INFORMATION BULLETIN

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National Unity Day

4 November 2014, 15:30, Moscow

Vladimir Putin took part in celebrations to mark National Unity Day. Vladimir Putin laid flowers at the monument to Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky on Red Square. Taking part in the ceremony were also heads of Russia’s traditional religions and members of students’ construction and military-patriotic teams.

Later, together with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Vladimir Putin visited the interactive exposition My History. The Rurik Dynasty, which opened at the Manezh central exhibition centre as part of the Orthodox Russia cycle.

Reception to mark National Unity Day

4 November 2014, 16:00, The Kremlin, Moscow

Vladimir Putin congratulated citizens of Russia on the national holiday and presented state decorations to foreign citizens for their contribution to strengthening friendship and cooperation with Russia and for retaining and popularising the Russian language and culture in other countries.

Public figure and head of the Greater Chernobyl Cause charity organisation Fiona Corcoran (Ireland), public figure and philanthropist Yoko Nagae Ceschina (Japan), and researcher from the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economies Karl Lennart Samuelson (Sweden) were awarded the Order of Friendship.

Director of the Centre for Russian Culture Studies at the Ca’ Foscari University Silvia Burini (Italy), Rector of the Danubius Institute, Head of World History Chair, Faculty of Philosophy, at the Comenius University in Bratislava Miroslav Danis (Slovakia), General Director of the Pushkin House Russian Culture and Education Centre Sun-Min Kim (Republic of Korea), and CEO of Berhan International PLC medical clinic Tebebe Yemane Berhan (Ethiopia) were awarded the Pushkin Medal.

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PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Friends, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Congratulations to you all on National Unity Day.

This holiday stands for the loyalty of our people to their homeland. This indissoluble bond, this responsibility for their Fatherland have always served as the basis for Russia’s independence and sovereignty, while patriotism and love for our country have held our multi-ethnic nation together for centuries.

We inherited these powerful and sincere feelings from our parents and grandparents. Loyalty to our rich spiritual and cultural heritage is the true essence of this holiday. There is good reason why it was timed to coincide with the key event in our history, when the people put an end to the tragic Time of Trouble.

The anguish they felt for their country, for the intestine feuds, weakness of authority, for the betrayal of their Motherland united people of different ethnicity and religion. They formed militia and liberated Moscow from occupation, thus saving their homeland from strife and determining the future of Russia as a great and powerful state.

Over four centuries have passed, but the dramatic events of those times remain a lesson for us, serving as an example for all generations and a rule for us all – a rule that says we should preserve and protect our national interests. Failure to bear in mind these national interests may
lead to disintegration and ruin of the country; its sovereignty is of the same fundamental value as freedom and democracy.

Friends,

This year we have been through some tough challenges. Our people responded to those challenges with consolidation and a spiritual and moral upheaval, just as it did many times in the past.

Striving for justice and truth has always been held high in Russia. There is no threat that can force us to forsake our values and ideals. Today’s holiday restores the continuity, making us feel part of Russian history and its great culture that bring together people all over the world.

Traditionally, this reception is attended by our compatriots and foreign citizens who make a great contribution to strengthening multilateral ties with Russia. We are always happy to see them and I would like to express our gratitude to each and every one of you.

We highly value your public awareness efforts, your attention to developing and promoting the Russian language and culture, as well as your contribution to bringing together people and nations.

Once again, I would like to extend my greetings to the citizens of our large country, to all who are here in this hall and to all our compatriots in other countries. My congratulations and best wishes to all of you!

<…>

Friends,

Let me once again congratulate you on our national holiday, and I congratulate our friends who have received Russian state decorations.

I would like to note that you are making an enormous, truly invaluable contribution to the development of relations between peoples, a contribution to mutual relations and mutual understanding.

It is only through culture, through literature, music and history that we can help people understand each other better and live in peace and happiness.

Thank you very much. All the best.

Meeting with young academics and history teachers

5 November 2014, 16:10, Moscow

Vladimir Putin met with young academics and history teachers at the Museum of Modern Russian History.

Representatives of leading Russian universities and institutes under the Russian Academy of Sciences, in particular, the Institute of Russian History, Institute of General History and the Archaeology Institute, took part in the meeting.

* * *

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Colleagues, friends,

We agreed to hold this meeting, the purpose of which is to listen to you and hear from you views and ideas that we could carry out in the course of our work together, all the more so given the importance of your field of professional activity.

Of late, we have spoken a lot about and I think have made progress too towards putting greater importance on knowledge of history in general and teaching history in schools and universities. There have been many discussions over the modern concept of history that should form the foundation for the textbooks we use in our schools. I hope that you, as young specialists in this field, will take active part in these discussions and work together with your colleagues on this.
I will not talk about your work’s importance now. I have spoken about this on numerous past occasions. You have surely heard my words and I have probably bored you all by now with my constant coming back to this subject. I keep doing so because this really is needed today and is so very important for our people and country. We see the attempts being made to recode society in many countries, and such attempts are being made to recode our society too. This always goes hand-in-hand with attempts to rewrite history and shape it to particular geopolitical interests. But history is a science and if you are serious about it, it cannot be rewritten. Of course, it is precisely to prevent this from happening that we need people like you, specialists who can not only give a full and objective picture of past events but also give them an assessment, which is extremely important and an essential part of history as a science.

Let me end my remarks here. I would rather go straight to the discussion and exchange of views with you. I will listen to what you have to say and will make a few remarks regarding the issues foremost on your minds. Let me end here for now.

Please, you have the floor.

OLEG ZAKIROV: Thank you.

Mr President, I want to congratulate you and everyone here on National Unity Day. This is a young holiday but it has a rich history. It has great importance for us and this importance is growing every year. I also want to thank you for coming to the Seliger Youth Forum this year. The discussions and speeches there were very interesting and all of the forum participants had the chance to meet with you. Thank you very much. We hope that we will have the opportunity to organise such events there in the future for young teachers and academics.

My question is as follows. These last years, the state authorities have actively supported patriotic themes in culture, education, and scientific research, and have backed patriotic media projects. But at the same time, we cannot ignore that it is pseudo-historical or false interpretations of history, sometimes directly politicised falsifications, that often make their way to the broadest audience through the media, films, internet resources and even computer games. Even the most important pages of our past, such as the history of the [1941-1945] Great Patriotic War and the history of Russia’s relations with Ukraine and with other countries and peoples close to us have been subject to falsification.

Of course, Russia cannot think of banning films, websites or publications, but would it be possible to achieve effective substitution in this area, if one can put it this way. Do you think that objective and balanced patriotic works of culture and academic thought could make false historical works uncompetitive and deprive them of their mass audience? Of course, there are always people who love sensations, secrets and all that is falsely presented as new scientific discoveries and new objective interpretations. But in your view, do you think we can create greater demand among the broad audience of readers and viewers for academic research and its results, given that historical films and programmes also have a considerable influence on historical consciousness and memory?

