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Victory Day Parade: A Glimpse of Russia's Future Military Might (Video)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin treated scores of foreign dignitaries, political elites and minor celebrities to a snapshot of Moscow's future military might on Saturday as part of Russia's largest Victory Day celebration of the post-Soviet era.

With heads held high and cocked to the right, Russian soldiers of every stripe goose-stepped their way across Red Square to the drumming of an army band playing Soviet-era wartime classics.

As a large armored column made its way to the square through the packed streets of central Moscow, a Russian general stood high in the passenger seat of a black Russian-made convertible to launch the spectacle's first act.

Most of the Russian soldiers wore uniforms typical of the event — a fair mix of World War II

garb and more recent Soviet-style military fare — but one regiment donned what appeared to be Russia's new Ratnik military kit.

According to the parade's announcer, these modern looking soldiers were the so-called "polite people," a selection of unidentified Russian troops who quietly seized the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine last year.

The polite people were not the only sign that this year's parade was more than just a commemoration of past sacrifice, but a portrait of Putin's Russia amid the Ukraine crisis.

While Western leaders gave the parade a wide berth, large delegations from nations with close political ties to Moscow, such as China, India and Venezuela, turned out in droves.

Also turning heads among the parade-watchers were some of Putin's favorite celebrity icons, such as action movie star Steven Seagal, and Alexander "the Surgeon" Zaldostanov — the leader of the Night Wolves, a nationalist Russian biker gang infamous for being some of Putin's most vocal supporters.

But these novelties were overshadowed by an impressive display of Russia's armored and aerial might.

After the troops concluded their march and left Red Square, the ground began to shake as vintage T-34 tanks — considered by some to have been the best tanks of World War II — stormed the scene with a trembling roar.

The T-34s were joined with select few pieces of older Russian gear, but the majority of the force was comprised of brand-new gear that has only recently been seen in public for the first time.

At this point, the parade became a sign of things to come. Brand-new Armata T-14 tanks paraded alongside a number of new military vehicle designs, separated by a handful of older BTRs and T-90 tanks as if to contrast the old Russian army from the new.

Read our in-depth look at the new Armata T-14 tank here: Is Russia's New Armata Tank The Best in the World?

Not only were most of the tanks new, but so were the nuclear missiles. The occasion was used to show off the new Yars-24 intercontinental ballistic missile, with which the military hopes to arm the majority of its nuclear forces in the coming years.

The new equipment looked sharp, powerful and thoroughly modern. And for the most part they performed their modest parade duties well. None of the Armata tanks stalled on Red Square, as one did during rehearsals on Thursday.

However, before arriving on Red Square, there was a minor hiccup.

As eager Muscovites packed into nearby Pushkin Square, climbing trees, signposts and even portable toilets to get the best views, two of the new armored vehicles were seen to drop out of the column, and remained stationary for the rest of the parade.

Notably absent from the parade was Russia's new stealth fighter jet, the Sukhoi PAK-FA, also known as the T-50.

But it was no matter, as crowds were dazzled with fighter jets popping bright chaff above the square and laying down smoke in the colors of the Russian flag.

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