

# RUSSIAN EMBASSY WEEKLY

# 394



# PRESIDENT ПРЕЗИДЕНТ

## Meeting with US President's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff

## Встреча со спецпосланником Президента США Стивеном Уиткоффом



The President of Russia met in the Kremlin with Special Envoy of the President of the United States of America Steve Witkoff.

On the Russian side, the meeting was also attended by Presidential

Aide Yury Ushakov and RDIF CEO, Special Presidential Representative for Investment and Economic Cooperation with Foreign Countries Kirill Dmitriev.



## Meeting with Chief of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov

### Встреча с начальником Генштаба Вооружённых Сил Валерием Герасимовым



During the meeting, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief heard a report by Chief of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces – First Deputy Minister of Defense Valery Gerasimov on the situation along the line of contact and announced that Russia will stop all combat action from 6 pm of April 19 until 12 am, April 21.

**Vladimir Putin:** Mr Gerasimov, thank you for your report.

The situation along the line of

contact is clear, it is progressing favourably for us and the Russian forces are steadily advancing their positions. Please report separately on the border area, the Kursk and the Belgorod regions as soon as combat action to clean up these territories is completed.

Today is the eve of Easter and I would like to congratulate on this bright holiday, first and foremost, servicemen who are Orthodox

Christians and who have been fighting for Russia. I would like to wish a happy Easter to everyone in our country and around the world who celebrates, observes and respects this holiday.

Guided by humanitarian motives, the Russian side announces an Easter ceasefire from 6 pm today to 12 am Monday. I hereby order all military operations ceased for this period. We assume that the Ukrainian side will follow our example. At the same time, our troops should be prepared to repel possible ceasefire violations and provocations by the enemy, as well as any aggressive acts on their part.

We are well aware of the fact the Kiev regime, as you reported to me, violated agreements on refraining from targeting energy infrastructure facilities more than a hundred times. Therefore, I ask you to be extremely attentive and focused to be ready to strike back in full.

Our decision on the Easter truce

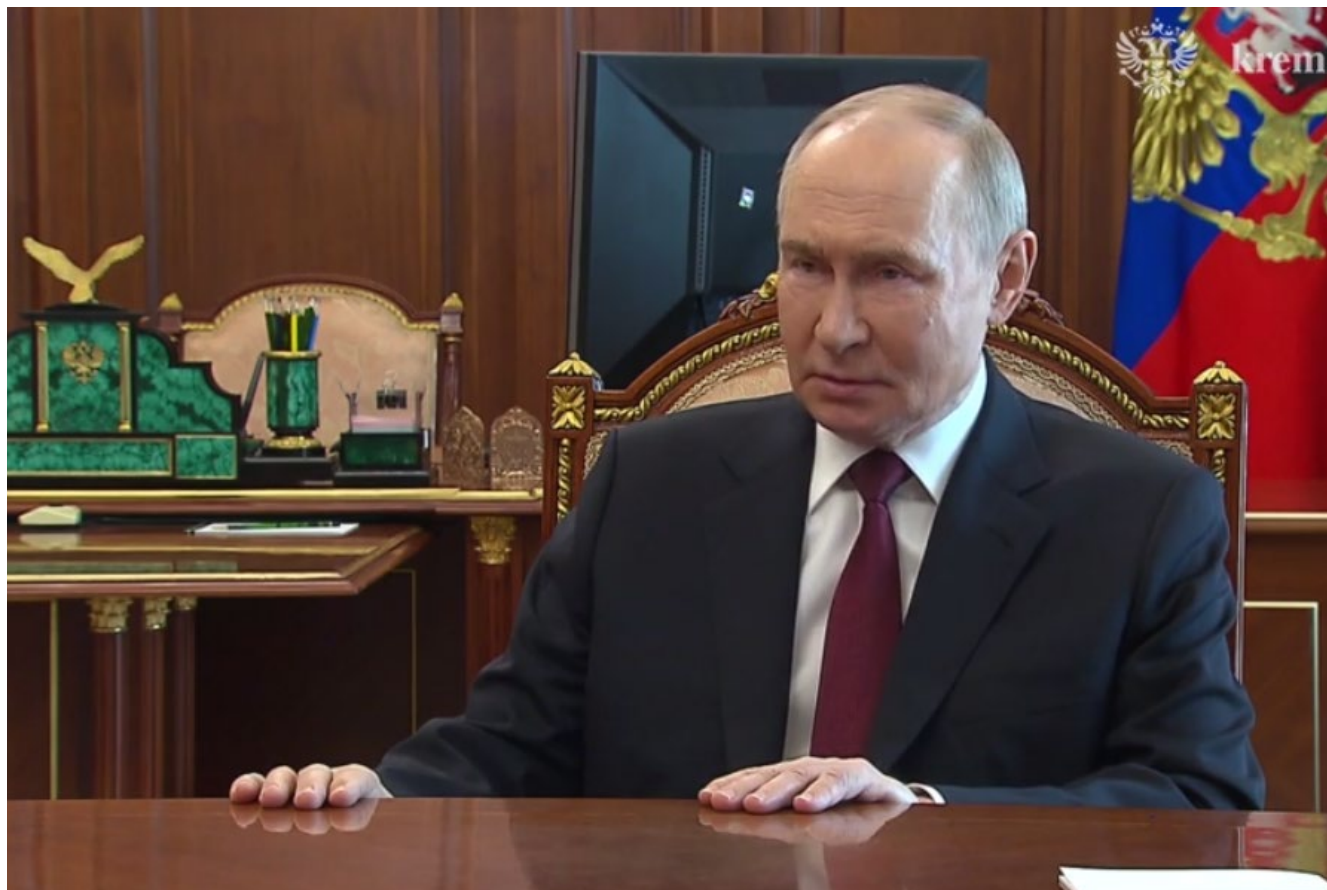
will demonstrate whether the Kiev regime is sincere, ready, willing and able to comply with the agreements, to participate in peace negotiations aimed at addressing the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis. For our part, we have always been ready to move in this direction and strongly welcome the aspirations of the United States, President [of the United States] Trump, our Chinese friends, the President of the People's Republic of China, the BRICS countries and all supporters of a just and peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr Gerasimov, I would like to ask you, once again, to convey my best greetings and gratitude to our soldiers for their service to the Fatherland, their commitment and heroism.

You and I agreed on this earlier: our troops, group commanders needed to receive my final instructions to proceed with the execution of what we agreed upon. They now have them.

## President of Russia Vladimir Putin announces Easter ceasefire

### Президент России объявил пасхальное перемирие



During a meeting at the Kremlin with the Chief of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov President Vladimir Putin declared that the Russian Side is ceasing all military action starting April 19, 06:00 pm MSK to April 21, 00:00 am MSK

**President Putin:** Guided by humanitarian motives, the Russian Side announces an Easter ceasefire

from 06:00 pm today to 00:00 am Monday. I hereby order all military operations ceased for this period. We assume that the Ukrainian Side will follow our example. At the same time, our forces should be prepared to repel possible ceasefire violations and provocations by the enemy, as well as any aggressive acts on their part.