Thank you very much.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Oleg, you said quite rightly that we cannot ban anything. We should not ban anything in general except what is purely criminal in nature, and the legislators view these things in just this way – as something criminal. As for things that have a negative impact but are not actually criminal as such, the only way to combat them is to offer a more solidly justified and better explained view in their place.

We visited the museum just before and Ms Velikanova [Director of the Museum of Modern Russian History] showed me the exhibitions. We noticed that during the civil war period, which was a very difficult time for our entire nation, for better or for worse, the Bolsheviks’ slogans and posters were more vivid and concise and no doubt more effective in their impact. Aside from anything else, they also rode the fashion of the moment because no one wanted to keep fighting and so they called for an end to the war. They duped society, of course.
You all know the slogan of “Land to the peasants, factories to the workers and peace to the people!” They did not give the people peace because the civil war broke out, and they took the factories and land and nationalised them. So this was complete and total deception.

RESPONSE: It’s not right to deceive.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Of course, it’s not right to deceive, but they did so with style, and that no doubt worked in their favour too because defence of one’s views and interests must be thorough, performed with talent, and have good content and packaging that attracts and makes a strong impression on people’s minds.

I cannot claim that the state authorities are effective in this area, but there have been some changes for the better of late in my opinion. The state authorities can never be effective in this area, however. Only society can be effective if people realise the importance of the approaches and views that society itself considers necessary for the country, people and specific individuals.

Our common task (let me call myself your colleague) is to convince the majority of our people that our views are correct and objective and present the results of your work to society. We need to win minds and encourage people to take an active position in their own right on the basis of the knowledge that you present as objective. But I do call on you to be objective in studying all periods of our history.

When we convince the vast majority of our people that our position is correct, objective and fair, and show that this position benefits our society, country and people, we will gain millions of supporters. This is what we have been seeing over recent times. When we show that we are right and our actions are just, we will win huge numbers of supporters at home and abroad. It is the same with laws. Thousands of laws get written, and then millions of people think up how to get around them. If we can present our position the right way, we will win millions of hearts and minds, and this will happen of its own accord.

But this requires serious research of course, a lot of hard work, research in the archives and work with documents. The state authorities’ job is to help you to get across to the public the importance of your research, to help you present and advertise it, to use the modern terms. We will do our best.

ANDREI POPOV: Mr President, good afternoon. My name is Andrei and I represent here the organisers of the exhibitions the Romanov Dynasty and the Rurik Dynasty. On behalf of our big team, let me thank you for your high assessment of our projects. Your words and your support are very important to us. I have a question, and if possible, a request to make too.

My question is as follows. When we organised the Rurik Dynasty exhibition, we plunged back into a time when Russia faced constant hardships and trials of a sort that we do not know and cannot even fathom today. There were endless wars, the invasions of Batu Khan and Tamerlane, the attack from the West during Alexander Nevsky’s time, and bloody internecine wars. One cannot help recalling the words of St John of Kronstadt, who said that, “Russia is forged by trials and misfortunes.” He said this at the start of the 20th century.

Mr President, do you think that all of these trials and challenges that Russia faces today are not just coincidence but have a deeper meaning for our country? What is your view of this, what does it mean for you?

As for my request, you came to our exhibition last year, and to the one this year. Thank you for this. You saw how we managed to create an interactive and interesting textbook of Russia’s history through to 1917. With the Moscow City Government’s support, a permanent exhibition will open next year at the VDNKh centre. But we have received huge numbers of letters from the regions with people asking us to bring these exhibitions to them. Many people simply do not have the possibility to come especially to Moscow to see the exhibitions. Could you help us to make it possible to take these exhibitions to the regions, set them up on a permanent basis in the capital of each federal district, so that more people will have the chance to encounter this kind of unique and amazing knowledge in such a fantastically interesting form?
VLADIMIR PUTIN: First of all, regarding the exhibition, I want to thank you and everyone who helped to organise the event and express my sincere thanks for your hard work.

The first exhibition, dedicated to the Romanov dynasty, took place not just in Moscow but also in the regions. We will try to make sure that the exhibition on the Rurik dynasty also gets taken to the regions. I am sure that it will be of great interest, just as was the exhibition on the Romanovs.

But I must say that the work on the Rurik Dynasty exhibition was a lot more difficult. For a start, this is further back in time from us today, and it is harder to work out all the details of what actually happened. There are fewer primary sources and we cannot even always be confident that what we have are primary sources and not handwritten copies (with changes possibly made to copies). The most reliable culture is oral culture, whereas anything copied in writing, the person doing the copying can always add something. But we have what we have and have to make do with this, search and analyse.

Why do I say that this is more difficult? I am not ready for a serious discussion, which would require reading all the literature. You are in a much better position in this respect than I because this is your profession, your bread and butter, but perhaps in the exhibition’s framework this is the only approach in any case. I looked yesterday at how the Rurik dynasty began, but you use only Karamzin’s version.

This Norman theory of the Russian state’s origins postulates that this group was called in to help organise relations within the community. But there is another theory that they were called in not to help organise things within the community but to provide external defence. They were simply hired as a security organisation, to use today’s terms. That was all, and they later could be said to have usurped power. This point of view also exists.

But you give only one point of view. This Norman theory postulates that statehood came from outside. Those who think differently say that statehood had already taken shape in Novgorod and the foreign group was hired for external defence. This was why the princes were so restricted in their rights and why they got forced out if they crossed the line in exercising their powers.

The other thing that I wanted to bring to your attention is something that also has a bearing not just on the present but on all of our history and could in part answer the question that you put, namely, why did we go through such a difficult time in that period of our history? All these wars, invasions, the wars against the Mongol-Tatars and so on, why did it all happen? Yaroslav the Wise was very wise of course and did a lot to develop the country, but he did not institute a system of succession like the system used in some Western countries. The procedure for succession to the throne in Russia was very complicated and tangled and created fragmentation.

Because (after all, you are specialists and I’m sure you know this better than me), the problem with this system was that succession did not simply pass directly to the oldest child, but was determined by two factors: the oldest heir by direct succession, as well as the oldest in age. And they got completely confused and began fighting amongst themselves: who was older, and who was more directly connected. All this led to fragmentation and weakening of the Russian state.

Knowing this, we must take the situation today and tomorrow very seriously. This is exceedingly important. We were just remembering, I recalled Klyuchevsky, and he stated many absolute truths. You recall, he said, “History is not a teacher, it does not teach anything. It is an overseer who merely punishes those who haven’t learnt their lessons.” This history lesson about periods of fragmentation must trigger a danger signal. We must treat this very carefully, and not allow such things under any circumstances. We must know our history.

Yesterday, I was talking to someone, a very well-known individual, highly respected and very educated. But she did not know that National Unity Day honours the liberation of Moscow...
by militia members who were headed by an ethnic Tatar. This was surprising – how could this be? But it’s amazing. He collected money and gave away all his belongings in order to gather a militia, appealed to the prince and essentially put him at the head of the militia. He collected the money, you see, to save Russia.

This says a great deal. It speaks to the internal unity of the multi-ethnic Russian people, which keenly feels the danger of a rift, from the division of the nation, from fragmentation. It is dangerous for everyone, regardless of ethnicity or religion. These things are highly important. And if you could somehow reflect this, either in your future exhibitions or events like this, it would be exceedingly important. I suppose that’s all.

