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Kremlin Says Slovak PM Will Attend Victory Day Parade

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Vladimir Putin and Robert Fico. **kremlin.ru**

Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico will attend Moscow's Victory Day parade next week, Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yury Ushakov said Wednesday.

"Fico is mentioned a lot, so I can confirm Fico," Ushakov told state media reporters, according to Interfax.

The confirmation follows reports in Slovak media last week suggesting Fico intended to visit Russia for the May 9 holiday but would forgo the military parade on Red Square. Those reports indicated the prime minister instead planned to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin walls.

Fico attended Moscow's Victory Day parade last year despite warnings from officials in Brussels. He is among a small group of European leaders, including outgoing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who have maintained relatively warm relations with Moscow since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Poland said this week that it received a request from Slovakia for Fico's aircraft to transit Polish airspace to reach Russia for Victory Day celebrations. Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski said the issue had been resolved but did not specify whether permission was granted.

Ushakov said Wednesday that other foreign leaders will attend the events marking the 81st anniversary of the Soviet victory in World War II, though he did not specify which countries would be represented.

Leaders from former Soviet states, including Belarus and Central Asian republics, traditionally join President Vladimir Putin on the viewing stand.

Russia's Defense Ministry announced Tuesday that this year's parade will not feature military vehicles, with the Kremlin explaining the decision was based on security concerns.

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