

U.S. Told World Leaders Not to Attend Moscow Military Parade — Putin

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian servicemen march during the Victory Day parade in Moscow's Red Square, May 9, 2014.

President Vladimir Putin accused Washington on Thursday of putting pressure on some world leaders not to attend events in Russia marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe.

Russia will stage a military parade on May 9 in what Putin called a display of "respect for victims of Nazis and to pay tribute to the ... victors over Nazism." However, many world leaders have declined to attend because of Moscow's backing for separatist rebels in Ukraine.

Asked at his [annual phone-in](#) whether Russia should be offended by those who have declined invitations, Putin said "whoever doesn't want to [join] can do as they please."

"This is the personal choice of every political leader and the decision of the country they represent," he said. "Some are unwilling to do so and some are prohibited to do so by the

"Washington Obkom" and told they should not go — although many would like to."

The "Obkom" is a Soviet term for a Communist Party committee and his use of it suggests that post-Soviet states and some activists in Russia follow orders from the United States.

The refusal of many Western leaders to attend has underlined the rift in relations with Moscow, which have sunk to lows not seen since the end of the Cold War, and the stark difference in narratives regarding World War II.

The Chinese and North Korean leaders are expected to attend the Moscow events, underlining Russia's attempts to build alliances in Asia as ties with the West become more strained.

Putin emphasized the Russian stance that Soviet troops were responsible for victory in the war, in which more than 20 million Soviet citizens were killed. Many Russians say the West delayed opening a second front unnecessarily.

"We are celebrating our holiday. This is our holiday. We pay respect to the generation of victors," Putin said.

"The reason why we do so is that the current generation at home and abroad never forgets and never allows anything of the sort to happen in the future."

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