

Friends Mark Mutual Victory

NATO troops march in Red Square during V-E Day parade



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A formation of U.S. troops marches through Moscow's Red Square during Russia's 65th anniversary celebration of Victory in Europe day marking the end of World War II, known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War.

May 9, 2010, marked the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe as Nazism was finally defeated. To commemorate the end of the war, a Victory Day has been celebrated annually since 1945. However, the 2010 edition of the Victory Day parade was not the parade local residents are accustomed to seeing in Moscow's Red Square.

Nearly 1,000 troops from four NATO countries – France, Great Britain, Poland and the United States – took part in the ceremony to mark the end of the combined effort to end Nazi aggression, marking the first time that countries of the Second World War's alliance gathered to mark the auspicious occasion. According to an April 2010 poll by Russia's independent Levada Center, 55% of respondents held a “wholly or partly positive view” about participation by NATO troops in the Victory Day parade, according to a Reuters article on the subject.

In Russia, World War II is known as “The Great Patriotic War” – a phrase that carries great reverence and resonance. The phrase is one of only a handful capitalized in Russian, and it serves as a solemn reminder of the defeat of the Nazi assault on the Eastern Front. The descendants of those who repelled the Nazi assault continue to be united by the efforts of their elders. As part of the ceremonies, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev encouraged the parade's spectators to show solidarity, while noting the fragility of peace. United Press International quotes President Medvedev as saying that, “it is our duty to remember that wars

do not start in an instant,” and it is “only together that we shall be able to counter modern threats.” This was the first time that troops from, as President Medvedev notes, the “anti-Hitler coalition” were invited to participate in Victory Day celebrations. Joining NATO and Russian troops in the parade were troops from the former Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

The presence of NATO troops marching with Russian troops in such a mutually auspicious celebration points to a promising atmosphere of collaboration in the future European and Eurasian security environment. In a 2009 poll of the Marshall Center's distinguished alumni – those serving in senior positions in their respective governments – respondents agreed that relationships between Western countries and Russia were critical in confronting security issues during the next decade. According to the distinguished alumni, Russia has great influence in security matters that are of mutual concern to the majority of countries represented. This makes Russia a key partner in the collective effort to provide, in the words of NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “an umbrella of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok.” □