**KIRILL KOCHEGAROV:** Good afternoon, Mr President.

I have a question concerning not only science, but also education, at the school and university level. Because in reality, regardless of how well the scholars work, it is very important for their research to translate at a school level for students at universities and schools. You spoke about the concept for an educational and methodological complex on Russian history, part of which is the history and culture standard, which is a good example of cooperation between academic science and schools. It was discussed extensively and quite thoughtfully and, ultimately, everyone reached some sort of result. But what’s important is not just the content of this concept, but also how it will all be presented at schools.

Right now, the Education Ministry has begun discussing model programmes based on this concept, including on history, which proposes designating the material by grade level – what will be taught in which grade.

With regard to this, I have a question: how do you feel about the role of the 20th century, its teaching in schools and in the history of Russia?

And another question. I have read that, for example, our Kazakhstani partners are developing a concept for students from non-humanitarian university departments – in other words, so that there is common content, so that people who have never studied history study it at universities. There were some recommendations concerning the content as well. I would like to hear your views on this issue.

Thank you very much.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** I may disappoint you. I do not want and do not feel I have the right to delve into the technology of teaching history. I have expressed my attitude toward this subject. I feel it is exceedingly important, simply essential; we cannot build a nation without it.

But how can it be organised? I feel this ultimately needs to be done by experts like yourselves, in discussions with colleagues, by the Academy of Sciences, the school and parent communities. This is a serious discussion, it must be professional to the utmost degree – it involves organising the work itself. It is up to you to think and decide within your community.

As for teaching history at non-humanitarian universities: yes, we need to take all the best elements. The Kazakhstani have a great deal we can learn from, they are working very successfully in many areas – in the economy and the humanitarian sector. They look at what we are doing, and we look at what they are doing. Of course, the best practices should be taken from all around the world, and especially from our closest neighbours. We need to see how they organise all this.

As for the 20th century, everything is important for us – the more distant past, and more recent, contemporary history. It is harder to teach more recent history because we have a great deal of politicised issues there, not all wounds have healed yet, especially if we take the civil war, the opposition between the Reds and Whites. But nevertheless, we still need to deal with it, we must strive to be as objective as possible, and we certainly need to know about our most recent past.

This year, we spoke a great deal about World War I and, I feel, we presented information about that war very well and quite objectively. In practice, we revived the names of many of our
forgotten heroes and gave new, unbiased assessments to the events that happened then and the result that was so tragic for Russia. Why was it so? Where did this result come from? After all, we were not beaten in battles on the front. We were torn apart from within, that’s what happened. Russia declared itself a loser. To whom did it lose? To the nation that ultimately lost the war itself. Overall, it’s crazy. I think this is an entirely unique situation in history. Russia lost enormous territories, did not achieve anything aside from colossal losses. We must know this as well, that we suffered enormous losses out of some sort of political considerations. I am not even certain whether we were able to recoup those losses fully.

Yes, we won the Great Patriotic War; we were winners in World War II. This was also likely no accident, because those who took part in World War I – they were essentially the people leading the main operations, supervising the fronts and the general staff. Who were those leaders? Military experts who fought in the First World War. There were some new commanders as well, an entirely new generation so to speak, especially after the 1937 repression. But the military experts who had made it through the furnace of World War I were at the forefront. And this also played a certain role. The cruelty of the leadership likely played a certain role as well.

We could, of course, argue about this and give political assessments. It’s just hard to say whether we could have won the war if the leaders had not been so cruel, if they were more like those in Nicholas II’s time. It’s very hard to say. And what would the consequences have been if we’d lost? The consequences would have been simply catastrophic. They were going to physically exterminate the Slavic people, and not just ethnic Russians, but many other peoples, including the Jews, the Gypsies and the Poles. In other words, if you weigh it, it is hard to say what is worse. We must study it and assess it, but those assessments must be as objective as possible.

Should we be doing this? Of course we should. I mentioned World War I. In 2017, we will be marking the 100th anniversary of what some call the Great October Socialist Revolution, while others talk about the October coup. But in any case, this event took place almost a hundred years ago and requires an objective, deep, professional, comprehensive assessment. And next year will also mark a major anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War. Of course, there has been a great deal of terrible, bloody events, but unfortunately, this is what we have lived through and we must certainly know about it.

MIKHAIL NIKIFOROV: Hello, Mr President. My name is Mikhail; I have come from Crimea.

Russia’s National Unity Day has a special meaning for people in Crimea, because Crimea is a region that had been separated from its Homeland for 23 years, which is a long time. I would like to thank you again for the celebration of this unity with our Homeland – with Russia. My question is not even so much a question; I want to talk about something that you mentioned as well, that history will be a topic of speculation, that there will be attempts to rewrite history; they are being made now. With regard to the events of this year, the history of Crimea is very interesting right now, not just in Russia but throughout the world. It is natural that our opponents would wish to rewrite it, using it for their own political goals.

So I think that right now, it is important how much Crimea’s history is intertwined with the history of Russia. We are interested in the objective history of Crimea and I think that for us, for Russia, it would be important to create scientific works on the history of Crimea, with participation by eminent scholars not only from Russia but other nations as well. I feel Crimea must be the centre for writing these works; the history of Crimea must be written in Crimea. And I think that if we do not write this history of Crimea, it will be written for us. Even now, in Kiev, attempts are being made to write the history of Crimea. Naturally, those attempts are not objective. Since we are interested in objective history, we must work on writing it ourselves, because it will be written for us without relying on the scientific principles of objectivity. Thank you.
VLADIMIR PUTIN: You deny your Ukrainian colleagues the presumption of innocence and consider a priori that everything there will be politicised. Although we cannot rule it out, given the state of society today, but nevertheless, we need to look at what those colleagues are doing. Some things are so obvious that they cannot be denied. And we ourselves have not even discussed it yet.

What do I mean? Well, if we delve into distant history, we will also look at what Prince Igor was doing (that, incidentally, is reflected at the exhibition), we will look at the borders of Khazar Khaganate, how relations developed between peoples in that time, how the Russian state was born and developed, how it evolved. And this history does not hold any losing positions for us, starting with the fact that for ethnic Russians (I mean that particular segment of our multi-ethnic peoples – ethnic, Orthodox Russians), Crimea has a kind of sacred significance. After all, it was in Crimea, in Hersonissos, that Prince Vladimir was baptised, subsequently baptising Rus. The first, initial font of Russia’s Baptism is there.

And what is Hersonissos? It is Sevastopol. You can see the connection between the spiritual source and state component, meaning the fight for Crimea overall and for Sevastopol, for Hersonissos. In essence, the Russian people have been fighting for many years to gain a firm foothold in its historical font. This is extremely important. We flip through some things, so to speak, while others seem more important to us, but there is something more profound even than, say, the understanding that Sevastopol is a city of Russian glory, of naval glory, which is also important. But there are aspects that are even more profound.