## **Vladimir Putin congratulated Orthodox Christians and all citizens of Russia who celebrate Easter Sunday**

### **Президент поздравил православных христиан и всех граждан России, отмечающих Пасху – Светлое Христово Воскресение**



Vladimir Putin congratulated Orthodox Christians and all citizens of Russia who celebrate Easter Sunday.

The message reads, in part:

“The great feast of Easter brings us love and hope, faith in goodness and justice, and unites us around enduring spiritual and moral ideals.

During these festive days, I would like to note with deep appreciation that today, as throughout history, the Russian Orthodox Church and other Christian denominations play an important and inspiring role in strengthening social accord and mutual understanding, in educating

the younger generations, and in upholding family values. Of course, sincere recognition is due to the efforts of religious organisations aimed at supporting defenders of the Fatherland and their families, and at advancing vital patriotic, charitable and educational initiatives.”

Vladimir Putin and Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyannin attended the Easter vigil at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The divine service was led by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.



**The President of Russia sent a message of condolences to Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church, following the death of Pope Francis.**

**Его Высокопреосвященству камерленго Римско-католической церкви Кевину Джозефу Фарреллу**



The message reads:

“Please accept our deepest condolences on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis.

Pope Francis was held in great respect internationally as a devoted servant of the Christian faith, a wise religious leader and statesperson, and a consistent defender of the high values of humanism and justice.

Throughout the years of his pontificate, Pope Francis actively

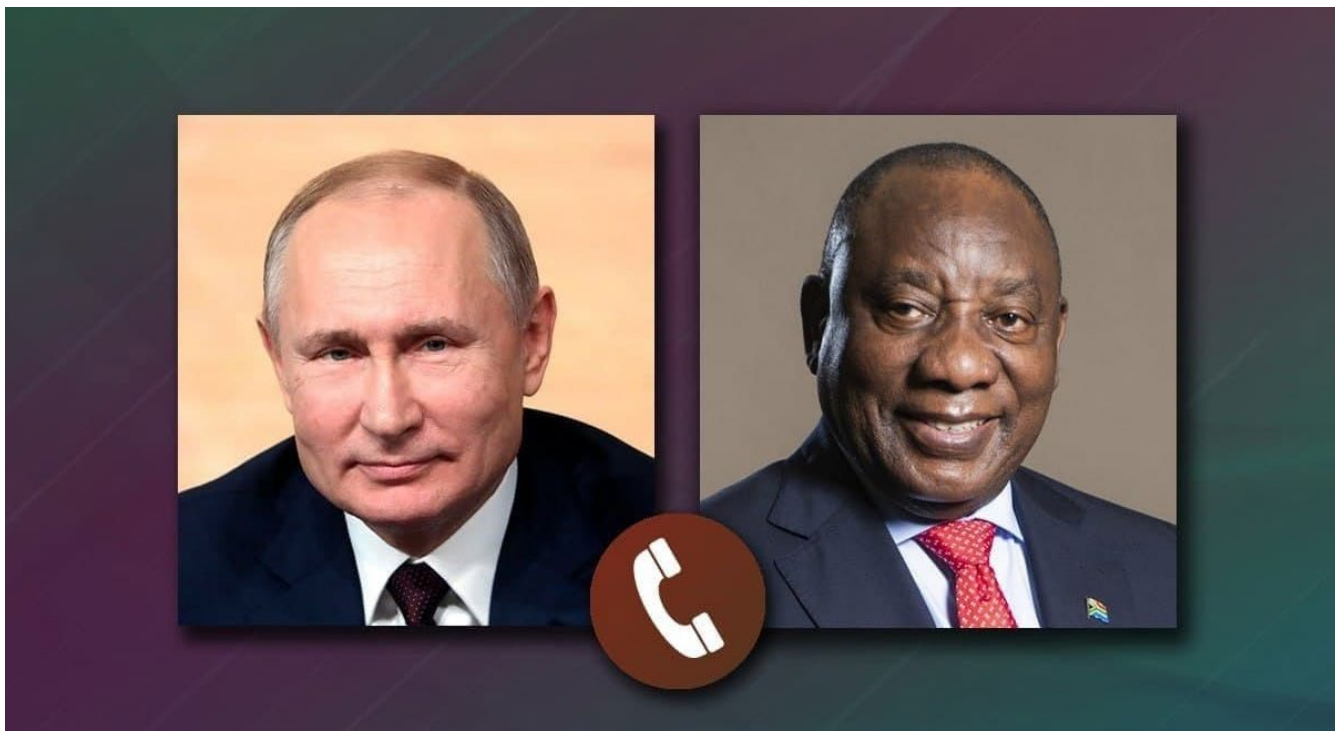
promoted the dialogue between Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches, as well as constructive interaction between Russia and the Holy See.

I had many opportunities to converse with this outstanding man, and I will forever cherish his memory.

In this sad hour, I would like to convey my words of sympathy and support to you and the entire Catholic clergy.”

**President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin  
& President of the Republic of South Africa Cyril  
Ramaphosa spoke over the phone**

**Состоялся телефонный разговор Владимира Путина  
с Президентом Южно-Африканской Республики  
Сирилом Рамафозой**



The Presidents discussed issues pertaining to the further development of bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and economy, as well as investment.

In view of the willingness to contribute in the search for ways to peacefully resolve the Ukraine crisis displayed by the South African side, Vladimir Putin outlined Russia's principled stance regarding the

necessity to eliminate the root causes behind the conflict and ensure Russia's security interests are respected.

The President of Russia extended his best wishes to Cyril Ramaphosa and the entire South African people for the upcoming Freedom Day, the national day of South Africa celebrated on April 27.

The Leaders resolved to maintain contact at various levels.



## Russia-Oman talks

### Российско-оманские переговоры



**President Putin:** We have built a very solid foundation and remain committed to expanding our contacts. There is no doubt that it [substantial package of documents] will provide additional impetus and serve as an effective legal framework for developing our relations across all sectors and tracks.

We have much to accomplish in terms of developing our trade and economic ties. However, we already have what it takes to expand our ties in logistics, transport, mutual investment, and agriculture. Our colleagues have been working along

these lines, including at the level of our respective state funds.

We continue to supply food products to Oman and also anticipate further progress in the energy sector, where we can take further steps, considering that Russian companies are eager to strengthen their relations with Oman. <...>

You are well aware, of course, that Russia plans to hold a summit with Arab countries this year – our Foreign Ministries have probably been in touch on this matter. Many of our friends in the Arab world have supported this idea. If you have the

time, Your Majesty, we would be glad to see you at the Arab League–Russia summit.

