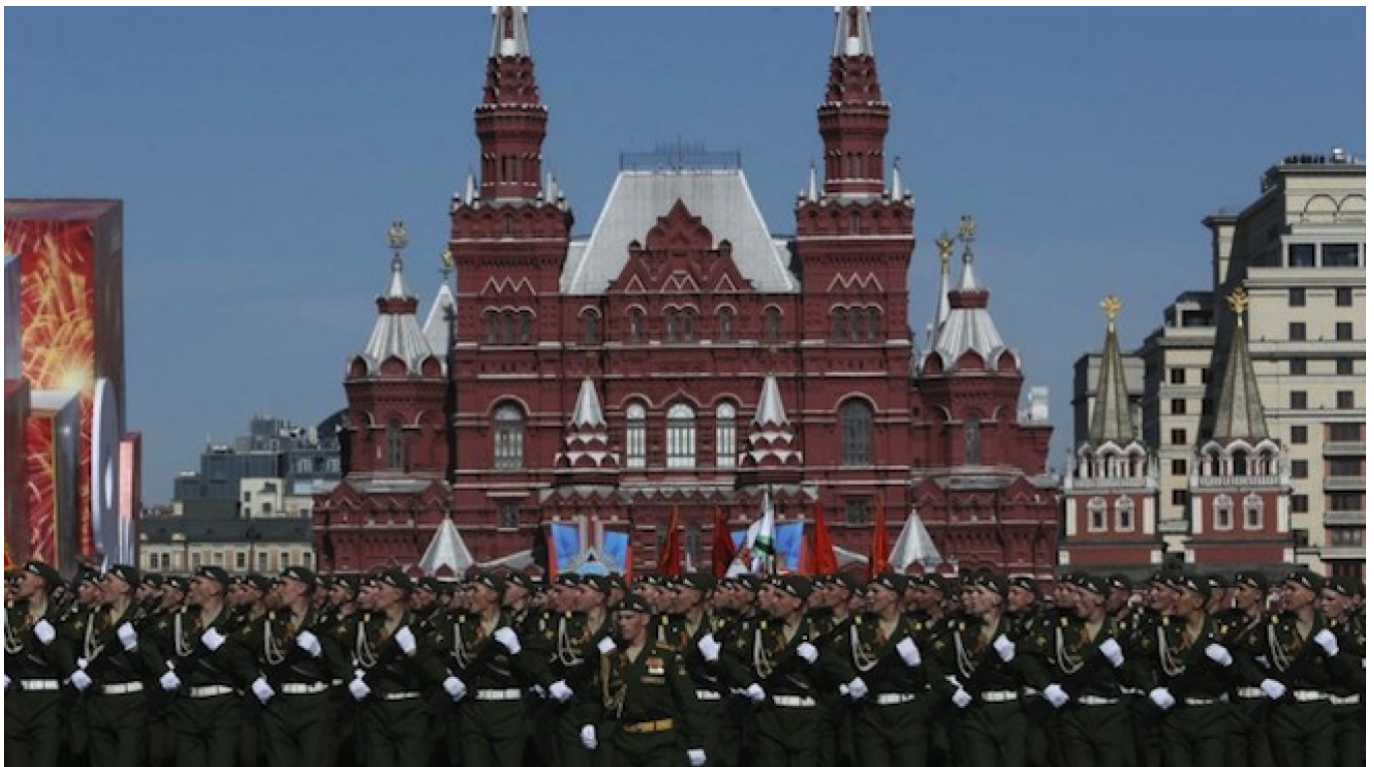


Obama to Snub Russia's World War II Victory Day

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Russian servicemen march during the Victory Day parade in Moscow's Red Square May 9, 2014.

U.S. President Barack Obama will not attend Victory Day celebrations in Moscow this May, deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes told a news briefing Monday, according to the TASS news agency.

Obama will join several other Western leaders, including the presidents of the three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — in snubbing the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany on May 9.

Rhodes reportedly said the United States nonetheless "greatly respected" Russia's role in the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"Disagreements over Ukraine do not diminish the importance of our common history," Rhodes was quoted as saying by TASS.

Presidential aide Yury Ushakov told TASS in December that the leaders of "all countries that

participated in the anti-Hitler coalition" had been invited to the event marking the end of World War II.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang are among the world leaders who have confirmed their presence.

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