As for the fact that we need to turn to this topic, the history of Crimea, you’re right, this is very relevant today, but overall, this is relevant for other reasons, which I just stated. Naturally, I suppose it would be good if you and your colleagues who are living and working in Crimea turned your attention to this topic and worked on it. We would be happy to support it. I will speak with the Cabinet, and we will support it at the governmental level. It is certainly needed. But we will need to look at the 20th century. Why? Because a great deal of the spiritual aspect of life in Crimea is tied to Russia in general. I mean our great writers and artists who lived and worked in Crimea. This is an essential part of our cultural life, our cultural code.

OLESYA ADAMENKO: Hello! My name is Olesya Adamenko, I teach at the North Caucasus Federal University in the city of Stavropol.

I have the following question: Mr President, we talk a lot about history, the role of individuals in history, and I would like to ask: which historical figure from our past would you invite to your team, and why?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: You know, our rich history has many outstanding individuals with strong characters and encyclopaedic knowledge devoted to their people, their nation. It is impossible to invite any of them, but I feel it is possible to try to understand how they reasoned, what guided them in certain situations, when making particular decisions. The organisers of the exhibition devoted to the Rurikids are trying to interpret certain things, even if their understanding is fragmented. But this exhibition is not only aimed at providing knowledge, but first and foremost, inciting an interest in history among people toward Russian history and provide a certain outline.

But the goal of experts such as yourselves and all your other colleagues is to help me and my colleagues, regardless of where they may be and at what level of government, to understand what guided previous generations of Russian people, wherever they served the Fatherland, in making various decisions, more or less difficult and more or less important, or crucial decisions. I am referring to our economic past, as well as the military component, and the domestic and foreign policy. This is exceedingly important; it is interesting and very useful. And we very much count on your help. Indeed, that is why we have gathered – to ask you to get you involved in this work.
ZHANNA METELKINA: Zhanna Metelkina, International Relations History Institute, Southern Federal University.

My question is as follows. You frequently quote philosophers, historians, public and state figures such as Berdyayev, Klyuchevsky and Stolypin. What body of historical materials do you reference to answer the questions that stand before modern Russia?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: I have essentially just about answered this question. If I myself am working on something, before saying something or giving a speech somewhere, just like anyone else, I simply try to remember what seemed important and interesting from what I had seen, read, or learned earlier. And I simply try to find it using the Internet and books to remember more precisely: what did a particular author say about a particular problem? You look, you refresh something in your memory – I suppose that is the easiest, most necessary approach.

Moreover, if you find yourself facing something that already occurred in some form in previous times (and this happens very often), you try to see how the events developed at that point in history, at some point in the past, what decisions were made and what this led to. If there is time to do so, that is what I try to do. And if not, if I have to do everything quickly, I use my legal sense and understanding of what is possible and useful for a particular sector and for the nation overall in today’s situation specifically. But all of this is based on previous experience, of course, and an assessment of today’s situation.

There are many different authors. If we talk about your field of expertise, we have already listed many. There are other authors as well, who are not as well known to the public, but who are no less valuable, although I will not list them all now. Many people have expressed themselves and stated their position on life, on the history of our state, assessing what happened in earlier times, talking about their hopes for the nation’s development in the future. And not just those working in the field of historical science. They also include our philosophers, such as Ilyin, our writers, artists, and political figures. So all of this together. But, of course, this needs to be done constantly, which is what I try to do.

ANTON KOMPLEYEV: Anton Kompleyev, Penza State University.

Mr President, I would like to return to the problem of falsifying history, the distortion of our perception of history. I myself work on the history of World War II and I think many present here would agree that this is one of the most painful topics subject to falsification and distortion, first and foremost by our western colleagues, for the most part. The reasons are clear. This problem has existed for a long time. We have already heard here that the challenge of fighting it is not just a challenge for the government, but for the historical community as well, first and foremost, us, historians. The Government should help us in this respect.

In light of this, I would like to give an example. I am holding a book by a British historian; it addresses the Anglo-German confrontation in 1940 and 1941, the German military plans and German operations against Britain. This book has absolutely no mention of the Soviet Union’s role in this period of the war, it absolutely fails to show the relationship between the German war plans against Britain and the fact that in parallel, Hitler was preparing a war against the Soviet Union. The book does not even mention the Barbarossa plan. In my view, and I think many of my colleagues would agree, this approach belittles the role of the Soviet Union in the years of World War II. And in this regard, we are entirely capable of giving a dignified response, and we can give it by broadening and expanding the source base in this area. And we do not need to go anywhere to do this: in our nation, in the Moscow Region, in Podolsk, in the Defence Ministry’s Central Archive, there is a large array, a large set of documents captured from the Germans. Unfortunately, a significant part of them is not accessible to researchers, including on the issue of German military planning during World War II.

Now, since 2011, a Russian-German project has been underway to digitise these documents. But this work will take years, or more likely, decades. The fact that this work is underway is used as justification for not allowing researchers access to these documents. They
have not been translated into Russian. But they are not even accessible to researchers who speak German.

So Mr President, I have an important request. I think if researchers work with these documents, this should in no way impede the project to digitise the documents. On the contrary, as our colleague from Crimea stated, if we do not write history, it will be written for us. We see that this process is underway, so we need to respond somehow.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: You are right. But here’s the issue. The issue is that researchers in the United Kingdom write about what is interesting to them. I have not seen this book, but as you yourself said, it focuses on the study of relations between Great Britain and Germany. In 1939 through 1941, right?

REPLY: Yes.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: So that is what he focused on. Why are you offended by it? He is an Englishman and you are a Russian; you are interested in our Russian history. This is normal. If there is some kind of distortion there, if there are lies in there, that’s another issue. But if he is simply researching certain relations during a certain period, and is not concerned about others… After all, he is not talking about, say, relations between the United States and Germany during that period of time, he is not studying them. That is not the subject of his study. His subject is different in this case. So there is no reason to feel offended.

But I completely agree with you that we need to fully study this period, as well as others. Why? That period is also interesting. Because before that, we had the so-called Munich Agreement in 1938. And what is it? Incidentally, your colleagues in western nations hush it up. Chamberlain arrived, shook his paper and said, “I brought you peace” when he returned to London after the talks. To which Churchill, I believe, in private, stated, “Well, now the war is inevitable.” Because appeasement of the aggressor, which Nazi Germany was, would clearly lead to a major future military conflict, and some people understood that. There should be a deep multilateral study of what was happening before World War II.

Or, for example, there are still arguments about the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and the Soviet Union is blamed for dividing Poland. But what did Poland itself do, when the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia? It took part of Czechoslovakia. It did this itself. And then, in turn, the same thing happened to Poland.

I do not want to blame anyone here, but serious studies should show that these were the foreign policy methods at the time. The Soviet Union signed a non-aggression agreement with Germany. They say, “Oh, how bad.” But what is so bad about it, if the Soviet Union did not want to fight? What is so bad?