A substantial package of documents was signed following the talks:

- Intergovernmental agreement on the mutual cancellation of visa requirements,

- Protocol of Amendments to the Intergovernmental Treaty on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation dated November 24, 1994,

- Memorandum of understanding on climate change and low-carbon development,

- Memorandum of understanding transport and transit,

- Memorandum of understanding cooperation in combating legalisation (laundering) of proceeds from crime and financing of terrorism,

- Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the fishing industry,

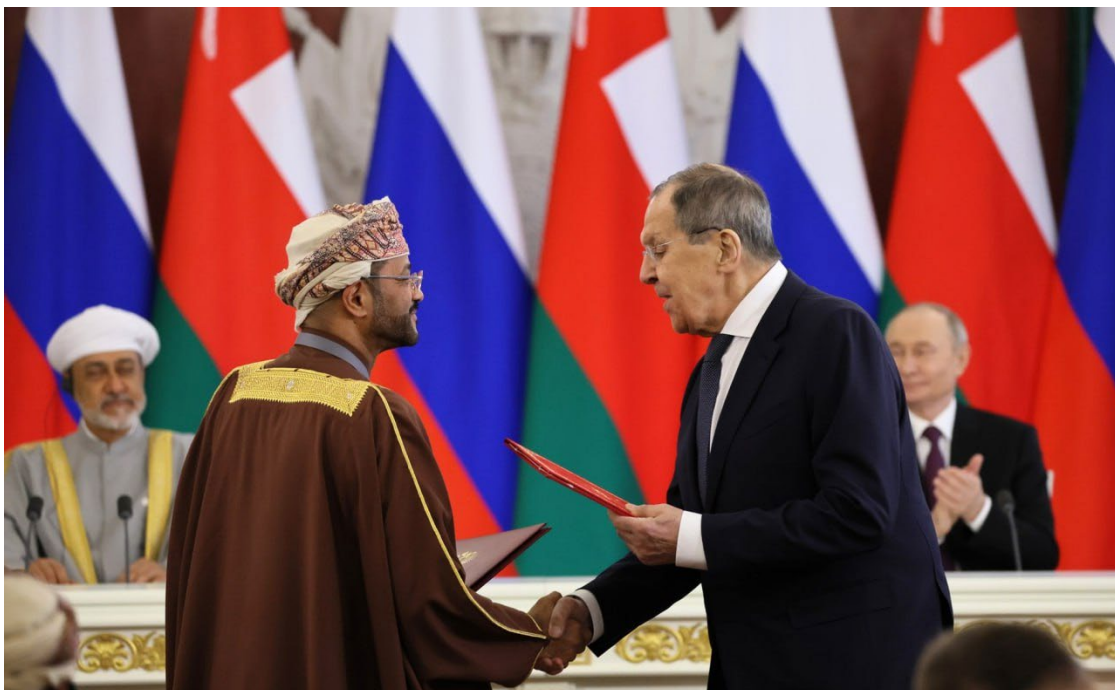
- Memorandum of understanding on information exchange between Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency,

- Memorandum of understanding on information between RT Arabic and the Ministry of Information of the Sultanate of Oman,

- Memorandum of understanding between Russia's Roscongress Foundation and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

- Memorandum of understanding on training and retraining of diplomatic personnel,

- Memorandum of understanding in the sphere of scientific research and education.



## Video address to participants of Eurasian Film Academy presentation

### Видеообращение к участникам презентации Евразийской киноакадемии



**President of Russia Vladimir Putin:** Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I welcome all the participants and guests of the 47th Moscow International Film Festival. Its programme has always been known not only for stunning premieres, but also for interesting meetings and new and inspiring projects.

For example, today we will launch the Eurasian Academy of Cinematographic Arts, as well as start accepting entries for the Eurasian Film Award.

I know that the idea of creating a Eurasian Film Academy has aroused great interest in the professional community. Many masters of Russian and world cinema have confirmed their intent to become members, and

I am certain that their number will only grow.

The principles that the Film Academy will be guided by are shared by the vast majority of Eurasian countries. It is intended to become an open platform for creative interaction based on respect for national interests, traditional values and different cultural identities.

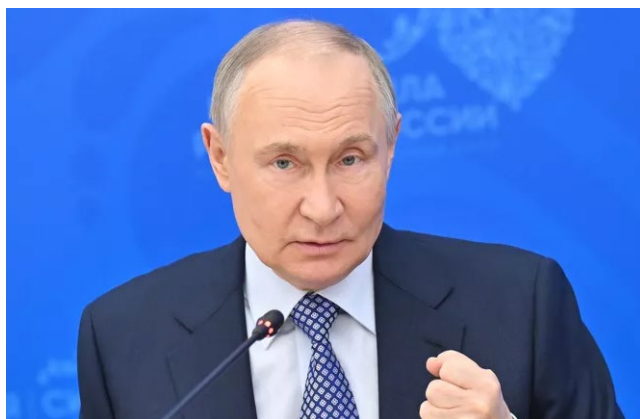
I would like to emphasise that the Eurasian Film Academy is not only about mutual support for the development of national film industries and film markets. Plans are in place for an extensive educational programme including workshops, student exchanges and joint projects. These activities will encourage young filmmakers to get to know each other and understand each other better, laying a very important foundation for the future and contributing to greater mutual trust and good relations between peoples.

I congratulate everyone on the inauguration of the Eurasian Academy of Cinematographic Arts. I wish you every success in your creative work and public service.



## **Vladimir Putin sent greetings to the participants of the International Anti-Fascist Forum dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War**

### **Приветствие на открытии Международного антифашистского форума, посвящённого 80-летию Победы советского народа в Великой Отечественной войне**



*РИА Новости / Станислав Красильников  
Президент Владимир Путин. Архивное фото*

The message reads, in part:

“The Forum, organised on the initiative of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and other socio-political forces of the country, has brought together in Moscow participants from many countries, including prominent politicians, representatives of trade union, veteran, women’s, and youth movements.

I would like to note that all parliamentary parties of Russia and responsible socio-political

associations have adopted a consolidated patriotic position, are defending the sovereignty of the country, and seeking to establish good relations with our foreign partners, and everyone else who hold in high regard the ideals of peace and justice. Together, they implement the initiatives aimed at preserving the historical memory of the bloodiest war of the 20th century, the immortal feat of the Red Army soldiers and commanders who crushed Nazism.

I want to emphasise that today it is important to join our efforts to prevent the spread of racism, Nazism, fascism, Russophobia, anti-Semitism, and other aggressive ideologies based on inciting hatred, intolerance, and propaganda of national exceptionalism. This is our common duty before the present and future generations.”

## Meeting with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia

### Встреча с Патриархом Московским и всея Руси Кириллом и Патриархом Сербским Порфирием

The meeting was also attended by Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk and Metropolitan Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Your Holinesses,

Allow me to welcome you to Moscow and also in the chambers – the atmosphere here is so special. We are delighted to see you.

I know that the Serbian Orthodox Church makes a significant contribution to strengthening the relations between our peoples, who traditionally maintain the warmest, closest and most trusting alliance relations.

Let me wish you a happy Easter. This is our common bright holiday.

As I have said, Russian-Serbian relations have always been special, even today, because we are bound by strong and deep spiritual roots.

We are always happy to see you. We are looking forward to seeing the President of Serbia [Aleksandar Vučić] in Moscow for celebrations of

Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

We know that the situation in the Balkans is challenging and we also know about your efforts to strengthen Serbia's position, including the importance of the All-Serbian Assembly that you held.

We are always glad to see you. Welcome.



## Meeting of the Military-Industrial Commission

### Заседание Военно-промышленной комиссии



**Vladimir Putin:** We are holding a regular meeting of the Military-Industrial Commission. Its agenda includes discussing several matters related to the development of the Armed Forces and the performance of the defence manufacturing sector at the current stage, i.e. today, and the way it will operate in the future.

