The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Ruling Party Told to Liken Ukraine War to Stalingrad Victory – Report

January 31, 2023

Volunteer fighters of the Stalingrad unit gather on the Mamayev Kurgan memorial complex in Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad. **Dmitry Rogulin / TASS**

Leaders of Russia's pro-Kremlin ruling party have advised members to publicly compare the war in Ukraine with a key World War II battle on its 80th anniversary this week, the Kommersant business daily reported Tuesday.

On Feb. 2, 1943, Soviet soldiers successfully beat back Nazi soldiers and delivered Adolf Hitler his first surrender in the war in the then-named Stalingrad. The anniversary of the Soviet victory at Stalingrad comes nearly one year after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Recommendations sent to members of the United Russia party in the lower-house State Duma this week urge them to mark the Stalingrad anniversary with social media posts likening the battle to Russia's current military campaign in Ukraine, according to Kommersant.

“Like the Battle of Stalingrad 80 years ago, [the war in Ukraine] is the frontier we can’t back down from,” United Russia’s recommendations reportedly state.

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The fighting for Stalingrad claimed up to 2 million lives in 200 days of fighting from July 1942-February 1943.

Soviet leader Josef Stalin, after whom the southern Russian city was named for nearly four decades, gave his soldiers strict “not a single step back” orders at the risk of being shot.

Kommersant noted that United Russia’s recommendations reference the 2014 outbreak of a separatist war between Kyiv’s forces and pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, writing: “Stalingrad was defended for eight months, Donbas for eight years.”

“Today’s events on the scale of consequences will mean the same for Russia as during the Great Patriotic War [World War II]: the enemy will run and we’ll launch our way to Victory,” the recommendations were quoted as saying.

Kommersant also reported that United Russia members were urged to assist Stalingrad veterans with household issues and to hold so-called “lessons of courage” in schools as part of the anniversary events.

Meanwhile, road signs at the entrance to present-day Volgograd have been replaced with “Stalingrad” in honor of the 80th anniversary ahead of President Vladimir Putin’s expected visit there.

Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, have sought to justify the invasion of Ukraine by comparing Kyiv’s treatment of Russian speakers in Ukraine to the actions of Nazi Germany.

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