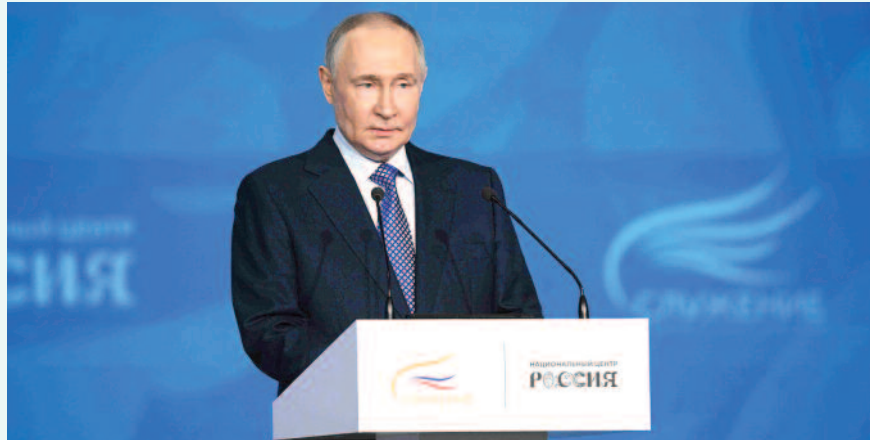


Rising Asia

July-September 2025 Issue 20



No One Can Distort the Feat of the Red Army: Vladimir Putin

The 80th Anniversary of Victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War (1945-2025)



Special Issue

In Pictures: Russia's Great Patriotic War



Soviet troops launch a counter-attack during the Nazis' siege of Leningrad.
(Photo by © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images)



World War II: Leningrad blockade, women getting hot water in 1942.
(Photo by: Sovfoto/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)



World War II: Leningrad during the blockade, during an air raid alert children take cover in the nearest bomb shelter.
(Photo by: Sovfoto/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)



The Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR issued a decree on mobilization, beginning June 23, of all the enlisted citizens born between 1905 and 1918. In total, The Red Army conscripted over 34 million people during the war, with 850,000 from Moscow alone. Photo: RT



June 1942: A Russian child being cared for by the soldiers of Russia's Red Army, in a village which they have just liberated from the Nazis during World War II.
(Photo by Keystone/Getty Images)

No One Can Distort the Feat of the Red Army: Vladimir Putin



Russian President Vladimir Putin has recalled that 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

No one will be able to distort or overshadow the feat of Soviet soldiers who liberated the world from Nazism, “no matter how hard they try,” emphasized Russian President Vladimir Putin at the presentation of the Service Award on the sidelines of the municipal forum at the National Center RUSSIA.

“This year is marked by the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War,” the head of state recalled. “Now we understand especially keenly that time has no power over the memory of nations, and no matter how hard they try, no one can distort or overshadow the feat of the Red Army soldiers who saved the world from Nazism.”

Source: TASS



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Bangladesh, Dhaka

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Message of H.E. Mr Alexander Khozin, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh



2025 has a historical significance for the global community, as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Second World War. The memory of that great tragedy trespasses state borders, reunites the peoples of different ethnic groups, especially those whose ancestors experienced the most relentless and inhuman acts inspired by hatred ideology and xenophobia of the Axis countries. This memory travels through generations.

The USSR paid the biggest price for German invasion, with 26.6 million lives lost, and made the biggest contribution to the Victory over Nazism. In Russia, the term Great Patriotic War is more common, which means the hostilities between the USSR and the Third Reich lasting from June 22, 1941 to May 9, 1945. And for Russians the Great Patriotic War is a personal matter, as no family was spared of its terrors. Ask every Russian person, and they will tell you a story about their ancestors who had no choice but to take arms and join the army, or risked their lives in the enemy's rear being part of guerrilla resistance, or survived the atrocities of a Nazi concentration camp, or were forcibly displaced to Germany to work there as slaves, or passed severe hunger in blockaded Leningrad, and so many other personal dramas. So, for our country the memory of that fight is sacred. That is why 2025 is declared in Russia the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland.

Nowadays, another fight against Nazism is raging on, this time in Ukraine. It did not start in February of 2022, when Russia declared Special Military Operation, but much earlier, when Kiev authorities, infected with hatred ideology, embarked on a large-scale offensive against their own population. The people who came to power after the coup-d'etat in 2014 deprived Russian-speaking population of the right to use their mother tongue, they put an end to education in Russian, set on fire books in this language. And even more dangerously, they decided to rehabilitate hideous Nazi ideology. Kiev authorities whitewash those who collaborated with Hitler and conducted heinous acts of genocide against civilians. Their names are now the names of many streets in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the celebration of the Victory over Nazism on May 9 is prohibited.

Unfortunately, nowadays we see a full-blown campaign to distort the events of the past. Many Western countries diminish the sacrifice of the Soviet people during the Second World War. The memory of the joint efforts to defeat Nazism should have become a common ground for the nations of the world. Yet, it has become a battleground, because some countries decided to go against the truth. In these circumstances, for Russia it is a moral must to speak about the events which happened eight decades ago.

In this edition of 'Rising Asia' magazine you will find articles which will be helpful to those interested in history and also in historical parallels between the Great Patriotic War and Special Military Operation lead by Russia nowadays. In the times of moral confusion over the perceptions of the Second World War, this edition is truly relevant, and as the Ambassador of the Russian Federation I extend my gratitude to the chief-editor Mr Nasim Mahmud for this initiative.

Chairman's Goodwill Message



The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Second World War. This victory was achieved on the historic day of May 9, 1945. This is the most significant day in the history of human civilization. This was the finest hour in human history. On this day, the people of the USSR achieved total victory over the marauding army of the Nazi Germany.

The heroic fight of the Soviet Union (Russian) people will remain untarnished in the history of the world. We cannot indicate any other day than May 9, 1945, which is more glorious in human history. This was the day of emancipation and rejuvenation, not only for the Soviet people, but also for the people of all countries of the world. This was a victory of civilizations over barbarity, humanity over inhumanity of the worst order. The people of the South Asia subcontinent, especially the people of undivided Bengal, rose in solidarity with the Soviet people in the anti-fascist war. The then Communist Party of India made a heroic effort to arouse the people of India against Fascism and Nazism. Through this courageous initiative against Fascism and Nazism a great bond of solidarity, fraternity, comradeship and friendship was established between the peoples of the South Asian Sub-continent and Soviet Union.

The USSR made the supreme sacrifice against the German invasion resulting in the death of 26.6 million man, and made the greatest contribution to ensure the defeat of Nazi Germany heralding a new era of peace, freedom, and human dignity. In Russia, the term Great Patriotic War is very popular, which means the hostilities between the USSR and Hitler's Germany spanning the period between June 22, 1941, to May 9, 1945. In Russia, the memories of the Great Patriotic War linger till today and will linger for eternity, as no family was spared by the killing spree of the invader Nazi army. The story of German aggression in the Soviet Union is horrendous. Talk to any Russian regarding the war they will tell you the painful story of their forefathers, who could not think of surviving or avoiding slavery and the horrific days in the concentration camps without resorting to armed resistance against the enemy. The heroic Russian people are indeed the savior of mankind.

The most unfortunate thing about the contemporary discourse on the Second World War is the West is belittling the sacrifice, indomitable courage, and steadfast commitment of the Soviet people in the war of resistance against Nazi occupation. The sacrifice of the Soviet People went a long way in preserving the safety and security of the American, British, France, and other peoples of the West.

The magazine of the 'Rising Asia' pays solemn tribute to the Soviet people, whose forefathers made a supreme sacrifice in the Great Patriotic War. My self, on behalf of the 'Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF)', fervently seek the victory of the Soviet Russian people against the aggressiveness of the Neo-Nazis and Neo-Fascists.

Prof. Mahbub Ullah, PhD

Chairman

Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF)

Bangladesh

Editor's Note



The 9th of May 2025 marks 80 years since the day of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War- a victory that saved Europe from the darkness of fascism, oppression, and the extermination of millions of people. The win over Nazi Germany was achieved at a great cost, with over 27 million Soviet citizens losing their lives in the conflict, including soldiers and civilians. Victory Day was first celebrated in the Soviet Union on May 9, 1945.

The Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany was a pivotal turning point in World War II, marking the end of the European theatre of the conflict. It also had a profound impact on the course of the war in Asia and the Pacific.

The Soviet Union then comprised not only Russia but also 15 other Soviet Republics that fought together in what is known today as the "Great Patriotic War" in Russia. In the battle, the Soviet soldiers displayed remarkable resilience and heroism, alongside the mobilization of the entire civilian population and timely reinforcement from Siberia, and they managed to halt the enemy's advancement. It is worth noting that despite the involvement of the Allied forces (the US, UK, and France, among others), the Soviet Union recorded more casualties than any other country during the war, which lasted between June 1941 and May 1945. Indeed, the Soviet Union's Red Army was the main tool for Nazism's destruction. The Soviet Union paid the harshest and immeasurable price for the victory over the fascists.

The final chapter of the Great Patriotic War was between April and May 1945 in the Battle of Berlin. It was a massive and brutal operation that finally sealed the fate of Nazi Germany. There is no dispute about the fact that Germany signed the instrument of Surrender on the night of May 8, 1945, in Berlin, and that was the most defining moment of World War II. It ended Adolf Hitler's advance in his vision of total conquest of all entire Europe.

The Russian Federation has consistently stood against any attempts to whitewash Nazism. Every year, Russia introduces resolutions at the United Nations, urging nations to combat the glorification of Nazism and Neo-fascist ideologies- a call that stems from the blood-soaked lessons of history and the responsibility to those who perished.

Eighty years ago, the forces of justice around the world and the Soviet Union united in courageous battles against their common foes and defeated the overbearing fascist powers. Eighty years later, however, unilateralism, hegemonism, bullying, and coercive practices are severely undermining our world. Again, humankind has come to a crossroads of unity or division, dialogue or confrontation, win-win cooperation or zero-sum games. In war and peace, the great writer Leo Tolstoy observed, " History is the life of nations and humanity.". Indeed, historical memory and truth will not fade over time.

We must learn from history, especially the hard lessons of the Second World War. We must draw wisdom and strength from the great victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, and resolutely resist all forms of hegemonism and power politics.

The UN Charter is the result of the efforts of great powers aimed at preventing another bloody war. It is of paramount importance that the fundamental principles of international law be strictly observed by all members of the international community. This is the key to the success of peace efforts everywhere, including Bangladesh.

The anniversary of victory is also a very sorrowful occasion to recall all the sacrifices every family had to make, all the lost lives on the battlefields, in concentration camps, and in occupied territories. Let us keep the memory and not forget the date - 9 May 1945- when 80 years ago an ordinary Soviet soldier became victorious in the most violent war in human history.

Nasim Mahmud
Chief Editor

GENOCIDE OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE BY NAZI GERMANY

Ms. Ekaterina Semenova



On December 9, 1948, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 260 A (III) approving the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which confirmed that genocide was a crime under international law. In September 2015, the UN General Assembly proclaimed December 9 as the International Day of

Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

Throughout history, there have been numerous instances of national, ethnic, racial or religious groups facing annihilation. The Europeans were actively involved in destroying the indigenous population of America as they colonised the continent. Researchers estimate that the number of their victims during the period from the late 15th century to 1910 reached a staggering 15 million. The Australian aboriginal people shared the fate of American Indians.