We will also review progress on instructions and directives related to supplying troops with the weapons, equipment and combat assets they need the most. I must stress that this goes beyond supplying units taking

part in the special military operation. This, of course, is a priority. Still, we must also make sure that the military in general, the army and the Navy, receive these assets.<...>

For example, the production of ordnance, as well as communication, reconnaissance, and electronic warfare systems, more than doubled. The troops received over 4,000 armoured vehicles and 180 combat aircraft and helicopters.

Over 1.5 million drones of various types were delivered, with about 4,000 so-called FPV drones equipped



with virtual reality control systems supplied to the frontlines daily.<...>

I would particularly like to emphasise that the models most required on the frontlines are being improved rapidly, with their performance characteristics enhanced both in light of combat experience and the evolution of enemy countermeasures. Their developers, including leading Western arms corporations, are not standing idle either – we are aware of this, and our personnel on the battlefield know it too.

The high technological dynamism of our industries has been achieved, not least through feedback directly from the frontline. This operational coordination has been established by the Ministry of Defense with defence industry enterprises and must continue on a permanent basis.<...>

This year's objectives are even more extensive, including the implementation of a programme to expand and modernise the defence industry's capabilities, involving over 400 enterprises.

Let me stress: today, without any exaggeration, all the world's armies, leading global defence manufacturers and tech companies are studying the experience we gained by conducting the special military operation, both

in terms of tactics and weapon technology development. We must stay one step ahead, as we have done many times in recent years, and I am confident we will continue to do in the future.<...>

Drawing on combat experience, it is necessary to update training curricula in military academies and schools for the junior officer and sergeant corps. <...>

It is essential to accelerate the manufacturing of variously-based automated systems of different types, with a focus on unmanned boats and other naval systems.

Another challenge is to create laser systems capable of hitting various targets, including drones and potentially other military equipment such as aircraft, missiles, and the like. We have the relevant practical know-how, as well as manufactured products, but we must build up our efforts in these modern, high-demand and promising areas.<...>

Our research centres, design bureaus and institutes are working on this, formulating ideas and offering them for our consideration. I am asking you to thoroughly consider these proposals without hastily rejecting them. This is not a task for tomorrow but for today, because it may be too late tomorrow if we do not

address it today.

In addition, we must complete the creation, in keeping with the schedule and conforming to the necessary specifications, of a constellation of various-purpose spacecraft for conducting all kinds of reconnaissance and ensuring uninterrupted communication in a closed format in a complicated jamming environment, including both during hostilities and peacetime combat training, for the Armed Forces, special operations and other law enforcement agencies. This will allow us to complete the creation of a modern real-time battle command system, thereby greatly increasing the combat potential of these forces.

We must also step up the

manufacturing and use of protected domestic software and AI products in comprehensive automated battle command systems. We often speak about artificial intelligence, which is the latest trend discussed at all meetings in all spheres without exception. However, we must recognise, and actually everyone knows it, that the possibilities of AI are truly vast. Those who are the first to use this technology, in this case, in the military sphere, will have huge advantages on the battlefield. We must never forget this.

There are also other ideas and designs, but we will talk about them some other time. And now, let us start working on the issues on our agenda.

## The President held a meeting on economic issues via videoconference

### Совещание по экономическим вопросам



Vladimir Putin:

Today, we are holding yet another meeting on matters from our economic agenda. Let me remind you that these regular sessions offer us an opportunity to assess the current state of affairs and the key trends in the real economy, finances, and the services sector.

Conducting a constant and comprehensive analysis of the current economic situation is imperative. It is something we always keep in mind, especially now, as the global economic environment is objectively

becoming more complex and as global commodity and financial markets face serious volatility due to intensifying global competition.

We must not only monitor these factors and forecast changes; it is essential to seize the opportunities that open up for developing domestic industries, trade ties and exports, and to strengthen the Russian economy as a whole, so as to ensure steady and dynamic growth under any external conditions.

We discussed this in late 2024 at the meeting of the Council for Strategic



Development and National Projects. We set an objective back then – it consisted of ensuring steady economic growth while reducing inflation and maintaining low unemployment. The statistics for the first months of this year prove that this approach retains its importance and relevance.

As you know, the Government, the Central Bank and experts all agree that this year's gross domestic product growth will be somewhat lower compared to 2024. As a matter of fact, we have already discussed this, and this is what we wanted to achieve. We talked about achieving the so-called soft-landing with a view to maintaining macroeconomic indicators and, first and foremost, overcoming inflation.

In fact, GDP increased by 1.9 percent year-on-year in the first two months of 2025. Growth rates were higher for the processing sector, with an increase of 5 percent in January and February 2025.

However, inflation remains too high at over 10 percent. As I have already said, we need to put inflation on a steady decelerating path.

Special attention must be directed towards the housing construction sector. Regrettably, the number of new projects being initiated by developers is diminishing. This fact

demands our particular focus, as the pace of construction directly affects housing affordability for citizens and impacts the launch and operational capacity of related industries – from the production of building materials to the manufacture of furniture and household appliances.

We previously agreed to maintain special oversight over the situation in housing construction and to devote necessary attention to a number of other areas as well. The Government has already adopted a series of decisions regarding this matter. Today, I request a report on their implementation and any additional steps required.

I should also note that housing and infrastructure construction are encountering the most challenging conditions – as evidenced by monitoring conducted by the Government subcommission on enhancing the resilience of the financial sector and certain economic sectors.

In this context, I must highlight that the credit portfolio of banks has similarly declined since the beginning of the year. For instance, over the first three months, the volume of ruble-denominated corporate loans on bank balances decreased by 680 billion rubles, while loans to individuals fell

by 192 billion rubles.

Overall, the contraction in the credit portfolio has been offset for the economy by increased federal budget expenditures. Cumulatively, over January–March of the current year, the budget deficit reached 2.2 trillion rubles.

Of course, we must acknowledge – and we are aware of this – that our expenditures have increased by 25 percent compared to the same period last year. This was done deliberately to ensure that economic actors and all our agencies could undertake necessary actions promptly and in a timely manner, enabling smooth operations through to the end of the year.

Nonetheless, I reiterate: the rise in the budget deficit is primarily linked to adjustments in the expenditure schedule, as I just mentioned. Expenditures were carried forward to earlier dates – to the beginning of the year – so that both federal and regional authorities could expedite the launch of national project initiatives, settle contracts, commence construction works, and allocate funding. In any case, we must take this factor into account. Our economic policy must incorporate this approach.

## **Greetings on the 30th anniversary of the Presidential Council for Coordination with Religious Organisations**

### **Членам Совета по взаимодействию с религиозными объединениями при Президенте Российской Федерации**

Vladimir Putin congratulated members of the Presidential Council for Coordination with Religious Organisations on its 30th anniversary.

The message reads, in part:

“All these years, the Council has been a respected platform for fruitful and constructive dialogue between the state, society and religious organisations on a broad range of key national and international issues. It is making a major contribution to the implementation of significant initiatives aimed at maintaining peace and civic accord in our country, preserving our rich

historical heritage and enduring spiritual, moral and family values, educating our young people and strengthening mutual understanding between representatives of different nationalities, religions and cultures. Last but not least, our spiritual leaders have a great role to play in protecting the rights and freedoms of believers and in promoting cooperation with our foreign friends and partners.