Moreover, even knowing about the inevitability of war, supposing that it could happen, the Soviet Union desperately needed time to modernise its army. We needed to implement a new weapons system. Each month had significance because the number of Katyusha rocket launchers or T-34 tanks in the Soviet army was in the single digits, whereas thousands were needed. Each day had significance. So idle thoughts and chatter on this matter on a political level may have a purpose, in order to shape public opinion, but this must be countered with serious, deep, objective research.

As for the role of the Soviet Union and our allies in World War II, all this is also highly important. We cannot deny the enormous input of our allies into the victory over Nazi Germany. But we must compare the victims sacrificed at the altar of this common victory, the efforts and significance. And to do this, we simply need to restore some information: how many German divisions were on the Eastern Front, and how many fought on the Western Front? Simply the number of tanks, artillery, planes on the Eastern Front and the Western Front. Everything immediately becomes clear. We simply need to talk about this, to repeat it again, to count. But to do this, of course, we must work in the archives.
How many victims where there? How many people died in World War II in Great Britain? How many, 350,000? The US lost about half a million, somewhere between 350,000 and half a million, that’s it. Yes, that is an enormous number, it is terrible, but you see, it is not the 25 million victims lost from the Soviet Union. We simply must talk about this. But of course, in order to talk about it, we need good, deep research.

It is very interesting to show the real events of World War I. This is exceedingly important in understanding the relationship between nations, peoples and governments. After all, the allies were playing the game, they were competing against one another, but they also helped one another. For example, at the time, everyone knew and said, and nobody denies it today, that Russia saved Paris with its offense. We must give credit to the allies that in 1915, when the Russian army suffered a defeat, the allies gathered and began offensive actions at the cost of enormous losses – granted, they did not achieve a result, but they did it. And all of this ought to be discussed, but in order to discuss it, it must be researched.

I will try to help you get the archives in Podolsk opened to you.

ANTON KOMPLEYEYEV: Thank you very much.

YEVGENIA KURENKOVA: I am Yevgenia Kurenkova from the Knowledge Society of Russia.

Our country has a wealth of tradition in general public education. Spreading scientific knowledge, especially knowledge of history, is an important part of developing our society today. The newly revived Knowledge Society has put together a number of teaching aids and methods. We took the results of public opinion surveys into account in this work. What really surprised us was that young people in the 14-24 age group have no idea whatsoever of who they can take pride in. Young people today have no heroes. If they see no heroes around them, perhaps they should at least remember some of those from history. But here we also run into problems.

Sadly, they seldom mention heroes of Russia and the Soviet Union. They name Marshal Zhukov, but rarely recall the heroes of the Great Patriotic War. 30 percent of respondents do not even know that this war took place and that they had relatives who took part in it.

The Great Patriotic War is one of the twentieth century’s main events, a terrible event. The Knowledge Society builds its work around holding lectures and open master classes and courses in order to spread historical knowledge among today’s young people. We have for a long time organised open lectures for university students and senior students from schools.

We want to broaden our audience now and develop teaching materials for different groups of the population, including military service personnel, young workers, and pensioners. But we have a problem with giving our activities the legitimacy we need to get our lecturers access to audiences. Schools have teachers after all, and employers do not seem interested in having their employees broaden their education. In other words, business is business.

How do you view this kind of public education work and the idea of creating ‘people’s universities’, which can help to spread new knowledge in science and technology and also the results of historical research in various areas?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: First of all, I think this is very important work and it is a great thing and very useful that you are pursuing these efforts. Thank you very much for this. We took some steps to revive the Knowledge Society precisely in order to give people the opportunity to learn about these things that you and your colleagues consider important.

It is really very worrying indeed to see that young people today do not know who to take as their example, see no heroes around them, and do not even know about World War II. This is quite simply terrible, a real disaster. It is also a failure on the part of the state authorities, an incomparable failure and very dangerous situation. We must admit that our partners in other countries have worked much more effectively over recent decades. You mentioned heroes and
said that young people do not know any heroes. Your colleague, Anton, is studying World War II. We have plenty of examples of heroes.

I visited Poland a few years ago and heard there about how World War II began. A German cruiser came in close to the shore and for 10-12 days straight fired at a fortress. When the fortress’ defenders realised that their Western allies were not going to come to the rescue and had betrayed them, seeing that there was no help to be had from any quarter, they surrendered. They held out right until this point. A lot was said about their heroic behaviour and how they deserved attention and the highest historical assessment. This is certainly the case of course and I fully agree here.

But think of the Brest fortress, where the soldiers fought for more than two months to the very last man, and if anyone was taken prisoner it was only if they were captured unconscious. They kept fighting even after their food, water and ammunition had run out and the front line had already moved hundreds of kilometres deeper into the country. But they fought until the very last drop of blood. I think this is an example we could talk about. These were soldiers of all different ethnic groups, including people from the Southern Federal District, to use our names today. It is terrible that many people today do not know about these events. This is not their fault; it is the state authorities’ fault. We need to work to fix this.

As for getting access to audiences, this is a strange matter and I am not even sure I understand what the problem is. What do you mean by facing restrictions in access to audiences? What needs to be done then to remove these restrictions?

YEVGENIA KURENKHOVA: Perhaps we could draw on the Soviet past, when lecturers from the Knowledge Society had some official status and influence in society. Perhaps this way schools and universities and so on would be interested in inviting lecturers from our society to come and talk about new knowledge.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Mr Fursenko [Presidential Aide], this work needs to be organised in more concrete fashion. Good. If you can come up with some more concrete proposals on how to organise this work, let us know, and we will look at what we can do to help.

YEVGENIA KURENKHOVA: Thank you.

LEONID BOBROV: Leonid Bobrov, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Novosibirsk State University.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: How old are you?

LEONID BOBROV: I’m 34 now. I defended my doctoral dissertation (D.Sc. degree) at 31.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: That’s great! What was the topic of your dissertation?

LEONID BOBROV: “The Main Directions of Evolution of Protective Weaponry Complexes of the Peoples of Central, Middle, and Continental East Asia in the Second Half of the 14th through 19th Centuries.” In other words, how Asian armour developed after the Mongol invasion.

Mr President, I have a very pleasant duty today to express words of gratitude to you from my colleagues who received Presidential Grants in different years. We held a meeting in the Siberian Federal District and it turned out that hundreds of young people, Siberians, have already received this grant and not a single one of them was lost for Russian science. There are now two dozen of them who hold Doctor of Science degrees; in other words, people continue to work. And my responsibility today is to thank you, so that this project does not become lost and continues to develop in the future, because it represents a real start in life for many young scientists.

My question is as follows. In the last decade, the historical reconstruction movement has been developing very rapidly in our nation. There are already tens of thousands of young people involved – both young men and women – who restore the weapons and costumes of various Eurasian peoples. Should the government get a little involved in this? In what way? By
supporting the clubs, directions and movements that are working on reconstructing the historical past of the peoples of Russia – from Muscovite Russia, the Great Patriotic War, the War of 1812 and so on, because, as they say, it’s better to touch living history one time than to read a textbook a hundred times, regardless of how well-written it might be.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** The answer is clear and obvious: of course, we need to do this. But we need to approach it carefully.