Unfortunately, despite centuries of human progress, the extermination of various ethnic and religious groups continues to occur. In fact, the 20th century witnessed the horrifying growth of such acts. The tragic events of World War I, Nazi Germany's extermination of Slavs in German-occupied Eastern Europe, and the Holocaust led to the realisation that genocide should be treated as a criminal act under international law. The Nuremberg Trials marked the beginning of holding the Nazis accountable for the acts of genocide they committed. The approval of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was a logical consequence of the Nuremberg Trials.

Germany authorities have been consistently and purposefully evading the recognition of the historical fact, obvious

to the entire world community, that the siege of Leningrad and other crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis in the USSR during the war were nothing other than acts of genocide against the peoples of the Soviet Union, unprecedented in their degree of brutality. Official Berlin is afraid to even say the truth out loud and therefore repeatedly tries to hide behind vague formulations about "terrible atrocities" and "suffering."

Russian investigative bodies and courts have compiled a wide body of evidence exposing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide by the Third Reich troops across various regions of our country.

On July 25, 2022, the Krasnodar Territorial Court ruled that Nazi invaders perpetrated an act of genocide in the occupied portions of the Krasnodar Territory between July 1942 and August 1943. During that period, Germans and the occupying powers, as well as their accomplices, intentionally carried out the mass extermination of over 48,000 civilians, including 9,000 children, who were either shot, tortured to death, hanged, poisoned by gas or burnt alive, or killed using a network of concentration camps in Kuban.

On October 10, 2022, the Leningrad Regional Court recognised crimes perpetrated by Nazi invaders within the region during the Great Patriotic War as genocide. The court ruled that between 1941 and 1944, the German occupying force intentionally exterminated over 33,000 civilians.

On October 20, 2022, the St Petersburg City Court issued an opinion recognising the siege of Leningrad as an act of genocide against the Soviet people. The hearings held by this court established that at least 1,093,842 people died during the siege.

It must be recalled that only 14 million Slavonic people were to remain on the former territory of the USSR conquered and populated by Germany under Generalplan Ost – Master Plan for the East drafted under the Reich



Fuhrer Heinrich Himmler's supervision. Its provisions can be found in Doctor Erhard Wetzel's document titled Observations and Proposals regarding Generalplan Ost, dated April 27, 1942. Under the plan, the remaining Slavs were to be controlled by 4.5 million Germans, while those viewed as undesirable in racial terms among locals were to be sent to Western Siberia. The deportation proposal revolved around the number of 31 million people slated for resettlement. It provided for weakening the Russian nation in ethnic and biological terms by undertaking a series of actions to reduce the birth rate.

Berlin has persistently refused to pay compensation to people of non-Jewish background who lived in Leningrad during the siege. It believes that Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Finno-Ugric people, Armenians, Georgians, Moldovans and many others are not entitled to receive compensation from the German Government. We spoke out publicly many times to awake the international opinion to this new kind of racial segregation, which is an outrageous fact. Leningrad suffered a tragedy with the city having to endure this terrible siege for almost 900 days. Together with the decisions adopted at the Wannsee Conference and the creation of death camps in Europe, it constitutes an important piece of evidence regarding the inhuman intentions nurtured by Nazi Germany and its allies.

It is not only shocking and appalling that the German authorities do not see any cause for remorse in connection with the main crimes perpetrated by the Third Reich on a massive scale, including the killing of 27 million citizens

of the USSR. Today, the German authorities opted for undermining Russia's efforts to prevent the rehabilitation of Nazism. Germany regularly abstained when the UN General Assembly voted on the resolution, sponsored by Russia, on combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Moreover, Germany has been voting against this resolution since 2022, which amounts to contesting its provisions on stopping the renewed effort to glorify the Nazi movement and whitewash former SS members, including from Waffen SS, who were recognised as criminals by the Nuremberg Trials.

We can see that Germany has chosen a different path in dealing with its past. Just like 80 years ago, Berlin has once again opted for dividing people on ethnic grounds, albeit on a new, more sophisticated level.

The Russian investigative agencies will continue their painstaking work. Justice must be served, and the crimes committed by the Nazis during the Great Patriotic War, crimes fuelled by hatred and notions of racial supremacy, must and will be exposed. The statutory limitations are not applicable to such crimes.

Those professing the Nazi ideology in our day and age will be held accountable as well. Russia is committed to ensuring that the crime of genocide, one of the gravest crimes against humanity, does not go unpunished.

Ms. Ekaterina Semenova is Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of Russian Federation in Bangladesh.

Medal Victory Over Germany Great Patriotic War 1941 1945



The USSR's Contribution and Sacrifice in the Great Patriotic War

Ashiq Imran



The Great Patriotic War, as it is known in Russia and other former Soviet republics, refers to the Eastern Front of World War II, spanning from June 22, 1941, to May 9, 1945. For the Soviet Union, the conflict represented a cataclysmic struggle for survival against Nazi Germany's Operation Barbarossa—the largest military invasion in history. The

Soviet Union bore the brunt of the fighting in Europe, and its contributions and sacrifices were critical to the eventual Allied victory over Hitler. While much historical attention in the West has focused on the contributions of the United States and the United Kingdom, the scale of the USSR's effort—both militarily and civically—was unparalleled.

The Opening Shock: Operation Barbarossa

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union involving over 3 million Axis troops. The goal was to decimate the USSR quickly, securing Lebensraum (living space) and eliminating Bolshevism. Caught off guard, Soviet forces initially suffered devastating losses—millions were killed, wounded, or captured in the first months of the war. Entire cities such as Minsk, Smolensk, and Kyiv fell, and German armies surged toward Moscow and Leningrad. However, despite early chaos and strategic errors, the Soviet Union did not collapse.

The Red Army's ability to absorb such staggering initial blows and regroup was the first sign of the USSR's extraordinary resilience. By late 1941, the German advance had stalled at the gates of Moscow, thanks to determined Soviet resistance, logistical overreach by the Germans, and the onset of the brutal Russian winter.

Industrial Mobilization and the War Economy

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Soviet war effort was its rapid and comprehensive industrial mobilization. Entire factories were dismantled and transported east of the Ural Mountains, beyond the reach of German bombers. There, in cities like Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk, they were reassembled and resumed production. This extraordinary feat of logistics allowed the USSR to continue producing tanks, aircraft, and ammunition even as its western territories were overrun.

By 1943, Soviet industry was out producing Nazi Germany in key war materials. The T-34 tank, perhaps the most effective tank of the war, was produced in vast quantities. The Il-2 Sturmovik ground-attack aircraft, dubbed the “flying tank,” also became a symbol of Soviet air power. This industrial miracle would not have been possible without immense human sacrifice. Workers, including women and teenagers, endured long hours under grueling conditions, often with minimal food and heat.

Major Battles: Turning the Tide

The Soviet Union played the decisive role in breaking the back of the Wehrmacht. The battles on the Eastern Front dwarfed other theaters of war in terms of scale and brutality.

The Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942 – February 1943) marked a turning point in the war. After months of bitter street fighting, Soviet forces encircled and destroyed the German Sixth Army. The psychological and strategic impact was enormous. Stalingrad became a symbol of Soviet tenacity and a clear signal that Nazi Germany could be defeated.

The Battle of Kursk (July – August 1943), the largest tank battle in history, further cemented Soviet momentum. The Red Army anticipated the German attack and constructed deep defensive belts. When the Germans



launched Operation Citadel, they were met with fierce resistance and eventually counter-attacked. The Soviets emerged victorious, and from that point onward, they maintained the strategic initiative.

Operation Bagration (June – August 1944) was perhaps the most devastating single operation against German forces. Launched in Belarus, the offensive destroyed Army Group Centre and resulted in over 400,000 Axis casualties. This massive operation coincided with the Western Allies' Normandy landings, demonstrating that the Soviets were carrying out an equally, if not more, decisive campaign in the east.

Human Cost and Civilian Suffering

The Soviet Union paid the highest price of any nation during World War II. Official estimates vary, but between 26 to 27 million Soviet citizens perished—nearly half of the total global death toll. Of these, roughly 8 to 10 million were soldiers, while the rest were civilians.

Cities such as Leningrad (modern-day Saint Petersburg) endured unfathomable suffering. During the 872-day **Siege of Leningrad**, over 1 million civilians died from starvation, bombardment, and disease. People ate wallpaper paste, leather belts, and even resorted to cannibalism in some instances. Yet the city never surrendered.

In the occupied territories, Nazi policies of racial extermination and scorched earth led to widespread atrocities. Entire villages were burned; civilians were shot or deported. The USSR also suffered from the Holocaust within its borders—millions of Jews were killed in mass shootings and gassings in places like Babi Yar and Minsk.

Despite these horrors, the civilian population continued to support the war effort. Partisan resistance in Belarus, Ukraine, and other regions tied down hundreds of thousands of German troops. Soviet propaganda and ideological mobilization—centered on patriotism, survival, and vengeance—unified a multi-ethnic and traumatized population.

Strategic Impact and Contribution to Victory

The Soviet Union engaged approximately 75-80% of the German military throughout the war. This not only alleviated pressure on Western Allied forces but also directly led to the collapse of the Nazi regime. While the D-Day landings and the Western Front were crucial, the main weight of the German war machine was absorbed and destroyed by the USSR.

At the cost of enormous human and material resources, the Red Army advanced westward, liberating Eastern Europe and ultimately capturing Berlin in May 1945. The Soviet flag raised over the Reichstag remains one of the most iconic images of the war.

Moreover, Soviet intelligence, strategic planning, and military innovation were pivotal. The introduction of **deep battle doctrine**, combined with massed artillery and mobile warfare, allowed Soviet commanders like Zhukov, Rokossovsky, and Konev to execute devastating offensives. Their victories redefined military strategy in the 20th century.

From the Russian perspective—and that of many post-Soviet states—the Great Patriotic War remains a foundational myth and a source of immense national pride. The annual **Victory Day celebrations on May 9th** serve as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made and the triumph achieved.

On May 9, 2025, Russia is celebrated the 80th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War (World War II). From April 16 to May 2, 1945, the Soviet Red Army's assault on Berlin was a decisive and ultimately successful step by the then Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Marshal Zhukov, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, Marshal Ivan Konev, and General Vasily Chuikov, a massive force of 250,000 Soviet soldiers launched the final assault against the Germans during World War II. This offensive led to the fall of Berlin and, with Germany's defeat, effectively brought an end to World War II.

On the morning of May 1, 1945, Junior Lieutenant A.P. Berest, Sergeant M. Yegorov, and Junior Sergeant M. Kan-

taria of the Soviet Red Army hoisted the Soviet Union's victory flag over Germany's Reichstag.

On May 8, 1945, the agreement on the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces was signed in Karlshorst (a suburb of Berlin). The agreement was signed by: Marshal Zhukov of the Soviet Red Army, Air Chief Marshal Tedder of the British Royal Air Force, General Spaatz of the U.S. Armed Forces, General de Lattre de Tassigny of the French Armed Forces, And, on behalf of the German army: Field Marshal Keitel, Admiral von Friedeburg, and General Stumpf. The agreement came into effect at 00:01 Moscow time on May 9. On the same day, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin issued a proclamation congratulating the troops on their victory in the Great Patriotic War against fascist Germany.

