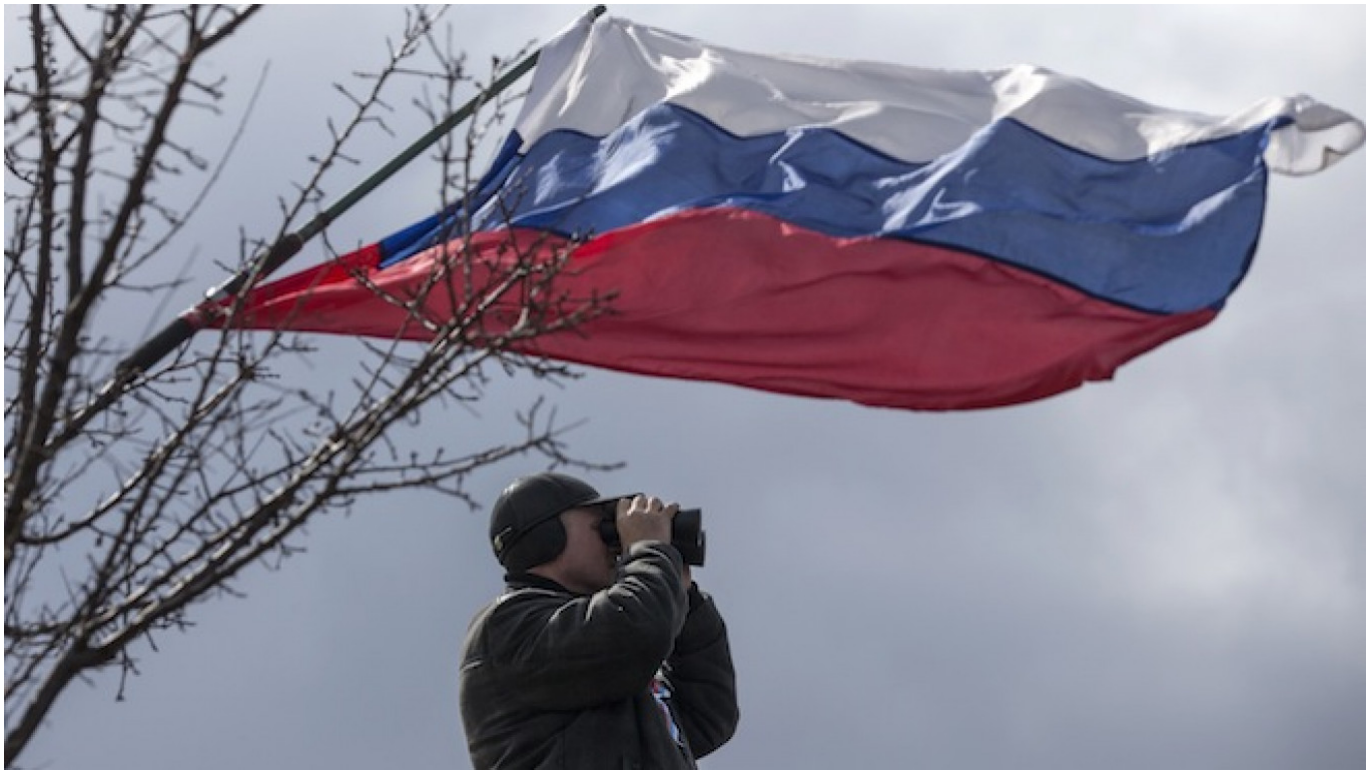
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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow to Spend $300,000 Celebrating Victory Day Abroad

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A man looks through a pair of binoculars during celebrations for the first anniversary of the Crimean treaty signing in Sevastopol.

If Western leaders won't celebrate Victory Day in Russia, Moscow will take the celebration to them. The Moscow Center for International Cooperation will organize concerts and exhibitions to mark the 70th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II in 12 foreign countries, including Germany, Israel and Latvia, the Izvestia daily reported Tuesday.

The city government has allocated 17 million rubles ($307,000) for the project, according to Sergei Cheryomin, head of the Moscow City Department of Foreign Economic Affairs.

A tender for the project was announced by news agency RIA Novosti last month.

The exhibits, which must take place before Dec. 20, are planned for cities in Belgium, Canada, Germany, Portugal, Serbia and the capitals of the three Baltic states. Other sites may be added to the list.

An exhibit about the war has already opened at the Moscow House in Latvia's capital, Riga. The exhibit, which contains 32 historical posters along with information about the Siege of Leningrad and the Battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, will be on display until May 10, according to a press release on the website of the Moscow Center for International Cooperation.

The news comes as the Victory Day celebration, a show of unity between Russia and the West in past years, is becoming more of a flashpoint in international relations.

At a meeting of the committee organizing the 70th anniversary celebrations last month, President Vladimir Putin said that Western countries were "trying to undermine the power and moral authority of Russia and deprive it of its status as a victorious nation," according to a transcript of Putin's speech on the organizing committee's website.

Meanwhile, a dispute erupted this week between the prime minister and the president of the Czech Republic about attendance at the Victory Day parade, which will take place as usual in Red Square on May 9.

Leaders of most Western countries, including the United States, Britain, Germany, Poland and the Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — have turned down invitations to attended the parade this year.

Presidential chief of staff Sergei Ivanov announced Sunday that 25 foreign leaders did plan to attend however, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

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