**LEONID BOBROV:** Certainly.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** So that there won’t be major traumas. But please tell us – I try not to just talk at meetings like this, but also listen to something interesting. So if we put this in modern terms, you are an expert in the development of the military-industrial complex of the 14th century?

**LEONID BOBROV:** Partially. And military history. The most precise title is archaeologist and weapons expert. We deal with the history of weapons.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** In the 14th century?

**LEONID BOBROV:** The 14th to 15th through the mid-19th century.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** And what region?

**LEONID BOBROV:** Central Asia, Southern Siberia… Beyond the Urals.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** Yes, east of the Ural Mountains and all the way to Korea. We left out Japan.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** What was the most effective form of weaponry at the time?

**LEONID BOBROV:** You know, for the steppe-dwellers, for the nomads, it was the composite bow; that was the greatest discovery of the steppe-dwellers which allowed them to dominate the Great Steppe for a thousand years.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** What kind of bow?

**LEONID BOBROV:** A composite bow. It is a true killing machine that consists of wood, bone, horn, tendons, etc. Researchers still haven’t uncovered all of its mysteries.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** Have you uncovered them?

**LEONID BOBROV:** Yes, of course.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** But you said they still haven’t been uncovered. But you uncovered them.

**LEONID BOBROV:** We have not uncovered everything. Some mysteries still remain.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** So you still have mysteries to uncover.

**LEONID BOBROV:** Yes, there is still work to do.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** What else do you want to uncover?

**LEONID BOBROV:** Well, for example, here’s something interesting. For a long time, there was a mystery pertaining to firearms. For a long time, it was considered that the appearance of guns removed traditional medieval armour from use. It turned out this wasn’t true at all. On the contrary, the appearance of firearms stimulated plate armour use. And while it remained in Europe for another century and a half, in Asia, this armour was in use all the way through the mid-19th century. This was due to the particularities in the development of firearms and so on. And in this regard, the Russian weapons complex is symbiotic; in other words, it contained elements of European armour, local traditions, and Asian traditions. And therein lies its uniqueness. You can use the example of Russian armour to examine the evolution of military affairs among the peoples of Eastern Europe very well. It is a very illustrative example.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** What would you recommend today for the military-industrial complex?

**LEONID BOBROV:** You know, what’s most interesting is that many types of weapons reached us from the medieval era. For example, modern bulletproof vests.

**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** It’s probably time to change them, then.
LEONID BOBROV: You know, what’s most amazing is that the latest findings in the field of bulletproof vests, for example, their construction, comes from the middle ages.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: The little platelets?

LEONID BOBROV: Yes, sewn in an organic matrix on the inner side.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: You can see, we’re already speaking the same language.

LEONID BOBROV: Yes, it’s very nice, actually. In general, we are very lucky that our President is interested in history.

REPLY: And archaeology in particular.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Yes, I am very interested in it. I have already spoken about this; I was invited by a very respected individual, whom I hold in the highest esteem, Anatoly Kirpichnikov, to his archaeological digs; I went there a couple times. It’s so interesting and really amazing. He told me, they were digging (and, it seems, are continuing now) in a place that held an ancient court. They uncovered some birch bark, and it became clear from its inscription that it was the subject of legal proceedings. They continued to dig, and after, I believe, five to seven years, they found another piece of birch bark, and after they read it, they learned how the trial had ended. It’s astonishing. You know, it’s as though you are completely immersed in history. It’s amazing. This research provides the opportunity to conduct a deep study of what was happening within particular territories at a time that was quite long ago, and to reconstruct those events. So, for example, the theory of the Norman origin of the Russian state, which says that the Vikings were allegedly invited to calm the infighting, is subject to certain doubts – it needs to be talked over with the experts of course – but why? Because, for example, the Finno-Ugric peoples and Slavic tribes were living in the Lake Ladoga region, but based on archaeologists’ excavations, it seems clear that they were living fairly harmoniously together. So the question arises: did they need someone else for counterbalance? Of course, it’s possible that something does not align in terms of timing, etc. In any case, it leaves something to think about. But the subject of your research is one where archaeology probably helps a great deal.

LEONID BOBROV: Yes, of course.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: It’s interesting. Did you work in the Southern Urals as well?

LEONID BOBROV: To the east of the Ural Mountains and the Southern Urals as well, of course. There are many interesting findings from Mongolian times, the Golden Horde period. And in general, I can say that in the last ten years, I think, the study of weaponry has made an enormous step forward; in other words, foreign journals are also happy to take our articles about the findings of our archaeologists.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: You have a very interesting research subject. It really is very interesting. That’s great. And I’m sure it incites interest from a broader public.

LEONID BOBROV: Yes, of course. We have created a special centre through Moscow State University where weapons complexes are being restored at a professional scientific level from burials. To be honest, I wanted to bring you a helm as a gift, an exact replica.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Did you get greedy?

LEONID BOBROV: Then I was afraid that perhaps the regulations would not allow it. But if you are not against it, we will certainly submit it to the protocol service.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: I suppose this is a state treasure?

LEONID BOBROV: It is a copy. It is an exact copy.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Then just say that. You wanted to bring a copy. Very well. If you bring the original, we will put it up in the Kremlin. We will document it, take it to the Kremlin Museums and display it somewhere.

LEONID BOBROV: Thank you. I will certainly tell our researchers.

VLADIMIR PUTIN: But since we have ended on such an interesting topic – the military-industrial complex – I must tell you that it is time for me to go and hold a commission
Meeting of the Commission for Military Technology Cooperation

5 November 2014, 17:10, The Kremlin, Moscow

Vladimir Putin held a meeting of the Commission for Military Technology Cooperation with Foreign States.

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Good afternoon, colleagues.

Today, we will examine a number of issues related to making our military technology cooperation with foreign countries more effective and will discuss concrete steps to consolidate our country’s position on the global arms market.

Before we start discussing our agenda, let me note that we are confidently carrying out our annual plan for military technology cooperation supplies. Our clients abroad have so far received Russian-made equipment and goods worth a total of $10 billion. This is more than 70 percent of the total supplies planned for this year.

Particularly important is that we are also laying good ground for the future. Our arms makers have concluded new export contracts this year for a total of over $7.5 billion. The orders portfolio will thus stay firmly at around $50 billion. This is a good result.

At the same time, I must note a few points in this sector that require our particular attention. First of all, the general geopolitical situation has become more complicated. Serious crises have flared up in the Middle East and North Africa, and on Russia’s very borders, in Ukraine, a civil conflict, essentially a civil war, is still underway. Despite the Minsk agreements, peaceful towns continue to come under fire and civilians are still getting killed. Many of our cooperation links with our Ukrainian partners and Ukrainian companies have been disrupted. That is not to mention the unfair competition we face from some of our traditional partners in the arms export sector. But we constantly encounter this sort of practice.

Russia has everything it needs not only to rise to these challenges but also to bolster its positions. To do this, we have drafted large-scale import substitution programmes for the defence sector and are building alternative production and technology cooperation ties. I want to thank the colleagues who did such a thorough job of the preliminary work here. We have drafted and approved together this work programme and arranged the necessary financing. It is good to see that the deadlines are quite acceptable and the financial costs are lower than we initially thought they would be. In general, everything is within acceptable limits and can realistically be carried out.