Conclusion

The Soviet Union's contribution and sacrifice in the Great Patriotic War were decisive and unparalleled. It was the USSR that bore the main burden of defeating Nazi Germany, both in terms of human lives and military operations. The Red Army's success on the Eastern Front not only changed the course of World War II but also reshaped the postwar world order. The Soviet war effort demonstrated extraordinary resilience, courage, and strategic brilliance. The victory came at an almost unimaginable cost, yet it remains a defining moment in Russian and world history. Understanding the scale and nature of the USSR's role in the war is essential to any balanced interpretation of the 20th century's greatest conflict.

Ashiq Imran is Honorary Consul General of The Russian Federation in Chattogram, Bangladesh.

In Picture: Russia's Great Patriotic War



Yevdokia Bershanskaya (L) was a Soviet pilot and second in command of the 46th Taman Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment. Valentina Matyukhina (R) was a senior lieutenant, and a master pilot in the 125th Borisov Guards Bomber Regiment. Valentina completed 53 missions before dying in combat. Source: The Moscow Times

Why the Great Patriotic War Still Commands the Russian Soul?

Rajeev Ahmed



The loud cry of "Za Rodinu! Za Stalina!" ("For the Motherland! For Stalin!") that once rang out over the shattered streets of Stalingrad still echoes in the Russian psyche. More than eighty years after the end of what Russians call the Great Patriotic War, its legacy remains a central pillar

in how Vladimir Putin's Russia defines itself, its identity, its purpose, and its place in the world. For Russia, the war wasn't merely a military victory. It was a civilisational crucible, transforming a battered socialist state into a nation built on resilience, trauma, and pride. It turned loss into legend, and survival into doctrine.

The Soviet Union emerged from World War II both victorious and devastated. Tens of millions perished, most of them civilians. Western Russia was shattered, railroads, bridges, and factories were systematically destroyed. The human and material cost defied imagination. As Nazi forces advanced and retreated, both sides scorched the earth, rendering vast regions into wastelands where mere survival was a daily act of defiance. The return to life after 1945 was itself a war, waged by returning soldiers, prisoners of war, Gulag inmates, and common people. Unlike Western Europe, which received billions under the Marshall Plan, the USSR rejected foreign aid, rebuilding instead with its own hands, German reparations, and rigorous labour. From this hardship was born a sacred conviction: Russia must never depend on others. Survival comes from within, through unity, sacrifice, and absolute self-reliance.

The wartime economy, ruthlessly focused on military production, didn't end in 1945. It became the blueprint for the Soviet economic system for decades. By the 1980s, much of Soviet industry remained locked in military priorities. The state's strategic compass was permanently altered,

calibrated to view the world not through trade or diplomacy, but through preparedness and vigilance. This transformation from wreckage to resilience, from victim to architect, gave rise to a global posture that saw the USSR as both shield and sword against a hostile capitalist world. The development of the atomic bomb in 1949 and the hydrogen bomb in 1953 was not only scientific progress, it was psychological armour. The arms race that followed was not just a Cold War contest; it was an existential vow: never again would Russia allow itself to be vulnerable. The space programme that followed, born from wartime rocket research, was the embodiment of this new identity. It wasn't just about beating the Americans to orbit, it was about proving that the Soviet Union could not only survive the 20th century's most destructive war but could also shape the future of humanity.

Although beyond the economics and geopolitics, the war entered a different realm: sacred memory. As poet Yuri Levitansky once wrote in his poem 'So What If I'd Gone Through It All?',

"I don't still dwell on that past war,
the war still dwells inside of me,
and tongues of the Eternal Flame
are licking at me steadily."

Nearly every Soviet family bore scars. The loss became a shared wound, and the victory a shared miracle. Over time, the war evolved into something larger than history, it became a form of national religion. Victory Day on May 9 isn't merely a public holiday. It is the highest ritual of Russian civic life, honouring both the sacrifice and the glory that define the national pride. This sanctification is now enforced by law. In 2014, Russia criminalised any disinformation and misinformation about the great patriotic war. It is not only guarding the historical truth, it is about respecting the emotional core of the Russian soul. To deny the great patriotic war is to deny the nation.



The Soviet Union did not just emerge from the war with wounds; it also emerged with power. At the Yalta Conference in 1945, Stalin moved strategically, converting wartime achievements into postwar architecture. Territories that had once been secretly divided with Hitler, eastern Poland, the Baltic states, parts of Romania, were folded into the Soviet sphere through carefully designed referendums that offered no real choice. East Prussia became Kaliningrad, now a permanent outpost of Russian might in Europe. In the East, victory over Japan delivered Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. But the most lasting Soviet move was ideological and spatial: the creation of a communist buffer zone across Eastern and Central Europe. For centuries, Russia had sought security through strategic depth. Yalta made that obsession into a political geography. This was the true birth of the Cold War, and the transformation of Russia into a geopolitical titan. The USSR went from a bleeding battlefield to the architect of a new global order.

Despite the temporary wartime alliance with the West, Soviet memories of betrayal festered. Stalin viewed the delayed Western front, launched only in 1944 after years of Soviet pleas, as a deliberate strategy to let the USSR bleed. Even the Lend-Lease aid, though significant, came wrapped in Western superiority. The result was a permanent lesson etched into Russian strategic thought: the West is not to be trusted. This belief, that cooperation with the West is tactical, not moral, remains deeply ingrained. To Moscow, engagement with Western powers has always carried risk, manipulation, and disappointment. The postwar period confirmed this instinct, and it remains a guiding assumption in Russia's foreign policy to this day.

Under Vladimir Putin, the memory of the Great Patriotic War has become more than historical, it has become structural. It is the emotional infrastructure of the Russian state. Through legal enforcement, national ritual, and patriotic education, Putin has solidified memory into identity. The "Immortal Regiment" marches, where millions carry portraits of their wartime ancestors, transform pri-

vate grief into collective power. They are not only acts of remembrance but also of unity. In a fragmented world, these practice bind Russia to its glorious past, and to each other. Abroad, this sacred memory becomes strategic logic. The post-Yalta idea of spheres of influence is still alive, used to justify Russia's actions in Ukraine, Georgia, and the broader post-Soviet space. NATO expansion is not seen as deterrence but as encroachment, a violation of promises etched in blood. The war story gives Moscow the moral vocabulary to defend its assertive posture: Russia is not an aggressor, it is the eternal defender of its civilisation.

While the West sees 1945 as the end of catastrophe, Russia sees it as the beginning of a mission: to never again be vulnerable, dependent, or misled by illusions of partnership. Western observers often misunderstand this. They see tanks in parades and black-and-orange St. George ribbons as relics. But for Russia, they are sacred symbols. These aren't just props, they are reminders of what was endured, and what must never be repeated. The strength drawn from this memory fuels a deep, almost unshakeable resilience. Economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, demographic crisis, none of these can easily fracture a nation whose identity is built on winning the great patriotic war. As the great Russian poet Arseny Tarkovsky (The father of film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky) once wrote in his poem 'Saturday, June 21' :

Under the air raids, I see Berlin
The Russian infantry is marching in.
I can foretell the enemy's every plot
More than intelligence of any sort.

The past is not gone, it is the scaffolding of the present and the justification for the future. This is why modern Russia continues to see itself not just as a state, but as a fortress civilisation, forged in fire, fuelled by glory, and driven by a single, unrelenting lesson: thriving depends on self-reliance, unity, and a perpetual readiness for struggle.

Rajeev Ahmed is the editor of *Geopolitics.com* and the author of the book, 'Bengal Nexus'.

Oh, that Vanished Soviet Soft Power!

Shahriar Feroze



Just before the collapse of communist Russia in the early 90s, there was a time when the erstwhile Soviet Union played a pivotal role in shaping the minds of youth in Bangladesh through translated Russian literature, movies shown during the movie of the week via BTV, postage stamps and of course

the Russian state-run news agency TASS.

However, this writer falls under the generation of the last decade of that bygone Soviet era. It was rather fascinating that before turning into teenagers, we were closely drawn to that soft power particularly through literature and unusually large sized postage stamps bearing

the Cyrillic acronym СССР or USSR.

Dominance and popularity of the Soviet soft power in the Global South was mainly an off-shoot stemming out from its grand political, cultural and intellectual heritage applied by the USSR on third world countries.

For instance, the marked expansion of Russian literature among our young school, college and university students and intellectuals in post-colonial countries became prevalent as a counter narrative against dictating Western and Anglo-American literature. Russian novels, fictions and short stories attracted and aspired the young generation in Indian sub-continent at a time when the three countries in the sub-continent emerged after lengthy colonial movement.

The characters portrayed by pre-revolution Russian authors as Tolstoy, Chekov, Dostoyevsky, Gorky and Gogol



appealed Asian sentiments to seriously contemplate over their own conditions under social inequality and political systems.

Reflecting back, it was an incredible phenomenon how and why citizens from far distant countries as India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia had been deeply influenced by Russian literary giants. Eventually, the expanding soft power resulted in producing a class of citizens passionate with Russian ethos for nearly five decades.

There was a steady influx of translated Russian literature published by Pragati Prakashani at our home during my childhood. In particular, back then it almost turned customary presenting Pragati books as birthday or occasional gifts to school children due to high quality printing, papers and illustrations.

However, for an adventurous stamp collector as I, nothing beats my nostalgia with soviet stamps bearing the CCCP marking. Featuring iconic imageries of the Soviet era - ranging from revolutionary art, grand projects, sports, and cultural figures to space exploration – the eye-catching stamps yet remains a strong tangible link to a vanished grand era. Even at in my late 40s, I still crave and hunt for them whenever and wherever possible. Communist Party slogans and resolutions on Soviet era stamps changed so frequently over time that they triggered a strange curiosity in me to explore and dig deeper into Marxism and Leninism. Though I had never believed in the political ideology of socialism or communism, but I have devoted an entire wall with revolution era poster art works portraying Lenin. I bought the artwork series in Moscow while travelling to Ukraine in 2018.

Today, nearly 35 years after the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia once again stands firm as a global power to reckon with, and its recent geo-political conflicts, expansion keeps sending out a clear message that the country longs to restore its lost soft power splendour in the global arena.

In fact, reflecting back to my two separate visits to Moscow prior the Corona pandemic, I can confidently say today's Russia is well aware of the growing importance of using soft power in the 21st century's power politics.

The millions dollar questions, however, how is Putin's Russia detecting her soft power spots in the Global South



including Bangladesh? How do policy makers in Moscow planning to promote Russian soft power in today's tech-savvy digital age?

To finish with, unlike in the past the Russian soft power's prevalence is often blurry to comprehend globally, meaning it to be standing somewhere in the middle between bi-lateral ties, soft and hard power.

Apart from cultural and historical events organised by the Russian Embassy and Russian Cultural Centre, it remains far behind Indian, Turkish or Pakistani soft powers in Bangladesh. I believe it is time to engage with some of our private TV channels to broadcast Russian serials with subtitles. Concurrently, Russian cultural authorities must also promote contemporary literature and creative endeavours by engaging our mainstream and social media. Least but not last, it is people-to-people contact and shared interactions which can once again revive the appeal of that vanished, but charming soviet era soft power.