We are grateful to you for your responsible patriotic stance and for your creative and selfless work for the benefit of our Fatherland and our people.”





**Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's talks  
with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Abbas Araghchi**

**О переговорах Министра иностранных дел Российской  
Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Министром иностранных  
дел Исламской Республики Иран А.Аракчи**



On April 17-18, Foreign Minister the Islamic Republic of Iran Abbas Araghchi paid a working visit to Moscow. He was received by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin, where the Iranian Minister handed him a message from the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Khamenei. Abbas Araghchi also had talks with Russia's Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov.

The Ministers held a substantive discussion on the entire spectrum of multifaceted bilateral relations, which officially reached the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership level after the new fundamental interstate treaty was signed in Moscow on January 17.

Sergey Lavrov and Abbas Araghchi commended the high level of political



dialogue promoted primarily through trustful communication between the Russian and Iranian Presidents.

The Ministers agreed to further develop trade and economic cooperation, with a focus on the implementation of joint projects, in accordance with respective agreements reached during Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit (<https://t.me/MFARussia/23489>) to Moscow on January 17, and in light of the 18th meeting of the permanent Russian Iranian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation scheduled for April 23-25.

The Parties had a thorough exchange of views on key issues on the global and regional agendas, including the situation in the Middle East, Syria, the South Caucasus and the Caspian region.

Special attention was given to the range of issues pertaining to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran's nuclear programme.

The Ministers reaffirmed their mutual commitment to deepening comprehensive collaboration on major multilateral platforms, primarily within #SCO and #BRICS.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's answer to a question from Moscow. Kremlin. Putin TV show, Moscow, April 20, 2025**

**Ответ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на вопрос программы «Москва. Кремль. Путин», Москва, 20 апреля 2025 года**



**Question:** What, in your view, has the EU degenerated into, if its officials warn leaders of EU member countries against travelling to Moscow?

**Sergey Lavrov:** There is no such word that would characterise this phenomenon. The fact that the EU is openly seeking to revive the European ideology of Nazism really boggles the mind (I am not being ironical). This ideology was born in Europe, wiped out in Europe, and banned by the Nuremberg Trials – again in Europe. But now it is being resuscitated under the leadership of the “Brussels bureaucracy.”

These are sad and worrisome events. We will not put up with

this. We will do whatever we can to prevent this ideology from rearing its ugly head. We want it to be destroyed once and for all. We want Europe to return to its values that do not consist in tarring everyone with the same brush, placing everyone under arms, and playing off others against Europe's rivals or those whose values, views and convictions are against the grain to European leaders, *führers*, and other “commissars.”

I hope that we will gain the majority in European capitals – the majority of those who do not want to renounce their roots or obey a bureaucracy, let alone one with clearly Nazi leanings.



**Question:** What does the Coalition of the Willing want? After all, some of them seem to be thinking about sending their troops to Ukraine.

**Sergey Lavrov:** It is unclear from this appellation what it is they want. In all evidence, they want to feel their superiority and decide things the way they want, while disregarding the opinion of others.

In today's Europe, this is linked to the revival of Nazi views, ways and ambitions. But they better not use this language while talking to Russia. If this "coalition of the willing" is led by some even remotely competent individuals, they should grasp this rather soon. Otherwise they will go on the warpath without any ambiguities. This is their choice.

We hear President of France

Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and now Friedrich Merz (who is about to assume chancellorship) shout belligerent and hostile slogans and threaten the Russian Federation. I do not think that this reflects the position of the French and German peoples. Evidently, these leaders are aware that if they follow the election-time decisions, views, and aspirations, they will not make a career. They want to seize at power by demonstrating this eccentric hostility.

I want to repeat once again that we, Russians, are strong-nerved people. President of Russia Vladimir Putin said repeatedly that we were ready to discuss any problems. But, of course, we are polite people and expect those who will inevitably apply to us to mind their P's and Q's.

## **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks at a meeting of the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group with ambassadors from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation member states, Moscow, April 21, 2025**

### **Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи Группы стратегического видения «Россия-исламский мир» с послами государств-членов Организации исламского сотрудничества, Москва, 21 апреля 2025 года**



**Sergey Lavrov:** Russia is the largest Eurasian power, a civilisational state. Here, alongside Christians, Buddhists, and Jews, reside millions of citizens who profess Islam.

Our country has traditionally maintained trust-based and amicable relations with the Islamic world. We are united by much: a commitment to building a just multipolar world order founded on the principles of the UN Charter in their fullness and interconnectedness; respect for

cultural and civilisational diversity; adherence in practice to the paramount principle of the sovereign equality of states; and Article 1 of the UN Charter, which demands respect for human rights irrespective of race, sex, language, or religion.

We are united in our conviction that no society should tolerate the imposition of alien values from abroad, which undermine historical roots, spiritual and moral foundations, and internal cohesion. We reject the pernicious practice of employing unilateral restrictive measures – so-called sanctions – against nations that pursue independent foreign and domestic policies grounded in national interests and traditions.

The Russian Federation places great emphasis on strengthening

friendly ties with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). I note with satisfaction that over nearly two decades of joint work since Russia obtained observer status at the OIC in 2005, we have achieved significant results.

A stable and trust-based political dialogue has been established on pressing issues of the international agenda.

Collaboration in culture, education, and science is underway. Ties between regions and people-to-people contacts continue to broaden. Meetings of clergy, cultural figures, and youth help our friends in the Islamic world better understand life in modern Russia – and enable us to better comprehend the highly complex processes unfolding in the Islamic world.

The backbone in Russia-OIC relations is the Strategic Vision Group led by Head of the Republic of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov. This Group serves as an instrument for fortifying friendship, mutual understanding, and trust between Russia and the Islamic world. It is, in essence, a unique platform for inter-civilisational dialogue, aimed at safeguarding traditional spiritual and moral values and enhancing mutual

understanding between the Russian Orthodox Church and Muslim organisations – and, more broadly, between the Russian World and the Arab-Muslim civilisation.

The development of ties with the OIC enjoys broad support across our nation. This process engages the government, parliament members, business communities, religious associations, youth organisations, and figures from science and culture. The contribution of authorities in Russian regions with historically Muslim populations is impossible to overstate.

In mid-May, Kazan will host the 16th International Economic Forum Russia – Islamic World: KazanForum. This flagship business event will provide fresh impetus to our trade and economic collaboration. A special session of the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group will be held on the Forum's sidelines. The Russian Foreign Ministry is already providing, and will continue to provide, comprehensive support for the Forum's organisation. We are mobilising backing through our diplomatic and trade missions.

We look forward to welcoming high-level delegations from your countries to the hospitable and amazing capital of Tatarstan.



