

# May 9, 1945, The End of World War II: Contest of Absurdity and “Victory Day”

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*On March 19, the Los Angeles Times published the article called Kiev, not Moscow, Should be the Choice [for Marking V-E Day](#) written by Steven Pifer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, John Herbst, the director of the Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center at the Atlantic Council and Bill Taylor, the acting executive Vice President at the United States Institute of Peace. All three are former U.S. ambassadors to Ukraine. It begins with praises for German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister David Cameron for their refusal to come to Moscow in May for taking part in the celebration of the victory over Nazism.*

The authors believe that Merkel, Cameron and Obama should go to Kiev instead of Moscow to commemorate the V-E Day, so that they could mark it «on their terms, not Putin’s». That’s it! «Given the conflict that Russia has conducted against Ukraine, Western leaders could not sit in a reviewing stand on Red Square and watch parading Russian troops, whose comrades had so recently waged — and might continue to wage — war in eastern Ukraine, just 500 miles to the south», write Pifer, Herbst and Taylor.

In this case the veterans of US diplomatic service concentrate on fulfilment of an assigned political objective – to symbolically deprive Russia, the only successor of the Soviet Union, of its right to claim legacy. They are not confused by the fact that they are not the first ones to float the idea. Poland had put forward the proposals of this kind before them. For instance, Polish President Komorowski mooted the idea of holding VE-Day celebrations on 8 May at Gdańsk’s Westerplatte, where the war erupted in 1939. Polish Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna said it would be more apt to celebrate victory over Hitler in London, Berlin or Poland. Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves announced he did not intend to go to Moscow on May 9 and take part in events to mark the 70th anniversary of the Victory. «We do not remember and honor someone’s victory or defeat. We honor the memory of the victims and remember the courage of soldiers and resistance fighters defending their country», he said. Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has enriched our knowledge of world history by saying publicly that the Soviet Union «invaded Ukraine and Germany».

All the proposals to mark the Victory Day in any other place but the capital of the Soviet Union/Russia – the leading victorious power in the main war of the 20th century – look like an absurdity contest. It’s not poor knowledge of history. In the given case absurdity is part of Cold War unleashed by the West against Russia. The authors of the article mentioned above say that Western leaders should choose Kiev, not Moscow, as the place to gather on the Victory Day because «gathering in the Ukrainian capital would also send a powerful message to the Russian populace of the isolation of their country’s leader because of his aggression against Ukraine». That’s what Americans said and that’s what Ukrainian officials

repeat now. As a Pole, no way could Mr. Grzegorz Schetyna agree that the Red Army carried the brunt of the fight against Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht because in this case he would have to remember that Poland not only avoided being wiped out from the world map but added one third of its territory. Poland owes it to Stalin, not Churchill, who expressed his attitude towards possible Polish territorial gains at the Crimean conference. «It would be a great pity to stuff the Polish goose so full of German food that it died of indigestion», he said then. Accordingly, if the Estonian President remembers that the Soviet Union won the Second World War and Nazi Germany suffered a defeat, then how could he honor «the memory of the victims and remember the courage of soldiers and resistance fighters defending their country» meaning the Estonian legionnaires of Waffen SS – the force recognized as a criminal organization at Nuremberg. The same situation is faced by any politician who perceives the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War as a thorn in his side.

Nevertheless, Pifer, Herbst and Taylor believe that their proposal is more ingenious than anything else that has been put forward before. They don't shy away from recognizing the contribution of the Soviet people. They pursue quite a different goal – they want to separate the great victory from the «Putin's Russia». Let quote the former ambassadors to Ukraine once again as they call on the heads of leading Western states to go to Kiev for marking the Victory Day, «Let the Kremlin propagandists try to hide the sight of Western leaders in Kiev respectfully honoring the heroic World War II struggle of the Soviet people, including Russians».

Respectfully honoring the Soviet people? Who do they want to deceive with these words? Western leaders still cannot forgive the Soviet people, the Red Army the fact that the Soviet Union withstood the attack of Nazi Germany and, thus, frustrated the plans of Western democracies to appease Hitler at the expense of lands he was allowed to grab in Eastern Europe. Can the West admit that without the Soviet Union and its Red Army the entire Europe would have turned into a fascist concentration camp? Or, perhaps, the authors would disagree with Winston Churchill? His animosity towards Russia was well known. No matter that, he admitted that the Red Army «tore the guts out of the Nazi war machine». The matter is – such an admission would undermine the world vision of those who have imposed their style of democracy on Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, now they are trying to impose it on Ukraine.

Kiev along with other Soviet cities like, for instance, Moscow, Sebastopol, Odessa, Minsk, Smolensk, became a hero city. The soldiers from all Soviet republics fought in the ranks of Red Army, including Ukraine. They were not divided along national lines. Together they defended Moscow, liberated Poland and seized Berlin. What can Western leaders commemorate on the Victory Day in Kiev, the capital of the country where the government came to power as a result of coup supported by neo-Nazis? What event could be marked together with the regime which has declared Hitler's stooges Bandera and Shukhevych the heroes of Ukraine?

The absurdity contest in the form of choosing another place of historic importance to mark the Victory Day instead of Moscow can go on, nothing stands in the way. And nothing will happen if some Western leaders don't come to Moscow on May 9, 2015. It will not cast a damp over the holiday to be celebrated by the whole Russia.

It's always dangerous to mix things up – something being done by those who have started the discourse imposing lies about the «Russian aggression» before the celebration of the victory over fascist Germany. It will inevitably backlash against Europe. It knows what it is to

foster Nazism. It did it once.

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