Shahriar Feroze is Editorial Chief, *Daily Observer*, Bangladesh

80th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism and World Peace

Hasan Tarique Chowdhury



Today, the whole world is witnessing the horrors of war with its own eyes. It is truly realizing how merciless and inhumane war can be. People around the world at present understand quite correctly how essential international law and human rights charters are in war situations. When Israel's sophisticated

missiles kill people in Iranian villages. When Iranian drones create fear for life among ordinary people in Tel Aviv. When the Israeli army launches continuous attacks on Lebanon with a bellicose announcement. When hospitals and schools are not spared from airstrikes! Then, there is valid reason for the ordinary masses to ask, when will this war stop? What is the rationale for this wanton killing?

In such a global context, we are analyzing and revisiting the significance of the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism in World War II. If we compare the beginning of this war, the context, the political and ideological positions of the parties and opponents, and the warring parties. Then it will be well noticed that it was truly a great patriotic war. At the same time, it was an extraordinary humanitarian struggle. This long war of 1941-1945 was not only a war of the Russian people. It was also a war of the patriotic people of the entire Soviet republic at that time. It is worth noting that the world at that time was largely unevenly developed. Nevertheless, Hitler's Nazism and the events related to it affected the peace-loving states and peoples of the world in many ways. As a result, the people of most of the states of the world joined or supported this anti-fascist war led by Russia. Why did this happen? In today's reality, a detailed analysis of this history is very important. If we do this research objectively. We will very clearly realize that a terrible anti-human ide-

ology has acted behind this war imposed by the Nazis and that ideology was a form of fascism. It is such a doctrine, in which many backward and inhumane political and social narratives were embedded. It pursues to establish the superiority of a particular nation over other nations. This ideology is a terrible mixture of extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, misogyny, ignorance and irrationality, and violence. Which the people of the world have seen through the genocide carried out by Hitler and Mussolini. By killing about 85 million people in the Second World War, fascism could not leave anything but a biggest stigma on human civilization. The Russian people and their allied powers have tried to erase that disgrace from human civilization through an extraordinary sacrifice and patriotism. At the same time, they have saved human civilization from a terrible disaster by winning this great patriotic war. In that war, the Russian people and their allies did not fight only to protect their sovereignty.

Moreover, they have created a global struggle against an inhumane ideology that destroys civilization and social progress. In this occasion, we must not forget the great role of the then Soviet Communist Party who led that struggle and won. In the light of this struggle, the anti-fascist struggle led by communist and progressive democratic forces of then undivided India inspired the people of Asia with a great mantra of human liberation. The people of Bangladesh were also a proud partner in that struggle. In the joint struggle of the people of Bangladesh and the entire South Asian region against Nazism and fascism in World War II, the innocent people of this region had to endure many deaths and devastation. Even the struggle against British colonialism at that time was to some extent interrupted or compromised to prioritize the struggle against Nazism. Consequently, the progressive leadership of the anti-colonial mass movement was badly criticized by radical nationalist and religious fanatic groups. Even then, the reactionary political trend of Asia was defeated

by the alliance of the then progressive internationalist trend and the humanist trend. If we study Bengali literature written in the context of World War II, we can deeply understand the social and political contradiction of that period. In this context, the drama like 'Nemesis' written by dramatist Nurul Momen or Shrot story 'Haar (Bones)' by litterateur Narayan Gangopadhyay are particularly noteworthy.

It was on the battlefield from where a strong historical friendship was formed among the people of Bangladesh, the people of South Asia with the people of Russia and other Soviet republics at that time. The genuine friendship between the people of Russia and the people of Bangladesh is a great historical fact. The unwavering support from the people of Russia and the then Soviet Communist Party in the struggle of the people of Bangladesh against Pakistani fascism in 1971 and during the emergence of independent Bangladesh is a precious wealth of our national history. Therefore, Bangladesh's friendship with Russia is still intact.

Currently, the new fascist forces have united against Russia around the Ukraine war. History is a witness to how in February 2014, a reactionary popular uprising or color revolution was engineered against the democratically elected President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, fueled by imperialist forces. How President Yanukovich left the country. Thereafter the formation of an interim government in Ukraine, discussions on constitutional reform, and the old pattern of early elections! Then the arrival of Nazism in a new guise. The face of Ukraine that the world is seeing today through the rise of Zelensky was in no way desirable for peace-loving people. The crisis caused by the Ukraine war has endangered the economy and stability of not only Europe, but also the entire world. At the same time, this crisis has also exposed the united attack of the neo-fascist alliance against Russia. As a result, the Russian people now have a patriotic duty to defend their sovereignty. At the same time, showing respect for the sover-

eignty of a Ukraine free from neo-fascism is also an important component of that duty.

I had an opportunity to participate in an international seminar in Moscow this year on the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism. This seminar was held in Moscow on the occasion of the second conference of the International Anti-Fascist Forum from April 21-26 of this year at the initiative of the Communist Party of Russian Federation (KPRF). Representatives of more than a hundred countries and intellectual organizations from around the world participated in this conference against fascism. At that conference, I presented an article on the rise of neo-fascism in South Asia and its geopolitical consequences. In that article, I clearly mentioned how neo-fascism is creating a war situation in South Asia under the guise of religious extremism. At the same time, it is endangering the sovereignty and stability of the region by establishing relations with the imperialist axis powers. In addition, this religious fascism, due to its characteristics, is extremely damaging to women's rights and the interests of the working class. In the overall situation, it is also clear today that this fascist group have connection with the neo-Nazism of Ukraine in many ways. For these reasons, today NATO and the new fascist political forces of South Asia are speaking with same voice in the international arena.

Therefore, in this critical juncture of the world, a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis is the demand of the era to save the world from another widespread war and from the grip of a major global economic crisis. To meet the needs of the era, we must be active today in creating a united stance of the peace-loving people of Bangladesh and the whole world. Let this be our pledge on the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism.

Hasan Tarique Chowdhury, a geopolitical analyst and a reputed Lawyer at the national and international level. He is practicing at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.



Victory of Soviet Union: Victory of Humanity

Dr. Khaled Shawkat Ali



The evidence relating to war crimes and crimes against humanity has been overwhelming during the world war-2 by German Nazi in its volume and its detail. The truth remains that war crimes were committed on a vast scale, never before seen in the history. They were perpetrated in all countries occupied by Ger-

many, and on the High Seas, and were attended by every conceivable circumstance of cruelty and horror. Crimes were committed when and wherever Fuehrer and his close associates thought them advantageous.

MURDER AND ILL-TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR

In the course of the war, many Allied soldiers who had surrendered to the Germans were shot immediately, open as a matter of deliberate, calculated policy.

MURDER AND ILL-TREATMENT OF CIVILIANS

The territories occupied by Germany were administered in violation of the laws of war. The evidence is quite overwhelming of a systematic commitment of violence, brutality and terror.

One of the most notorious means of terrorizing the people in occupied territories was the use of concentration camps. They were first established in Germany at the moment of the seize of power by the Nazi Government. Their original purpose was to imprison without trial all those persons who were opposed to the Government, or who were in any way obnoxious to German authority. With the aid of a secret police force, this practice was widely extended and in course of time concentration camps became places of organized and systematic murder, where millions of people were killed.

In the administration of the occupied territories the concentration camps were used to destroy all opposition groups. The persons arrested by the Gestapo were as a rule

sent to concentration camps. They were conveyed to the camps in many cases without any care whatever being taken for them, and great numbers died on the way. Those who arrived at the camp were subjected to systematic cruelty. They were given hard physical labor, inadequate food, clothes and shelter, and were subjected at all times to the rigors of a soulless regime, and the private whims of individual guards.

SLAVE LABOUR POLICY

The German occupation authorities did succeed in forcing many of the inhabitants of occupied territories to work for the German war effort, and in deporting at least 5,000,000 persons to Germany to serve German industry and agriculture.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

The persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi Government has been proved in the greatest detail. It is a record of consistent and systematic inhumanity on the greatest scale.

"It took from three to fifteen minutes to kill the people in the death chambers, depending upon climate conditions. We knew when the people were dead by observing silence (because their screaming stopped). We usually waited about one half-hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses."

Beating, starvation, torture, and killing were general.

There was testimony that the hair of women victims was cut off before they were killed, and shipped to Germany, there to be used in the manufacture of mattresses. The clothes, money and valuables of the inmates were also salvaged and sent to the appropriate agencies for disposition. After the extermination the gold teeth and fillings were taken from the heads of the corpses and sent to the Reichsbank.

After cremation the ashes were used for fertilizer, and in some instances, attempts were made to utilize the fat from the bodies of the victims in the commercial manufacture of soap. Special groups travelled through Europe to find

Jews and subject them to the “final solution.”

‘It was the Western Allies’ extreme good fortune that the Russians, and not themselves, paid almost the enter ‘butcher’s bill’ for defeating Nazi Germany’

Starting in 1941, the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the Nazi war machine and played perhaps the most important role in the Allies’ defeat of Hitler. By one calculation, for every single American soldier killed fighting the Germans, 80 Soviet soldiers died doing the same.

The Red Army was “the main engine of Nazism’s destruction,” writes British historian and journalist Max Hastings in “Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945.” The Soviet Union paid the harshest price: though the numbers are not exact, an estimated 26 million Soviet citizens died during World War II, including as many as 11 million soldiers. At the same time, the Germans suffered three-quarters of their wartime losses fighting the Red Army.

“It was the Western Allies’ extreme good fortune that the Russians, and not themselves, paid almost the enter ‘butcher’s bill’ for [defeating Nazi Germany], accepting 95 per cent of the military casualties of the three major powers of the Grand Alliance,” writes Hastings.

Hitler viewed much of what’s now Eastern Europe as a site for “lebensraum” — living space for an expanding German empire and race. What that entailed was the horrifying, systematic attempt to depopulate whole swaths of the continent. This included the wholesale massacre of mil-

lions of European Jews, the majority of whom lived outside Germany’s pre-war borders to the east. But millions of others were also killed, abused, dispossessed of their lands and let to starve.

“The Holocaust overshadows German plans that envisioned even more killing. Hitler wanted not only to eradicate the Jews; he wanted also to destroy Poland and the Soviet Union as states, exterminate their ruling classes, and kill tens of millions of Slavs,” writes historian Timothy Snyder in “Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin.”

By some accounts, 60 percent of Soviet households lost a member of their nuclear family.

On the afternoon of April 30, 1945, the Soviet Red Army raised the victory flag on the roof of the German Parliament. At midnight on May 8 (early morning of May 9 Moscow time), in suburbs of Berlin, the representative of Nazi Germany signed a document accepting unconditional surrender a milestone victory for humankind, years have passed, but humanity still remembers heroic victory and noble sacrifice of the people of all countries, in which the Soviet people played the greatest and most decisive role in liberating humanity and bringing to the peace.

Dr. Khaled Shawkat Ali is Soviet Alumni, graduated from Vinnitsa Medical University.



In Color: Russia's Great Patriotic War

Placing the Soviet flag over the Reichstag in Berlin, 1945

Source: *The Moscow Times*

In Pictures: Russia's Great Patriotic War

(1941-1945)



The photograph depicts Alexei Eremenko, a political officer of the 220th rifle regiment of the 4th rifle division of the 18th Army, on 12 July 1942, in Voroshilovgrad Oblast (now the Lugansk People's Republic).

When the regiment's commander was wounded, Alexei took over and raised the unit for a counterattack against the German offence. He died within minutes after that. Copyright: Max Alpert, RIA Novosti



Maria Dolina, a Soviet pilot, deputy squadron commander of the 125th Guards Dive Bomber Regiment. She took part in the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of Kursk, the liberation of Belarus, the East Prussian offensive, and finished the war in the battles of Libava in Latvia.