## **Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's opening remarks during talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov**

### **Вступительное слово С.В.Лаврова на переговорах с Министром иностранных дел Республики Узбекистан Б.О.Саидовым**



**Sergey Lavrov:** Thank you for your kind words and your traditional hospitality that we have felt the very minute we arrived on your ancient Samarkand soil. <...>

First of all, I would like to wish you a happy birthday – you had it yesterday. On that day, I also had the honour to be among those who sent you birthday greetings and wished you good health, inexhaustible energy, and new success in your responsible state position.

I fully share what you have said about the nature of our relations

based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and taking into account each other's interests.

These relations are rooted in the principles of strategic partnership and alliance, as defined by our presidents. There is an exceptionally high level of trust and mutual understanding between President Vladimir Putin and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. This sets the tone for the entire work being carried out by the state agencies both in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation.

You have said that we are making strides in all areas. It is gratifying that mutual trade has been gathering momentum despite the fact that we face a challenging environment, including illegal sanctions, political pressure we are all too familiar with, and the recent global economic turmoil which has been largely caused by the unilateral actions of our Western colleagues.

Nevertheless, the trade, economic and investment ties between our countries are advancing, and we have outlined clear avenues for expanding them in a consistent manner.

We must also mention proactive efforts to promote region-to-region cooperation and regular inter-parliamentary contacts. The Foreign Ministry has a diversified and extensive network of ties covering all key aspects of regional and international politics and are of mutual interest.

This is a special year, as you have said. The CIS has declared it the Year of the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War and the Year of Peace and Unity in the Fight against Nazism. This task is as important as never before because Nazism and neo-Nazism are rearing their ugly heads again. All of us see this.

Solidarity based on the principles,

for which our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought and died, is an important area of our joint effort. This was felt with a particular force in the morning today, when we laid flowers to the Grieving Mother monument. We feel that people in Uzbekistan have this kind of attitude to the events of that time and the blood shed by all the peoples of the USSR for the sake of victory over Nazism. People in Russia regard these feelings as sacred as well. We must do all we can to ensure that young people understand this and are educated in the spirit of profound respect for both those who fought on the battlefronts and those who forged the Victory on the home front.

Uzbekistan made an immense contribution to delivering on this shared agenda. The memory of mothers waiting for their sons, something that this monument is dedicated to, truly moves the soul.

Today, we can discuss all items on the bilateral agenda. However, we will not forget regional and global affairs either. We closely cooperate at various venues. I am confident that today's discussion will make it possible to chart some specific measures towards the implementation of agreements reached by our leaders.

**On April 22-23, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was in Samarkand as part of an official visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan.**

**22-23 апреля Министр иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лавров посетил с официальным визитом Республику Узбекистан**



Russia's Foreign Minister was received by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and held substantive talks with Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov.

The participants focused on joint preparations for celebrating the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Sergey Lavrov laid flowers at the Grieving Mother monument.

The Sides reviewed in detail the

status of the implementation of the large-scale agreements at the top and high levels aimed at strengthening the comprehensive strategic partnership and alliance. It was emphasised that President Vladimir Putin's state visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan in May 2024 was a milestone event in the progressive development of bilateral relations.

The Sides noted with satisfaction the steady positive dynamics of



political partnership, coordination of steps in the international arena, and cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical, and cultural and humanitarian spheres.

More than 115 investment projects with Russian participation worth 3.2 trillion rubles are carried out in Uzbekistan. Interregional cooperation is about to reach a whole new level. Nearly 80 Russian regions maintain stable ties with the Republic. The volume of Russian capital investment in the economy of the Republic exceeds \$13 billion. There are 3,000 joint Russian-Uzbekistani companies. Cooperation in innovation-driven science-intensive sectors is on the rise.

Uzbekistan's interaction with the Eurasian Economic Union as an observer country and the substantive dialogue between Tashkent and the Eurasian Economic Commission were highly praised.

Over 56,000 students from Uzbekistan studying at Russian universities constitute an important part of bilateral ties. There are 14 branches of Russian universities in Uzbekistan. Programmes to support the Russian language are underway,

including the "Class!," "Little One," and "The Power of Mind" projects in preschool and secondary education.

The Foreign Ministers compared notes on their approaches to key items on the respective agendas of the #CIS, the #SCO, the #UN, and other multilateral and regional platforms from the angle of enhancing coordinated actions in the future. They underscored the importance of building up constructive interaction in the 'Central Asia Plus Russia' format.

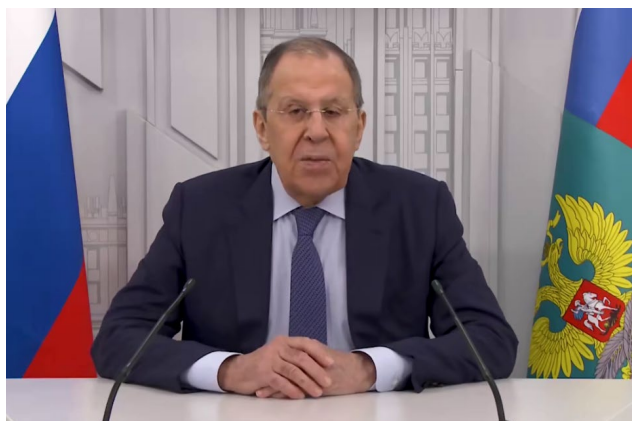
Uzbekistan's recent acquisition of the status of a #BRICS partner-state, which opens up prospects for that country to become full-fledged members of this group of countries that is gaining high global standing, was welcomed.

The Sides reviewed aspects of security in the Central Asian region in connection with the situation in Afghanistan and crises in the Middle East, and Syria.

The visit took place in an atmosphere of trust and full mutual understanding which is typical of Russian-Uzbek allied relations.

# **Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's video address to participants of the 4th International Youth Forum "Russia - Africa: What's Next?" and the 1st Russia - Africa Young Diplomats Forum**

## **Видеообращение С.В.Лаврова к участникам Четвёртого международного молодёжного форума «Россия – Африка: что дальше?» и первого Форума молодых дипломатов «Россия – Африка»**



**Sergey Lavrov:** Colleagues, friends, I am pleased to welcome the participants of the 4th International Forum "Russia - Africa: What's Next?" which is a platform of high standing for Russian-African youth dialogue. I would like to begin by thanking the leadership of MGIMO, personally Rector Anatoly Torkunov, and everyone else involved in making today's event, with broad African participation, possible.

Russian-African friendship and partnership have a long history: in the past century, our country selflessly helped Africans in their courageous struggle for freedom and independence.

Advancing relations with the African countries is among our top priorities, and this approach is enshrined in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation approved by President Vladimir Putin.

We support the Africans' push to be active players in international affairs. We will continue to help strengthen the continent's position as an independent centre of power in the emerging multipolar world order.

Russian-African relations are on the rise. The Russia-Africa summits in 2019 and 2023, as well as the Russia-Africa Ministerial Conference in Sochi in November 2024, were a major milestone.

Practical cooperation in trade and the economy, as well as humanitarian projects, is making great strides.

In order to provide such a multifaceted field of activity with the necessary resources, the Department for Partnership with Africa was established at the Foreign Ministry

which commenced its work in January 2025. Its functions include promoting political, economic, scientific, educational, and cultural ties with the African integration associations.

Russia provides support to African countries in order to strengthen their political and economic sovereignty.