As I said, we need to work actively with our traditional partners and with new customers. We have long-term and strategic relations with many of our partners. For decades now we have taken part in equipping and providing technical service for countries’ armed forces and helping to train their military specialists. Of course, we must maintain and continue these close ties that have stood the test of time. At the same time, we need to raise quality and broaden our customer base in the military-technical cooperation sector. Many of our partners have an interest in this too.

We should make greater use of our country’s advantages in this sector. They include our solid defence industry capability and our reputation as a genuinely reliable partner. We all know that reliability is one of the most important aspects of work in this sensitive sector. If we even just once or twice allow problems to arise in this respect, our reputation could take a serious
blow and this would have negative economic consequences. We must fulfil all of our obligations.

Naturally, demand for modern Russian arms on the world market is also an important aspect. Russia can deliver series-production models of the most advanced systems and weapons that have been tried and tested in battle conditions, and that in terms of cost, quality and effectiveness surpass foreign equivalents.

What’s more, we are ready not just to sell arms but also to organise joint production, repair, modernisation and maintenance, which in today’s conditions is extremely important.

It is essential to make use in practice of new forms of cooperation with buyers of Russian arms and military equipment. I am referring to flexible payment schemes, loans, extensive logistics support and other modern and effective mechanisms for promoting our products. I ask you to pay particular attention to this. We already use all of these instruments but we need to expand their range and beef up our efforts. This is all the more so as our partners respond very positively to these steps and show interest in these opportunities we offer. This is understandable because it not only boosts their defence capability but also offers new technological capability. Let’s discuss all of this now. Let’s begin our work.

Meeting with directors of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives

6 November 2014, 15:10, Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region

Vladimir Putin had a meeting with directors of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects (ASI).

The meeting participants discussed the agency’s performance, as well as new initiatives aimed at improving the investment climate, promoting new Russian manufacturing companies, and training professionals for industry and promising sectors of the economy.

ASI is an autonomous non-profit organisation established in 2011 to implement a set of measures in the economy and the social sphere.

In 2011-2014, over 1,000 leading medium-sized businesses have applied to ASI for support. 260 projects have been approved, and 79 of them have already received support. Over those three years, 25,000 people have undergone training through the agency’s Young Professionals programme.

Meeting with members of CSTO Parliamentary Assembly

6 November 2014, 17:00, Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region

Vladimir Putin met with members of Collective Security Treaty Organisation Parliamentary Assembly. Current issues in the CSTO’s work were subject of discussion.

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Good afternoon, friends, colleagues. I am very glad to see all of you.

Our relations in the CSTO framework with our partner countries and allies are flourishing. We have clearly outlined our goals and tasks. We are successfully working to strengthen the security of our states in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and we have created appropriate mechanisms and tools in all these areas. Everything we do is actively supported by the heads of states.

I am very pleased to see representatives of Afghanistan and Serbia here. In this regard, we must note that the situation, as it is developing in Afghanistan, certainly attracts attention around the world, not least in the CSTO zone. We wish the Afghan people success in normalising the situation in the country, but we realise that challenges will arise following the international contingent’s withdrawal. If necessary, we are ready to lend a hand to our Afghan
friends, to ensure the situation in the country remains stable and has positive development prospects.

Certainly, without your support, without the support of the public in our countries, different political forces that you represent in representative bodies of power, in parliament, it would be difficult or even impossible to tackle the tasks facing us.

This is because conducting the activities we are talking about – and this includes both training and the real fight against organised crime – would be very difficult without broad public support, without all the political forces understanding the importance of our joint efforts. Therefore, we hope that we will work jointly and effectively, and that we will have your support and the backing of all political forces represented in our countries’ parliaments.

I am very pleased that Russia is hosting this meeting. I am sure that it will be useful and will provide the support we need in addressing the challenges we face today.

Colleagues, I wish you every success and please convey my best wishes to the heads of states and governments of your countries.

**XV Congress of the Russian Geographical Society**

7 November 2014, 15:15, Moscow

**Vladimir Putin took part in the Russian Geographical Society’s XV congress.**

The congress re-elected Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu to be the Society’s president. Vladimir Putin heads the Society’s Board of Trustees.

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**PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN:** Good afternoon, friends.

I welcome to Moscow everyone taking part in the Russian Geographical Society’s XV congress. First of all, I want to thank our colleagues who were elected to various organisational positions within the Society for their previous work and wish them continued success now. This includes of course Sergei Shoigu, who was one of those who helped to revive the Russian Geographical Society and has done much for its work over these last years. There is no doubt that these last years will go down in the Society’s history as a period of renewal and a time when its wonderful traditions found new demand and received new development, and its activities took on new dynamics and content.

The Society held an extraordinary congress here in Moscow in 2009. Now it has an extensive network of branches in all 85 regions of the country. Its headquarters in St Petersburg has been returned to its original historical appearance. The Society’s rich archives, library and collections were literally rescued and what’s more are now open for people to use. Even more valuable is that these collections are being added to, including and above all through the efforts of many those present here now. I want to say thank you very much to you for this.

Research and exploration work essentially got a new life, the intensity of which can probably be compared to the Society’s most fruitful period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The key ethnographic and environmental protection commissions were restored and new commissions have been established too. The Society has renewed wide-ranging publishing activities and is making use of all the modern information resources that enable it to carry out a huge amount of educational work, primarily aimed at young people of course. Overall, the revived Russian Geographical Society is doing a lot to restore its traditions and prepare a new generation to continue its work. It is enough to cite the establishment of the youth movement and the hundreds of projects being carried out for children, often by the children themselves.

Today, I particularly want to thank those who set out five years ago on the difficult road of reviving the Russian Geographical Society, organised its work and took part in its projects. I want to express particular gratitude to our trustees.
Friends, we all have many day to day problems and various difficult tasks to take care of. We encounter all manner of obstacles in life and we each overcome them in our different areas. But what you are doing to restore the Russian Geographical Society truly deserves our particular attention and special thanks. Like your predecessors, you are active in helping the Society in its constructive initiatives today.

I also want to thank the media council’s members. They have carried out a lot of information work, helping people to learn about what is happening in society and in many ways discover our country’s wealth.

The recent [Russian Geographical Society] festival showed clearly just how much demand there is for the Society’s projects and how popular they are. Over the week it took place it drew tens of thousands of visitors and was of interest to children and adults alike. It was important to see that many people came not just to look, which is good in itself, but also to propose their ideas and willingness to help with projects, which is even better of course. We are always open to those who want to get involved in the Society’s work and provide some help. The RGS grants tender has just started now and I am sure that much of what has been planned will be carried out over the coming year.

I would also like to make some proposals. We discussed these ideas earlier in one form or another, but I think that carrying out these proposals could raise people’s interest not just in geography but also in the homeland in the broadest sense of the word.