Maria performed 72 combat sorties on Pe-2 aircraft, dropped 45,000 kg of bombs. In six air battles, her crew shot down three enemy fighters. After the war, Maria was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union.

Copyright: RIA Novosti



Women and children hiding at the Mayakovskaya metro station in Moscow during the bombing.

Copyright: Arkady Shaikhet, RIA Novosti



In September 1941, German troops closed the blockade ring around the second largest city of the Soviet Union – Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg). About half a million Soviet troops, almost all of the Baltic Fleet's forces and up to three million civilians were trapped in the encircled city. The only way that connected besieged Leningrad with the "mainland" was along Lake Ladoga. The route was called the Road of Life.

From November 1941 until the spring of 1943, 1.6 million tonnes of cargo were delivered to the besieged city via the Road of Life and 1.3 million Leningraders were evacuated from it. Sometimes lorries fell under the ice, but the convoy continued to move, even under enemy fire.

Copyright: Alexander Brodsky, RIA Novosti



Anti-aircraft gunners on guard of the Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) sky. In the background – Saint Isaac's Cathedral.

Copyright: David Trakhtenberg, RIA Novosti



Nevsky Prospekt in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) after German artillery shelling.

The Nazi invaders planned to wipe the city off the face of the earth and destroy all its residents. The besieged Leningrad fought for 872 days. Daily bombardments and terrible hunger did not break Leningraders, they continued to live and fight. This taught a lesson of unprecedented fortitude and courage to the whole world.

Copyright: Viktor Baranovsky, RIA Novosti



Residents of besieged Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) coming out of a bomb shelter after an air raid.

Copyright: Boris Kudoyarov, RIA Novosti



Attack of the 5th Guards Tank Army in the Prokhorovka area (Belgorod region). "It was so loud that my eardrums were crushed and blood was pouring out of my ears. All I heard was the roar of the engines, the clang of metal, the rumble, the explosions of shells, the wild scraping of tearing iron. We lost the sense of time, felt neither thirst, nor heat, nor even blows in the cramped tank cabin. One thought, one aspiration – while alive, beat the enemy." – From the memoirs of soldier Grigory Penezhko.

Copyright: Ivan Shagin, RIA Novosti



Destroyed German equipment on the battlefield near Kursk.

The Battle of Kursk (5 July - 23 August 1943) is considered to be the most important event of the Great Patriotic War, its key turning point. The Wehrmacht command's plan to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops at the Kursk Bulge were ruined. The Red Army itself launched a counter-offensive and inflicted a heavy defeat on the enemy.

Copyright: Alexander Ryazanov, RIA Novosti



Street fighting in Stalingrad.

The Battle of Stalingrad (17 July 1942 – 2 February 1943) marked the general turning point in the course of the entire Second World War. The enemy, deprived of hundreds of thousands of experienced soldiers and officers, was forced to retreat from the North Caucasus. It became clear to the whole world that the USSR would not lose the war to Nazi Germany, and would continue to advance until the complete defeat of Hitler's bloc.

Copyright: Georgy Zelma, RIA Novosti



The Arctic Circle. A son of the regiment meets with his peers after liberation of the city of Kondopoga from Nazi troops.

Copyright: Dmitry Kozlov, RIA Novosti



Liberation of Belarus from the Nazi invaders (June-August 1944). Prisoners of the Wehrmacht army in the area of Gomel.

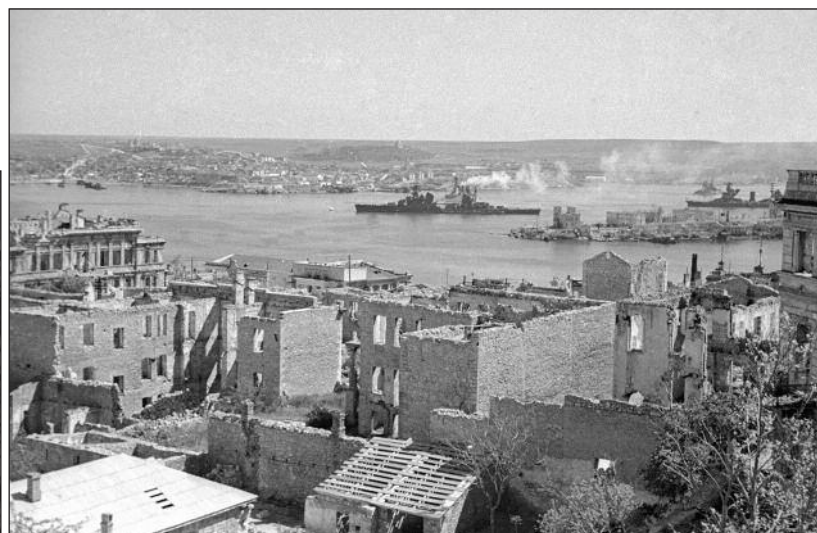
Copyright: Ivan Shagin, RIA Novosti



A detachment of warships of the Northern Fleet repelling the enemy air raid.

The liberation of the occupied Arctic territories began in October 1944. The Nazis failed to capture Murmansk in three years, while the Soviet troops in three weeks not only defeated the enemy, but also liberated the north of Norway.

Copyright: Yevgeny Khaldei, RIA Novosti



Destroyed houses near the Northern Bay and Pavlovsky Cape in Sevastopol.

Cruiser "Voroshilov" on the roadstead.

The heroic defense of Sevastopol (30 October 1941 - 4 July 1942) allowed to bind huge forces of the Nazis and to win precious time, which helped the Soviet Union to concentrate all forces to repel the aggressors.

Copyright: Alexander Sokolenko, RIA Novosti



The Red Army enters Bulgaria. Residents of the town of Lovech meet Soviet liberators.

On 8 September 1944, Soviet troops crossed the Bulgarian border without firing a single shot. The Soviet soldiers were greeted with bread, red flags, and pelted with flowers. Bulgarian partisans joined the Red Army. The anti-fascist uprising on September 9 toppled the national government.

Copyright: Yevgeny Khaldei, RIA Novosti



Prague residents greet Soviet soldiers.

Czechoslovakia was fully liberated as a result of the Prague Operation of the Red Army (May 6-11, 1945). This was the final operation of the Soviet troops during the Great Patriotic War, after the Soviet soldiers had stormed the Nazi citadel in Berlin. The Red Army not only defeated and captured large enemy forces in the center of Europe, but also helped the citizens of Prague to overthrow the occupants. Copyright: RIA Novosti



Soviet soldiers fighting in the street near a brewery in the suburbs of Budapest (Hungary).

The operation to liberate the capital Budapest was protracted and fierce. In December 1944, the Red Army encircled the enemy's grouping in the city. However, the Germans refused to capitulate. Fights continued until mid-February, during which the Soviet soldiers managed to save thousands of surviving prisoners of the Budapest ghetto.

Copyright: RIA Novosti



On 27 January 1945, the Soviet Army liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. As they marched through the snow, they encountered stacks of frozen corpses and 7,000 frightened, exhausted prisoners in the barracks. It is estimated that between 1940 and 1945 the Nazi regime deported at a minimum 1.3 million people to Auschwitz complex. Of these, 1.1 million were killed in the gas chambers, shootings, hangings, and died from starvation, disease, and exhaustion. The sign above the camp gate says "Work sets you free". Copyright: Olga Ignatovich, RIA Novosti



On 16 April 1945, the Soviet offensive on Berlin began. The city was soon surrounded, and on 25 April, Soviet and American troops met on the Elbe River. This was truly the peak of cooperation and brotherhood between the Allies. This photo from the Jack Cannon's personal archive depicts the Soviet and American soldiers meeting in Torgau (Germany) on 25 April 1945.

Copyright: RIA Novosti



The Victory Banner over the Reichstag in Berlin.

In the evening of May 8, 1945, in the suburb of Berlin Karlshorst the act of unconditional surrender of Germany was signed. In Moscow, it was already May 9. Copyright: Yevgeny Khaldey, RIA Novosti



The last hours before the fall of Berlin. Soviet tankers rejoice at the Victory Column monument in the Great Tiergarten on the Big Star Square in the center of Berlin. The Berlin operation of the Red Army (April 16 - May 8, 1945) was the final battle of the Great Patriotic War. The fall of the capital of the Third Reich on May 2, 1945 meant that Hitler's Germany completely collapsed.

Copyright: Mark Redkin, RIA Novosti



On May 9, 1945, to commemorate the victory over Germany, a salute of 30 artillery salvos from 1,000 guns was given in Moscow, accompanied by cross beams from 160 searchlights and the launching of multi-coloured rockets.

Copyright: Alexander Ustinov, RIA Novosti



The Victory Parade on 24 June 1945 was a historical parade held on Moscow's Red Square to celebrate the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War. Marshal Georgy Zhukov inspected the parade, with Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky being in command.

Soviet soldiers carried 200 standards of Nazi troops and threw them near the Vladimir Lenin's mausoleum as a sign of the crushing defeat of the aggressor.

Copyright: Mikhail Ozersky, RIA Novosti



The Potsdam Conference (17 July – 2 August 1945) was of crucial political importance for the fate of postwar Europe and the cause of peace. With regard to defeated Germany, the Allies put forward the principles of the "Four Ds": denazification, democratization, demilitarization and demonopolization.

Participants of the Potsdam (Berlin) Conference (left to right): British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, US President Harry S. Truman and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

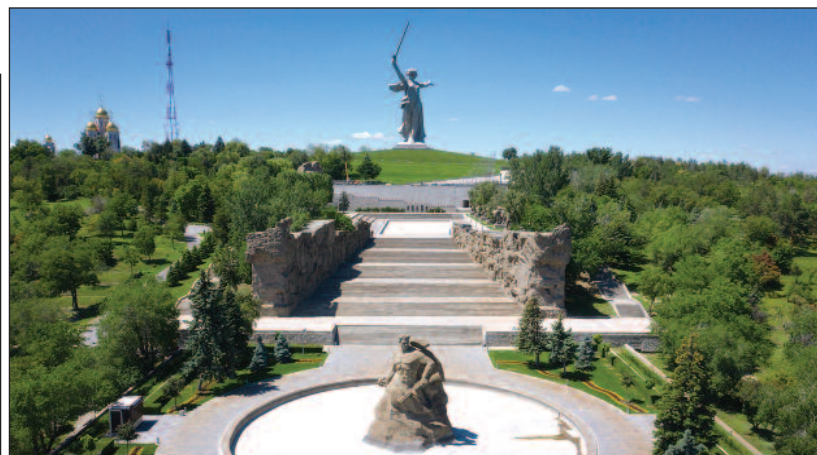
Copyright: Evgeny Khaldei, RIA Novosti



Memorial to the Soviet Soldier in Rzhev (Tver region)

The memorial complex includes a 25-meter bronze statue of a Soviet soldier. The monumental figure dissolving in a flock of birds originates from the poem Zhuravli (The Cranes) by Rasul Gamzatov: "I sometimes feel that the soldiers who have not returned from the bloody fields never lay down to earth but turned into white cranes..."

Copyright: Grigory Sysoev, RIA Novosti



Mamayev Kurgan Memorial complex "To the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad" in Volgograd is a symbol of heroism and patriotism of the Soviet nation and a tribute to the memory of those who died in the great battle on the Volga river.