Russian institutions of higher education train skilled personnel for African countries. Russia provides a significant number of quotas at the expense of the federal budget. We will continue to help Africans in their quest for advanced technologies.

Together with our African friends, we oppose modern practices of neo-colonialism. We believe it is important to combine our efforts in order to create mechanisms for economic ties and international trade services that are beyond Western control.

Africa is the continent of the future and it's the youth who are shaping it. This applies fully to foreign policy. Therefore, we are pleased that for the first time the Russia-Africa Forum of Young Diplomats will be held on the

sidelines of your event. We welcome this initiative by the Council of Young Diplomats of the Russian Foreign Ministry. Such a meeting fits in well with numerous MGIMO initiatives devoted to Africa, such as Africa in the Focus of Russian Interests, School of Young Africanists on Food Security, as well as Africa Week, and the MGIMO Model African Union.

I am convinced that the Forum participants will contribute to deepening Russian-African strategic cooperation and bringing it to new frontiers.

Friends, you will be discussing a wide range of issues, including promising areas of Russia's relations with the African countries and African integration associations, food security and combatting neo-colonialism, as well as various aspects of cooperation in research, education, media, sports, and other spheres.

I wish you fruitful discussions, the establishment of mutually beneficial contacts, and all the very best.



## **Russian and Bangladesh navies' ships conduct exercise in Indian Ocean**

### **Корабли ВМФ России и ВМС Республики Бангладеш провели военно-морское учение в Индийском океане**



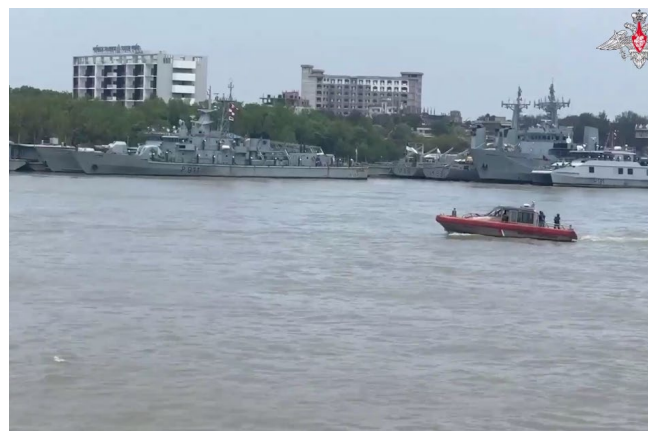
The Pacific Fleet's ships completed a business call programme at the port of Chittagong of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Staying on the territory of the friendly country, the sides agreed to hold a PASSEX-type joint naval exercise.

Ships of the Russian Navy and the Navy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh entered the waters of the Indian Ocean.

The Pacific Fleet's detachment included the following:

- the corvette Rezky,
  - the corvette Hero of Russian Federation Aldar Tsydenzhapov,
  - the medium sea tanker Pechenga.
- The Navy of the Republic of



Bangladesh's detachment included the following:

- the frigate Umar Farooq,
- the corvette Prottoy,
- the large patrol ship Durjoy.

In an assigned area, crews conducted communication and joint tactical manoeuvring exercises. In the evening, sailors of Russia and Bangladesh transmitted control and interaction commands in a radio silence using signal lights. Servicemen also improved practical skills of replenishing water and fuel reserves on the move from the medium sea tanker Pechenga.

After the training, Russian ships continued their long-distance mission.



# **SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION СПЕЦИАЛЬНАЯ ВОЕННАЯ ОПЕРАЦИЯ**



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**On April 21, Russian Ambassador to the United States A.Darchiev met with American World War II veteran S.Melnikoff and President of the Greatest Generations Foundation T. Davis**

**21 апреля Посол России в США А.Н.Дарчиев встретился с американским ветераном Второй мировой войны С.Мельникоффом и президентом фонда «Величайшие поколения» Т.Дэвисом**



The head of the Russian diplomatic mission congratulated S.Melnikoff who participated in the meeting of Soviet and American troops on the Elbe River near Torgau, Germany on April 25, 1945, on the upcoming 80th anniversary of this historic event, presenting him with memorable gifts.

In his turn, the veteran shared his memories of the military past, noting the decisive contribution of the Red Army, with which he and his comrades in arms joined in the victorious 1945, and that of the Soviet people, who made incalculable sacrifices, to the defeat of Hitler's Germany.

The Russian Ambassador and the guests spoke in favor of preserving the "Spirit of Elba", symbolizing the combat alliance of our countries and setting an example for building pragmatic and mutually respectful Russian-U.S. relations.



## **Ambassador of Russia to the US Alexander Darchiev visited the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, DC**

### **Посол России в США А.Н.Дарчиев посетил дипломатическое представительство Ватикана в Вашингтоне**



Ambassador of Russia to the US Alexander Darchiev visited the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington to sign the Book of Condolences on the passing of Pope Francis.

Chief of the Russian diplomatic mission expressed deep sorrow and

grief noting that the Pontific will always be remembered as an eminent and global leader, dedicated to peace and justice, as well as better relations with Russia, earning deep respect with Catholics and followers of other faiths.



## **The Ambassador of Russia to the US Alexander Darchiev opened the traditional film marathon that is held at the Embassy on the occasion of the Victory Day on May 9 and the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory**

### **Посол России в США А.Н.Дарчиев открыл традиционный киномарафон, проводимый в Посольстве в преддверии празднования 9 Мая и 80-летия Победы**



The guests of the event, including representatives of diplomatic missions of the CIS countries, employees of Russian missions in the USA, compatriots, journalists and American experts specializing in Russia, watched two episodes (“From the Balkans to Vienna” and “Allies”) of the legendary documentary series “The Great Patriotic War”, which was released in the USA under the title “The Unknown War”.

In a brief speech before the

screening, Mr. Darcheyev noted that the series created by the military cameraman and brilliant Soviet documentary filmmaker Roman Karmen is based on unique film documents, shot in a combat situation, about the battles that were decisive for our country and the whole World War II, which is still unknown to the general audience in the United States.

As emphasized by the Ambassador of Russia, it is important that the film tells in detail about the Soviet-American combat alliance in the fight against a common enemy, which sets an example for bringing the relations between Russia and the United States out of the crisis state inherited from the previous American administration.

On April 30, more episodes of the cinematic masterpiece, dedicated to the final battles of the Great Patriotic War, are scheduled to be screened.

## **Wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial plate “Spirit of Elba” at Arlington National Cemetery**

### **Церемония возложения венков к мемориальной плите «Дух Эльбы» на Арлингтонском национальном кладбище**



On April 25th at the Arlington National Cemetery after a three year gap due to the ban imposed by the previous US administration the wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial plaque “The Spirit of Elbe” took place, led by Ambassador of Russia Alexander Darchiev with the participation of the US State Department, heads of missions and senior diplomats from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, Russian compatriots and Americans.

Addressing the honored guest, US Army veteran Frank Cohn, who personally witnessed and participated in the historic link-up of the Red Army and the American troops on the river Elbe 80 years ago, Alexander

Darchiev stressed in his remarks that the present and future generations should be thankful to the veterans for the “simple fact” that they “can enjoy life and happiness”.

