

SCHILLER INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

H.E. Dmitry Polyanskiy

A Sacred Day—The Victory Over Fascism

We present here the edited transcript of the speech to the Schiller Institute's 3-hour conference on May 9, commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Victory in Europe (V-E Day) over fascism, by His Excellency Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations.



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H.E. Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy

It's a great honor for me to address your event, which happens on a very sacred day for us. It happens on the day of the victory over fascism, that my country—at that time the Soviet Union—made the most valuable contribution to. This day is very much enshrined in the memory of our people, because everybody in my country has some relatives who perished in this terrible war, or participated and were maimed, or were working in the real economy of our country to help to boost military production and to change the course of the war.

As you know, we were not provoking this war, we were not expecting it, and this happened as a big, big problem for my country, and for the whole of mankind: 27 million of my compatriots perished, mostly civilian population. There were immense atrocities committed. Of course, one needs to remember the Holocaust, and these things should never happen again. We all understand this.

Unfortunately, after the beginning of the '90s, there are trends which are very worrying, when there are countries that try to rewrite the history of the Second

World War, sometimes to change places between the victors and those who were the criminals during this war. We in Russia and in some of our neighboring states are doing our best not to allow such an interpretation of history, which absolutely turns the whole course of the Second World War upside down.

We are very much worried by these trends in some of our neighboring states, when there are Nazi collaborators who are now being respected as “heroes,” and when the monuments to the

real heroes, the real Liberators are being demolished, or placed in other locations without addressing us and without speaking to their relatives. We think that this is not normal. We think one should avoid such actions, which really are not tolerable in our world. We need to respect the memory of those who fell victims of this war, and we need to be very accurate in describing the events of this war.

That's why conferences like yours are very important. They mobilize opinion, they raise awareness of specialists and of experts on this situation around the history of the Second World War, and they help people to understand better the sentiments and the moods in different countries of the world, including my country.

I wish all of you success in this endeavor, and you can always count on Russia in defending the heritage of the Second World War, and in honoring the victors and providing accountability for the perpetrators of terrible crimes during this war.