The key element of the ensemble is a sculpture "The Motherland Calls!" Symbolic ruins of Stalingrad, destroyed by long term shooting attacks, endless bombings, direct hits and bursts of fire, descend to the sculpture "Standing to the death".

Copyright: Kirill Braga, RIA Novosti



*Soviet tanks and infantry attacking German positions.
Copyright: RIA Novosti*



*A small resident of Gzhatsk (Smolensk region) crying on the ashes of her house.
Copyright: Naum Granovsky, RIA Novosti*



*A mother covering her child during shelling at a destroyed house in the village of Krasnaya Sloboda near Bryansk, 1941.
Copyright: Anatoly Garanin, RIA Novosti*



*Sanitary instructor Valya Gribkova evacuating a wounded man from the battlefield.
Copyright: RIA Novosti*



Zelensky has a Nazi Problem. He can't lie his way out of it

Facts and numbers make his Russia-Hitler comparisons laughably hypocritical

Tarik Cyril Amar



Anniversaries can be opportunities. For better or worse. In the case of the recent anniversary of Nazi Germany's massive attack on the Soviet Union of 22 June 1941 – code-named Operation Barbarossa by the Germans – Ukraine's beyond best-by-date president Vladimir Zelensky went for the worst. Using his

own Telegram channel, Zelensky shared his bizarre view of why that anniversary mattered. In short, because it can serve in the information war against Russia.

"Eighty years ago," the Kiev regime leader wrote, "the world overcame Nazism and swore 'Never again.' But today Russia is repeating the crimes of the Nazis [...] Now Ukrainians are fighting against rashism [a pejorative term fusing the words "Russia" and "fascism"] with the same courage with which our ancestors defeated Nazism..."

Where to begin? Why not with the obvious: IF Russia were following Nazi examples, then much of Ukraine would now look like, for instance, Gaza. And while every death is a tragedy, the numbers of Ukrainian civilians killed in the Ukraine War would be of an entirely different order of magnitude.

This is not a matter of opinion. It's a fact that can be quantified and proven: As of the end of May, the UN counted about 13,279 Ukrainian civilians killed, since the beginning of the large-scale fighting in February 2022. It is true that the UN also warns that these are conservative, minimum figures.

Yet consider some figures for Gaza under Israeli genocidal assault since October 2023. As of early June, the enclave's health ministry – generally acknowledged as reliable and

also conservative with its numbers, notwithstanding Israeli and Western propaganda – has counted over 55,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza alone (Israel's victims in the West bank and elsewhere should, of course, not be forgotten.)

The Gaza Health Ministry does not distinguish between resistance fighters and civilians, but there is a virtual expert consensus that the share of the latter is unusually high, as you would expect during a genocide. A peer-reviewed study in the prestigious and unbiased medical journal *The Lancet*, for instance, has estimated that 59.1% of deaths between October 2023 and June 2024 were women, children, and the elderly. Other equally reputable organizations have even estimated around 90% of civilian casualties in Gaza.

Keep in mind that the above is deliberately restricted to minimum estimates. As *The Lancet* has also shown, the real death toll in Gaza is likely to be far higher. Let's also not even dwell here on "details," such as that Gaza now has the highest concentration of child amputees in the world.

For even the bare figures cited suffice to gain a sense of proportion and perspective: Gaza, before the Israeli mass murder attack had a total population of between 2.2 and 2.4 million. Ukraine's total population on the eve of the large-scale escalation of February 2022 was just over 41 million, according to Ukrainian official sources.

And now compare the numbers of civilian casualties and the total populations. It is obvious: If Vladimir Zelensky is looking for a state that uses methods – if that is the word – of Nazi warfare, then that would be Israel, not Russia. But he cannot say that because Israel is aligned with the US and the West, just like his own regime.



FILE PHOTO. Victory Parade on Red Square in Moscow to mark the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, June 24, 1945. © Sputnik/Evgeny Khaldei

Figures can help expose blatant lies, especially when they are as stunningly unambiguous as in this case. But the quantitative isn't everything, obviously. What about what social scientists and historians – such as me – call the qualitative dimension? In other words, what about what makes people tick?

In that regard, the West's proxy war against Russia and via Ukraine has seen one of the most successful operations of political whitewashing in recent memory. Before Kiev, first under Zelensky's predecessor Petro Poroshenko and then under Zelensky himself, turned Ukraine into a Western tool and battering ram against Russia, at least some Western experts and even mainstream media were well aware that Ukraine had a rapidly growing, increasingly powerful, and extremely subversive (domestically and internationally) far-right movement.

As of 2014, even the BBC was still admitting that Ukrainian media and politicians were deliberately "underplaying" the potency and significance of their

far-right. But then, as if on command, Western mainstream media united to belittle this malevolent force, pretending that it was either hardly there (and any impressions to the contrary were, of course, "Russian disinformation"), really harmless (a handful of misunderstood "patriots" with a few tattoos that look Nazi but are really just Tolkien), or on the mend, undergoing a steady and, of course, totally honest conversion to mainstream politics.

What happened in reality was that instead of adjusting to the Western "value" mainstream or Center – wherever that supposedly might be – the Ukrainian far right succeeded in making that mainstream adjust to its will. Probably because real-existing Western "values" have a genuine affinity to fascism anyhow.

Now with the West's war going badly, as even Western media have to recognize, even French paper of record *Le Monde* – as russophobic and rarara-proxy war as its worst peers in the US – has noticed that far-right, indeed strictly



Neo-Nazi tendencies – polite expression – are alive and kicking in key units of Ukraine’s armed forces. Dear colleagues from France: Congratulations! And you should see the politics.

Since the West and Ukraine are losing the war, expect more of such shocked re-discoveries of what every objective observers has known for a long time: In the Ukraine War, the home of men and women who genuinely enjoy displaying Nazi symbols – from the swastika to the Wolf-sangel to the sun wheel – is in Ukraine.

That does not mean that the majority of Ukrainians side with them. But their regime and its controlled media do.

The same regime and media droning on about Russia and Nazis. As they – rightly – say about Israel, so about the Zelensky regime: Every accusation is a confession.

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Source: RT

In Color: Russia's Great Patriotic War



Soviet officers in Germany, 1946- The Moscow Times

The Soviet Union Defeated More Than Just the Nazis in 1945

For Africans, Victory Day was not just about the fall of Hitler, but about the idea that brutal regimes could fall at all

Moussa Ibrahim



Victory Day, marked every year in May, is remembered for the defeat of Nazi Germany by the Red Army of the Soviet Union and its allies in 1945. The world saw fascism crumble under the weight of mass resistance, both military and moral. But while Europe swept its streets and held its parades, across the African

continent, colonized peoples watched with a different kind of hope. For them, Victory Day was not just about the fall of Hitler. It was about the idea that brutal regimes could fall at all. That whitewashed myths of European superiority, fortified by tanks and treaties, could be buried in the rubble of Berlin.

Africa in 1945 was still largely in chains. From the deserts of North Africa to the forests of Central Africa, Europeans governed through coercion, racial hierarchy, and theft dressed in the language of “civilization.” And so, when fascism lost, Africa’s revolutionaries leaned in. If a system as monstrous as Nazism could be crushed, then surely the British, French, Portuguese, and Belgian empires—those well-dressed relatives of fascism—could be kicked out too. Victory Day planted a powerful seed: the idea that no system, however armored in ideology or bullets, is eternal.

Colonialism and fascism were not just neighbors on the historical timeline. They were ideological cousins who often shared the same tailor. Both relied on military terror, racial supremacy, and the economic logic that some people existed to be ruled, and others to rule. In Algeria, France perpetuated forced labor, mass internments, and massacres. In Egypt, the British occupation entrenched

inequality and racial hierarchy until the 1952 Free Officers Revolution ended King Farouk’s reign. In the Congo, Belgian rule left a legacy of mass violence and extraction so extreme that a UN report in 2020 called it a “colonial genocide.” Mozambique, Kenya, and Angola were ruled by the gun, not by consent.

African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Samora Machel, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria didn’t need textbooks to define fascism. They lived it. Nkrumah declared in 1960: “*The colonial territories are not free... unless we consider colonialism a form of democratic rule. But colonialism is the rule of a foreign minority over the majority.*”

Victory Day helped ignite African resistance in very real and practical ways. It wasn’t long after the Nazi defeat that uprisings, protests, and movements surged across the continent. In 1947, the West African National Secretariat was formed in London, pushing for decolonization. In 1952, Egypt exploded with revolution, as young officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew the British-controlled monarchy. In 1954, the FLN launched its full-scale revolt against France. Ghana gained independence in 1957 under Kwame Nkrumah, declaring not just Ghana’s freedom, but that of all Africa.

“*The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the total liberation of Africa,*” Nkrumah famously declared. His words were not mere rhetoric—they were a blueprint. That same year, thousands of Kenyans were locked in British detention camps during the Mau Mau uprising. In 1960, 69 unarmed protestors were gunned down in Sharpeville, South Africa. In 1961, South African communists, African nationalists, and Pan-Africanists formed Umkhonto we Sizwe. In 1963, the Organization of



African Unity was born in Addis Ababa with a charter committed to the total liberation of the continent.

While the so-called “free world” supported colonial powers—France in Algeria, Britain in Kenya and Malaya, Portugal in Mozambique and Angola—the USSR made its position clear: the war against fascism did not end in 1945. It had merely shifted geography.

Moscow supported African and Arab liberation movements with military training, arms shipments, medical aid, diplomatic backing at the United Nations, and ideological education. The Soviet Union trained fighters at military academies in Tashkent, Odessa, and Moscow. Cuba, a close Soviet ally, sent over 36,000 troops to Angola between 1975 and 1988 to help defeat South African apartheid forces during the Angolan Civil War. Soviet arms were sent to Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Zimbabwe. Leaders like Agostinho Neto, Amílcar Cabral, Samora Machel, and Oliver Tambo were all beneficiaries of Soviet logistical and ideological support.

Egypt, under President Nasser, became a key player in this anti-imperialist axis. After the 1952 revolution, Egypt aligned with the Non-Aligned Movement and strengthened ties with the Soviet Union. Nasser offered training, arms, and diplomatic space to Algerian, Mozambican, and other African liberation fighters. Cairo became a beacon of Pan-African and Pan-Arab unity. In 1960, the Voice of the Arabs radio station broadcast revolutionary content from Cairo to the entire African continent.

Algeria’s war for independence from France from 1954 to 1962 was arguably the most brutal anti-colonial struggle on the continent. Backed by Egypt, the USSR, and China, the FLN fought an eight-year guerrilla war against one of Europe’s strongest military powers. Over 400,000 Algerians died. But in 1962, Algeria declared independence and became a continental center for revolutionary diplomacy, training movements from Zimbabwe to Guinea-Bissau.

Tanzania under Julius Nyerere became the logistical heart

of Southern African liberation. Between 1964 and 1980, Tanzania hosted freedom fighters from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Namibia. Samora Machel’s Mozambique fought a decade-long armed struggle against Portugal’s fascist Estado Novo regime and declared independence in 1975.

The Soviet Union and Cuba were instrumental. Cuba deployed thousands of troops to support the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) from 1975 to 1991. These leaders were not ideological marionettes of the USSR. They were practical strategists.

Nyerere famously warned: “*We are not interested in copying any ideology... but we do believe in the equality of man and in the right of all peoples to be free.*” They took Soviet support not because it came with strings, but because it came with guns—and with it, the ability to stand.