The Russian Ambassador emphasized that meeting on the Elbe river sets the example of how Russia and the US as great powers responsible for global stability can and should cooperate, so that the tragedy of WWII, including the horrors of Nazism, never happens again.

Alexander Darchiev also reminded that the symbolism of the Arlington National Cemetery event is especially important, as it sets the path for bringing Russian-American relations back to normalcy and common sense.

## International patriotic campaign #DictantPobedy

### Международная патриотическая акция #ДиктантПобеды



On April 25, the Russian Embassy in the United States hosted the Dictation of Victory as part of an international patriotic campaign with the participation of Ambassador A.N. Darchiev, the Embassy's leadership, employees and their families, pupils of the Embassy school, as well as compatriots who joined in remotely.

Answering the dictation questions concerning historical events and facts of the Great Patriotic War, the

participants were able to test their knowledge and discover new facets of the great feat of the Soviet people and the heroic Red Army, which crushed the war machine of Hitler's Germany.

The Victory Dictation plays an important role in preserving our memory in the fight against attempts in the West to rewrite history by whitewashing the Nazis and their henchmen.



## ON THIS DAY В ЭТОТ ДЕНЬ

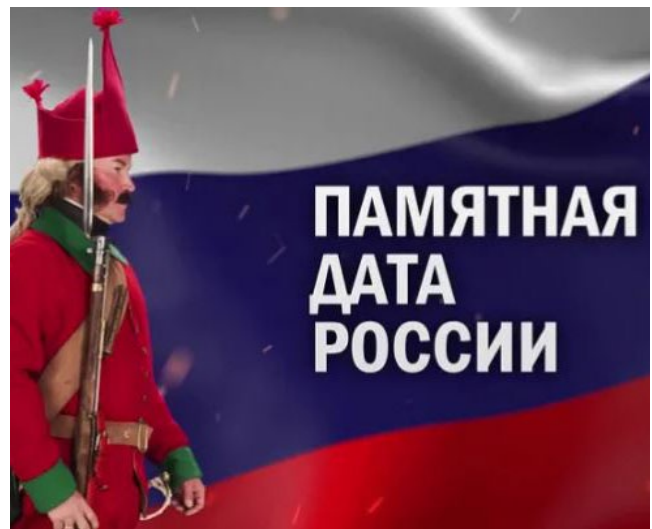
**On April 19, 1783, Empress Catherine the Great signed a manifesto on the accession of Crimea, the Taman Island and Kuban region into the Russian Empire**

**19 апреля 1783 года императрица Екатерина II издала Манифест «О принятии полуострова Крымского, острова Тамана и всей Кубанской стороны под Российскую Державу»**



On April 19, 1783, Empress Catherine the Great signed a manifesto on the accession of Crimea, the Taman Island and Kuban region into the Russian Empire.

Prince Grigory Potemkin, Governor-General of Novorossiya, played one of the key roles in the accession and development of Crimea. In June 1783, on top of Mount Aq Qaya, he personally received the oath of allegiance to Russia from the Crimean



nobility and the common people.

The results of the 2014 all-Crimean referendum once again confirmed the desire of Crimeans to remain part of our country and led to the long-awaited reunification of Crimea with Russia.



**WE REMEMBER  
МЫ ПОМНИМ**

**80 years ago, on April 25, 1945,  
Meeting of Soviet and American troops on the Elbe River**

**80 лет назад, 25 апреля 1945 года,  
Встреча Советских и Американских войск на Эльбе**

80 years ago, on April 25, 1945, only fifteen days before Nazi Germany's surrender, the historic Meeting of Soviet and American troops on the Elbe River took place.

On that day, the 58th Rifle Division of the Red Army's 1st Ukrainian Front, under the command of Marshal Ivan Konev, linked up with units of the 69th and 104th Infantry Divisions of the US 1st Army, led by General Omar Bradley.

This event had major symbolic significance, signalling the imminent defeat of Nazi Germany and marking the climax of the fight against Nazism. The spirit of unity in the fight against the common enemy, later known as the #SpiritOfTheElbe, laid the groundwork for future post-war cooperation.

It is no coincidence that, on April 25, 2020, to mark the 75th anniversary of this historic event, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin



**MEETING ON THE ELBE RIVER**

APRIL 25, 1945

and President of the United States Donald Trump issued a joint statement:

“The Spirit of the Elbe is an example of how our countries can put aside differences, build trust, and cooperate in pursuit of a greater cause. As we work today to confront the most important challenges of the 21st century, we pay tribute to the valour and courage of all those who fought together to defeat fascism.

Their heroic feat will never be forgotten.”

Back in 1945, Soviet and US brothers-in-arms, setting aside cultural differences and language barriers, exchanged badges, insignia, personal items and even valuables as keepsakes. Celebrations continued at the Soviet command headquarters on the eastern bank of the Elbe, where General Bradley met with Marshal Konev. At the end of the event, the Soviet commander presented his American counterpart a banner bearing the inscription “From the soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian Front” and his warhorse. General Bradley later sent Konev a “Willys” jeep.

Soldiers on both sides eagerly anticipated the moment of meeting and firm handshake. General Joseph Lawton Collins, Commander of the US 7th Army Corps, nominated several Soviet soldiers for

American military awards for their distinguished combat performance during the advance to the Elbe.

On April 28, Marshal Konev and General Bradley met again. During the meeting, the US general emphasised that the “people of the United States had always admired the battles and victories of the glorious Red Army, adding that American soldiers and officers aspired to follow the example set by the forces of the 1st Ukrainian front”.

A reporter from Life magazine took a picture of two participants in the Elbe meeting, Alexander Sylvasenko, right, and William Robertson, left, making them world-famous overnight. Both soldiers often recalled this historic meeting. Alexander Sylvasenko said that if the spirit of camaraderie between American and





Soviet soldiers had endured, the world might have become a different and better place. William Robertson described the atmosphere of the meeting with Soviet forces as one that gave him a sense of global unity.

In the years that followed #WWII, even during the Cold War, when former allies of the Anti-Hitler Coalition became bitter rivals, the Spirit of the Elbe was alive in the hearts of those who had taken part in that legendary meeting in Torgau. The Soviet and American veterans who had performed a heroic deed in the name of saving the world from the 'Nazi plague' cherished the memory of their wartime brotherhood, their shared struggle, and the



hardships they had overcome.

In 1963, Private Joe Polowsky of the US Army, who had been part of the scout unit that first crossed the Elbe and met with Red Army units, wrote a letter to Marshal Konev on behalf of American veterans.

The letter reads, in part:

“The soldiers on both sides pledged to do all they could to build a better life based on goodwill, mutual respect and peace between our two nations – a peace their children and all humanity needed.

And the promise made on April 25, 1945, must be upheld.”



# RUSSIA'S SCENERY КРАСОТЫ РОССИИ

## Кировская область Kirov region





# RUSSIA'S SCENERY КРАСОТЫ РОССИИ

## Кировская область Kirov region





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IN THE UNITED STATES**

**2650 WISCONSIN AVE. NW  
WASHINGTON, DC  
20007 USA**

**washington.mid.ru**