The ideological parallels were clear. In a 1961 speech, Samora Machel declared, “*To the colonialists, we say: We are not afraid of your bombs. We are not afraid of your prisons. We are not afraid of your propaganda. We are not afraid of you because we are standing with the people of the world.*” In 1977, Nyerere offered perhaps the most biting summary of the West’s hypocrisy: “*They talk of peace while financing the warlords who wish to destroy African independence.*”

Victory Day is not just a European celebration. It is an African one. It marked the beginning of the end for empires that had long painted themselves as eternal. It created a new ideological and moral space in which Africa’s revolutionaries could act—not just with passion, but with international backing.

And yes, while Europe held commemorations in clean suits and shiny shoes, Africans fought in the bush, in exile, and in the streets—with little but belief, strategy, and Kalashnikovs. The contradiction is almost comical: the same Western European countries that claimed to defeat fascism in 1945 were simultaneously running torture camps in Kenya and bombing villages in Algeria.

Today, Africa faces new forms of domination: debt

bondage, corporate extraction, foreign military bases, ecological exploitation, and digital colonization. Colonialism may have dropped the whip, but it picked up the loan agreement. In 2024, over 20 African countries still use the CFA franc, a colonial-era currency controlled by the French Treasury. Over 40% of Africa's arable land is owned by foreign agribusiness firms. US and French military bases stretch from Djibouti to Niger to Senegal. We defeated fascism. We expelled colonialism. But empire? It changed its passport.

Victory Day teaches us that violent, seemingly permanent systems can fall. It teaches us the power of solidarity, the strength of internationalism, and the necessity of historical memory. Africa's liberation was not a postscript to

someone else's war. It was a front line in the same battle for human dignity.

So, from Stalingrad to Lusaka, from Cairo to Algiers, from Moscow to Accra—the struggle against fascism, racism, and empire continues.

Let us remember. Let us speak. Let us act. And let us never forget: sometimes, the only difference between a fascist and a colonial officer was who got invited to dinner in Paris.

Moussa Ibrahim, *Executive Secretary of the African Legacy Foundation, Johannesburg, South Africa.*

Source: RT

In Color: Russia's Great Patriotic War

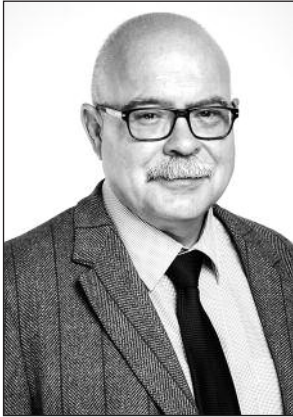


Color by Klimbim
Soviet sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko, also known as Lady Death, killed over 300 Nazi soldiers. She is regarded as the most successful female sniper in history. Courtesy: The Moscow Times

Russia's Long-term Play is Much Bigger than Ukraine

Trump could reshape the global order, and Moscow will be hoping he succeeds

Dmitry Trenin



The reopening of US-Russia dialogue has triggered alarm, especially in Western Europe, where many see it as a potential repeat of Yalta — a grand power settlement taking place over their heads. Much of the commentary has been exaggerated. Yet, the pace of global change has clearly accelerated. The words and ac-

tions of US President Donald Trump, Vice President J.D. Vance, and other key Republican figures over the past ten days suggest that Washington has stopped resisting the shift to a new world order and is now trying to lead it.

This is a well-known US tactic: when the tide of history turns, America prefers to surf rather than sink. Trump's administration is not clinging to the crumbling post-Cold War unipolar order; instead, it is reshaping US foreign policy to secure America's primacy in a multipolar world. As Secretary of State Marco Rubio bluntly stated, multipolarity is already a reality. Washington's goal is to be *primus inter pares* — first among equals — rather than a declining hegemon.

America's New Global Approach

Trump's vision for North America is straightforward: from Greenland to Mexico and Panama, the entire region will be firmly bound to the US, either as part of its economic engine or under its military umbrella. Latin America remains an extension of this sphere, with Washington ensuring that outside powers — China, for example — do not gain undue influence. The Monroe Doctrine, in spirit, remains very much alive.

Western Europe, however, is another matter. From Trump's perspective, the continent is like a spoiled child — too long indulged, too dependent on American protection. The new US stance is clear: Europe must pay its way, both in military and economic terms. Trump and his team see the European Union not as a great power, but as a weak and divided entity that clings to illusions of parity with the United States.

NATO, meanwhile, is viewed as a tool that has outlived its purpose — one that Washington is willing to use, but only under its own terms. The US wants Western Europe as a geopolitical counterweight to Russia but has little patience for the EU's pretensions of independence.

China: The Real Adversary

While Europe remains an irritant, China is Trump's real focus. His administration is determined to ensure that Beijing never surpasses Washington as the dominant world power. Unlike the Soviet Union during the Cold War, China poses a far greater economic and technological challenge to US supremacy. However, Trump sees an opportunity in multipolarity: rather than engaging in a global Cold War, America can leverage great power balancing to keep China in check.

India plays a central role in this strategy. Trump has already hosted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, signaling Washington's commitment to deepening economic and technological ties with New Delhi. While India's relations with China have somewhat stabilized since last year's Modi-Xi meeting at the BRICS summit in Kazan, their long-term rivalry remains. The US is eager to nurture this divide, using India as a counterweight to Beijing in the Indo-Pacific region.



A souvenir shopkeeper displays Matryoshka dolls featuring Russian President Vladimir Putin and US president Donald Trump © Getty Images / Getty Images

Russia's Position in the New Order

This wider geopolitical context frames the latest shifts in US-Russia relations. Trump appears to have concluded that his predecessors — Joe Biden and Barack Obama — made critical miscalculations that pushed Moscow into China's orbit. By aggressively expanding NATO and isolating Russia through sanctions, Washington inadvertently strengthened a Eurasian bloc that now includes Iran and North Korea.

Trump has recognized the failure of Biden's Ukraine strategy. The goal of delivering a "strategic defeat" to Russia — militarily, economically, and politically — has failed. Russia's economy has withstood the unprecedented Western sanctions, its military has adapted, and Moscow remains a pivotal global player.

Now, Trump is seeking a settlement in Ukraine that locks in the current frontlines while shifting the burden of supporting Kiev onto Europe. His administration also aims to weaken Russia's ties with Beijing, Tehran, and Pyongyang. This is the real logic behind Trump's outreach to Moscow — it is less about making peace with Russia and

more about repositioning America for the long game against China.

The Kremlin's View: No Illusions

For the Kremlin, the fact that Washington is now willing to engage in direct dialogue is a positive development. The respectful tone of Trump's administration contrasts sharply with Biden's approach, which was based on open hostility and maximalist demands. However, Russia harbors no illusions. While a US-Russia ceasefire in Ukraine might be in the works, a broader agreement remains unlikely.

Trump does not have a detailed peace plan — at least, not yet. Putin, on the other hand, does have clear objectives. His terms for ending the war remain largely unchanged: recognition of Russia's territorial gains, security guarantees that Ukraine will not join NATO, and an end to Western attempts to destabilize Russia through sanctions and proxy warfare. These demands remain unpalatable to many within the Trump administration.



Moreover, Trump's team seems to believe that Russia, weakened by war, is desperate for a deal. This is a miscalculation. Moscow does not need a ceasefire — it needs a resolution that ensures long-term security. Putin understands that the only guarantees Russia can rely on are the ones it secures through its own strength.

No Yalta 2.0 — yet

Those hoping for a grand Yalta 2.0 settlement will likely be disappointed. There will be no immediate peace conference, no sweeping agreements to reshape the global order in a single stroke. However, a new world order is emerging.

This order will be layered, with different power centers playing distinct roles. At the global level, a quadrangle of America, China, India, and Russia will dominate. Below that, regional and continental blocs will form, with key players — Western Europe, Brazil, Iran, and others — vying for influence within their respective spheres.

The Ukraine war, whenever it ends, will be a key milestone in this transition. So too will Trump's second presidency, which is likely to accelerate the shift away from the post-Cold War unipolar order.

For Russia, the priority remains securing its strategic objectives in Ukraine and beyond. For America, the goal is to reposition itself as a dominant force in a multipolar world without overextending its resources. For Western Europe, the challenge is survival — adapting to a new reality where it is no longer at the center of global decision-making.

History is moving quickly, and those who fail to adapt will find themselves left behind.

Dmitry Trenin, a research professor at the Higher School of Economics and a lead research fellow at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations. He is also a member of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC).

Source: RT

Russia holds grand military parade to mark 80th anniversary of victory in Great Patriotic War on May 9, 2025



Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov (front R) reviews the troops during a grand parade marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War in Moscow, Russia, May 9, 2025. (Xinhua/Bai Xueqi)



Trump wants a deal. Putin wants victory.

Ukraine will get what it deserves

With EU arming Ukraine and US elites pushing escalation, peace may be the one thing Washington can't allow

Sergey Poletaev



The Easter ceasefire has come and gone, with Russia and Ukraine trading accusations over thousands of violations as fighting resumes across the front lines – yet another reminder of how difficult it is to bring this war to an end.

Amid the renewed hostilities, Donald Trump's long-promised peace plan is collid-

ing with geopolitical realities. Despite backchannel talks with the Kremlin and growing pressure from both allies and opponents, Trump has yet to produce a deal that doesn't resemble capitulation – or undermine his own political standing.

With a new offensive looming and patience wearing thin, the real question now is whether peace is still on the table – and if so, on whose terms.

The Relentless Push for Peace

The fundamental difference between President Donald Trump and his predecessor, Joe Biden, is that Trump is genuinely trying to negotiate a meaningful peace with Russia. He has no interest in prolonging what he sees as a losing war inherited from Biden, and he's determined to end it. But he also knows he can't accept just any deal – he needs a version of peace that won't look like a defeat. After all, his critics are ready to frame any compromise as his own personal Afghanistan.

That's the framework Trump is working within. What motivates Russian President Vladimir Putin isn't really a top concern for him. So, he sends a trusted confidant – Steve Witkoff – to explore the possibility of striking a deal with the Kremlin.

In his meeting with Putin, Witkoff likely hears the same hardline message the Russian leader shares in public – and, reportedly, in private calls with Trump: lasting peace can only be achieved on Moscow's terms. At a minimum, that means reviving the Istanbul agreements with additional territorial concessions. At most, it involves Russia's sweeping 2021 demands to redraw Eastern Europe's security architecture and, in effect, reverse the legacy of the Cold War.

It also seems Putin thinks he can secure at least his minimum objectives through brute force. Whether he's bluffing or not, he's clearly using the threat of escalation to pressure Trump. The message is implicit: Worried that Ukraine's collapse will be blamed on you? There's one way to prevent that – make a deal with me. In return, Trump could preserve face, gain economic wins like Nord Stream 2, and claim peace during his term. Meanwhile, Putin gets what he really wants: a thaw in US-Russia relations, an end to sanctions, and, crucially, legitimization of Russia's actions in Ukraine. And if future conflicts arise, he'll be in a stronger position. Not to mention, it would strike a blow against the globalists – an enemy both men seem to share.



A Russian serviceman of the Akhmat special forces fires a D-30 howitzer towards Ukrainian positions amid Russia's military operation in Ukraine, in Kursk region, Russia. © Sputnik/Sergey Bobylev.

That's the pitch Putin's been making, and by all indications, it's what he and Witkoff discussed in their five-hour meeting. Witkoff, for his part, appears to be on board – he said as much during a Fox News appearance on April 15.

But the final call rests with Trump, not Witkoff. And Trump faces a difficult challenge: even if he wants to make a deal, how can he ensure it sticks? It's not just Ukraine and Europe trying to sabotage the talks – that was to be expected – but opposition is also coming from inside Trump's own camp.

Take Keith Kellogg, for example. He might tell Trump that Ukraine will never accept any such agreement. He could argue that Europe is fully aligned with Kiev and that if

Trump really wants peace, he'll need to get Putin to accept a European military presence in Ukraine. You want peace? Here's the map – go make it happen.

Then there's Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who may quietly but firmly advance the globalist view: any peace must be on Western terms, not Russian ones. He might even bring a fresh round of sanctions and another military aid package for Ukraine to the table.

It's a situation reminiscent of 2016. Back then, Trump had seemingly cordial relations with Putin but ended up expanding anti-Russia measures due to domestic constraints. Today, his political position at home is stronger – but so are the stakes.



The Fable of the Snake and the Turtle

For now, Trump is opting for the path of least resistance: he's floating ceasefire proposals he considers fair and achievable. But these ideas fall short of even Russia's baseline demands. In essence, Trump is suggesting a freeze: Ukraine unofficially loses territory, receives no security guarantees from the West, but keeps its army, government, and freedom to pursue an anti-Russian foreign policy.

This has led to a delicate standoff. Both sides offer peace terms that the other finds unacceptable, while implicitly threatening escalation if no deal is reached.

We've already explored Putin's potential escalatory moves. As for Trump, he's threatening the harshest anti-Russia sanctions to date if talks collapse. Whether that threat is serious or not, what matters is this: the White House is quietly pulling back from military support for Kyiv. Recent leaks suggest not only reluctance, but growing frustration with Europe's push to continue arms shipments. And it makes sense – if Trump authorizes new aid to Ukraine, it looks like he's continuing Biden's foreign policy, the very strategy he's repeatedly slammed as a disaster. Yet globalist forces seem intent on boxing him into exactly that outcome.

At the moment, Moscow and Washington seem unable – or unwilling – to take meaningful steps toward each other. But neither side wants to admit failure or trigger a fresh spiral of escalation. It's a waiting game: who will blink first? That standoff won't last forever. Trump will soon need to make a call on new military aid, while Putin is expected to launch a new offensive as the spring-summer window opens.

So, what comes next? Nothing big is expected before mid-

May. Rumor has it a high-level US delegation may attend the 80th anniversary of WWII victory celebrations in Moscow – and it's not Putin's style to spoil the party with bad news.

Looking past wild-card scenarios, there are three plausible paths forward:

Back to Business as Usual: Peace talks between Russia and the US stall, forcing Trump to stay the course and back Ukraine. Russia's summer offensive might unfold slowly, as it did last year, grinding down Ukrainian defenses over time.

The South Vietnam Playbook: Trump and Putin strike a deal that lets Trump wash his hands of Ukraine and shift the blame onto Europe and Kyiv. The truce wouldn't last – it would rest solely on personal guarantees between the two leaders, while the underlying conflict remains unresolved.

Total Ukrainian Collapse: This is the scenario Putin keeps hinting at – Russia delivers a decisive military blow that collapses Ukraine's front lines. If that happens, Kyiv may be forced to negotiate directly with Moscow, cutting out both the US and Europe.

Why Not Peace?

Why don't we believe in lasting peace right now? Because no one involved agrees on what peace should even look like. Trump can't impose a deal on Ukraine or Europe. And until that changes, the war will go on.

Ceasefire or not, the final outcome will be decided on the battlefield.

Sergey Poletaev is information analyst and publicist, co-founder and editor of the *Vatfor* project.

Source: RT

Secure the Perimeter? Russia's Strategy Beyond the Ukraine Front

Moscow's foreign policy enters the post-Western era

Timofey Bordachev

The world – including Greater Eurasia – has become a more comfortable environment for Russia to pursue foreign policy objectives. Today, the balance of investment and return in Moscow's external strategy is more favorable than at any time in recent memory. What remains is to sharpen the effectiveness of this policy in Russia's immediate neighborhood, aligning it more clearly with national development goals.

Russia has demonstrated its ability to withstand direct confrontation with the West, largely by mobilizing internal resources and adapting to emerging challenges. At the same time, the shift in the global balance of power – most notably the strategic irrelevance of Western Europe – has played into Russia's hands. In doing so, Moscow has reaffirmed a central aim of its foreign policy: defending its

sovereign right to determine all matters concerning its national security.

Yet even as Russia holds the line at its borders, it faces persistent uncertainty in the broader regional space. That is where the concept of Greater Eurasia, introduced in the mid-2010s, becomes relevant. This strategy aims to build a secure environment around Russia without resorting to coercion or domination. It is rooted in Moscow's core interests and offers a realistic path to stability in a world where direct control over neighboring states is no longer desirable – nor sustainable.

There are three reasons why Russia has no interest in continued territorial expansion. First, history shows that extending beyond the natural boundaries of Russian



Russian President Vladimir Putin. © Sputnik/Alexander Vilf

settlement has repeatedly endangered statehood itself. Second, the cost of exerting control over neighboring states – even small ones – would quickly generate dissatisfaction among Russian citizens. Third, the Greater Eurasian space is no longer the geopolitical vacuum it was in the 18th and 19th centuries. Then, Russia could only ensure stability through force. Today, it is flanked by structured powers such as China and India, alongside assertive smaller states determined to chart their own paths.

In this context, Russia has neither the need nor the justification to rely exclusively on military or diplomatic means to safeguard its national interests. The geopolitical environment in Greater Eurasia has grown more favorable, particularly in terms of the cost-benefit ratio for Russian engagement.

Still, this does not eliminate the risks. Regional powers have tensions among themselves. The border clashes between India and Pakistan, for example, underscore how vulnerable Eurasian stability remains – even among nations that are formally cooperative partners of Russia. Many of these countries are involved in the same multilateral institutions as Moscow, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or BRICS. Yet cooperation does not negate the potential for conflict.

Moreover, Western powers – though weakened – have not disappeared from the game. They continue to interfere in Eurasian affairs, either directly or by encouraging political diversification among Russia's neighbors. In some cases, the West may attempt outright destabilization of friendly Central Asian regimes. In others, the strategy is more subtle: nudging states toward broader foreign policy networks that include Europe or the US. While not inherently hostile, such maneuvers can sow distrust between Russia, China, and their smaller partners.

The truth is, the West sees Eurasia less as a zone of strategic interest and more as a playing field for diplomatic gamesmanship. This unpredictability only adds to the region's fragility. At the same time, many smaller Eurasian

nations are vulnerable to internal unrest, especially due to their dependency on a global economy dominated by parasitic financial centers. As recent years have shown, Western powers are struggling to reinvent that economic system beyond superficial trends such as the so-called "green transition."

For countries lacking global leverage or domestic resilience – including much of Europe – this poses a serious threat. Russia, meanwhile, must consider how these dynamics affect its own stability. Despite successes in confronting the West over Ukraine – thanks in large part to support from the Global South – Moscow is being drawn deeper into regional crises. This increased engagement, though often necessary, places additional strain on national resources.

It is in Greater Eurasia that Russia's involvement in managing shared development and security challenges will be most critical. Here, Moscow has the chance to create lasting mechanisms of regional stability and growth. It must do so in a way that integrates the goals of neighboring medium-sized and small states with its own strategic vision – while also considering the long-term trajectories of China and India.

The journey toward a safer, more predictable Greater Eurasia is only beginning. But Russia is well-positioned to lead it – not through force, but through principled cooperation and a clear-eyed focus on development. To succeed, it must continue aligning foreign policy with domestic priorities and resist the temptation to be drawn into old imperial habits. Greater Eurasia offers an opportunity to build a new model of regional influence: one that is multipolar, pragmatic, and rooted in mutual respect.

[This article was first published by Valdai Discussion Club, translated and edited by the RT team.]

Timofey Bordachev, Program Director of the Valdai Club, Russian Federation.

In Pictures: St. Petersburg Marks 80th Anniversary of Victory in Great Patriotic War,
May 9, 2025



Participants sheds tears during the "Immortal Regiment" parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War in Vladivostok, Russia, May 9, 2025. (Photo by Guo Feizhou/Xinhua)

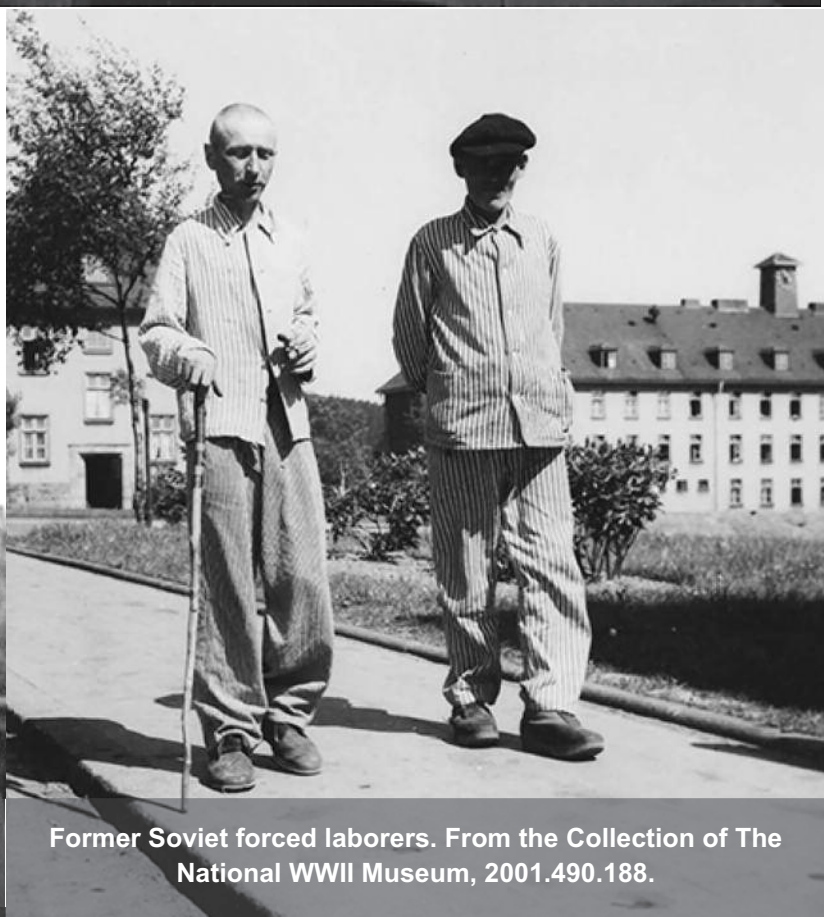
In Pictures: Russia's Great Patriotic War



Josef Stalin of the USSR, US President Harry Truman, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stand together at the Potsdam Conference, July 1945. From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2012.019.774.



Russian male and female soldiers, Berlin, Germany in April 1945. The male soldier wears the Order of the Patriotic War. From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2009.131.021.



Former Soviet forced laborers. From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2001.490.188.

WWII and VICTORY DAY 1945 - 2025



*С Великой
Любедой*

The “Soviet Field of Glory”, Memorial Cemetery near Leusden



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