There is the idea, for example, of launching the National Geographical Quiz, similar to the Total Dictation testing Russian language skills, which has been held for several years now and been a big success. This kind of voluntary national test attracts more and more people and obviously should reach out to new fields too. I am sure that the RGS’s regional branches and geography teachers would willingly support this idea (indeed, many of them already made proposals along this line earlier), and also the development of a common standard in geography and subsequent development of a series of new geography textbooks for schools. I know that teachers criticise modern teaching materials in terms of both presentation and content.

Geography, as we have said many times in the past, can and should be one of the most interesting subjects in school. It is important here to put particular emphasis on studying Russia’s natural heritage, environmental issues, rational use of natural resources, and protection of rare animal and plant species.

When it comes to environmental protection, I note that the RGS’s environmental projects are concentrated mostly in the Far East and the Arctic, which is understandable. These regions are home to many unique landscape systems that one cannot find elsewhere in the world. There are also ambitious plans for developing these regions and we can implement these plans, as we have said on many occasions, only if we make a very thorough analysis of all environmental risks.

But Central Russia also deserves its share of attention. It is important here too, to establish nature preserves and restore animal populations, develop public efforts to clean up forests, lakes and rivers, combat illegal logging and dumps, and protect and restore natural and cultural sites, not just the sites recognised as our country’s national symbols, but also sites connected to the history of our small towns and villages.

Squares, parks and small forested areas are also an integral part of our country and its heritage. We must protect this, develop it and pass it on to our future generations. This was the principle the Russian Geographical Society always followed in its work.

I sincerely wish the congress delegates and guests and all members of the Society big success and interesting work for our country’s benefit.

Thank you very much.
Meeting with President of Peru Ollanta Humala

7 November 2014, 19:30, Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region

Vladimir Putin met with President of Peru Ollanta Humala.

Development of bilateral cooperation in trade and the economy, science and technology and humanitarian fields were the subjects of discussion.

A number of agreements were signed following the talks, including an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in environmental protection, an agreement on cooperation in the tourism sector, an agreement on combating illegal drug trafficking, and an agreement on exchanging statistical data on reciprocal trade.

A roadmap for implementing agreements of the Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Science and Technology and Fisheries Cooperation was also signed.

Mr Putin and Mr Humala made press statements following their talks.

Press statement following talks with President of Peru Ollanta Humala

7 November 2014, 19:20, Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Ladies and gentlemen,

This visit by the Peruvian head of state to Russia is the first such event at this level in the 140 years of our bilateral relations and the 45 years of diplomatic relations between our countries. We are marking both of these anniversaries this year.

The talks with President Humala were constructive and friendly in spirit. I am sure that the agreements reached will give a big impetus to developing our bilateral ties.

We discussed current bilateral and international matters and outlined our plans for further developing our political dialogue and our partnership in all areas.

We paid great attention to the matter of expanding our trade and economic cooperation. We have already achieved some results in this area. Our bilateral trade has increased 2.5-fold over the last 5 years. Mr Humala and I think that it should be possible to double our reciprocal trade over the coming years. This requires us to improve the quality of our trade ties’ structure and encourage investment flows. Let me note that new opportunities are opening up now for increasing supplies of seafood, fruit, fish and other agricultural goods from Peru.

We instructed our intergovernmental commission to be more active in promoting big projects in promising areas such as mining, the energy sector, the automotive industry, and air and rail transport.

We have already made some good progress in developing natural resources. A Peruvian business with Russian capital is involved in copper mining in Ica Department in Peru. They are using the very latest environmental standards. The importance that both countries place on environmental protection is reflected in the agreement on cooperation in this area that we signed today.

Our countries also have big plans for industrial cooperation. Our KAMAZ company is taking part in setting up a joint venture for bus assembly. AvtoVAZ has good positions on the Peruvian market and exports the Lada car there. Russian Helicopters is selling Mi and Ka helicopters in Peru, and United Aircraft Manufacturing Corporation is holding talks on supplying aircraft for civil aviation.

Power Machines company has presented interesting proposals for turnkey supply of equipment for several Peruvian hydroelectric plants. Inter RAO is studying the opportunities for joining projects to build new power stations. We are also ready to make available our experience and modern technology for plans to develop nuclear energy, nuclear science and medicine in Peru.
We see good prospects in telecommunications and space exploration, including satellite communications and navigation. Russian specialists took part in placing in orbit in August this year Peru’s first micro-satellite, Chasqui-1. Two more small satellites are also in the plans.

Russian companies are developing 4G broadband mobile internet in Peru and we are studying the possibilities for joint use of Russia’s global navigation system, GLONASS.

Our bilateral humanitarian exchanges are developing rapidly. We make 30 scholarships available every year for Peruvian citizens to study in Russian universities. We currently have 117 Peruvian students studying free of charge in Russia.

Tours by performers from the St Petersburg State Ballet on Ice, Rosgostsirk (Russian State Circus Company) performers and other groups were a great success in Peru. The exhibition 1,000 Years of Inca Gold met with great interest in its turn from people here.

Our countries have had visa-free travel since 2011. This helps to develop our humanitarian contacts and business ties. We would like to develop tourism too. The agreement on cooperation in this sector will give a good boost to this work, I hope.

We also discussed international matters during our talks. With the APEC summit coming up soon in Beijing, we discussed Russia and Peru’s cooperation within this forum. Russia is interested in working together with integration organisations in the Latin American region.

I am happy to say that our exchange of views confirmed our close positions on many of the most important issues on the global agenda. Taking this into account, we agreed to coordinate more closely our efforts on the international stage.

We discussed our work together on combating drug trafficking. We have a base for this work. Russian specialists are holding open courses for drugs control police from South America in Peru’s capital, Lima. 115 people from 9 different countries have already completed the courses.

I want to conclude by assessing these talks very highly. They demonstrated our mutual desire to continue developing our bilateral relations and our dialogue at all levels.

I want to thank Mr Humala and his entire representative team for the work today and for all we have accomplished to develop our cooperation over this last period.

Thank you for your attention.

Vladimir Putin has arrived in Beijing

9 November 2014, 02:00, Beijing

The President of Russia has arrived in Beijing to take part in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

On the first day of his visit to China Vladimir Putin will meet with President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping. The two leaders will discuss bilateral cooperation and current international and regional issues. They will also align their respective countries’ positions on the main issues for the upcoming APEC and G20 summits. A number of bilateral agreements are expected to be signed following the talks.

On November 10-11, the President of Russia will be taking part in the APEC summit. Mr Putin will also hold a number of bilateral meetings with summit participants.

Meeting with President of Chile Michelle Bachelet

9 November 2014, 14:00, Beijing

In Beijing, Vladimir Putin met with President of the Republic of Chile Michelle Bachelet to discuss prospects for bilateral relations, including trade.

The two leaders agreed to intensify cooperation, specifically in such areas as agriculture and the study of the Antarctic.
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**PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN:** Madam President, friends, welcome. It gives me great pleasure to see you again.

We have always had a good partnership with Chile. This year we will soon be marking 70 years of diplomatic relations between our states. We maintain an intensive political dialogue; we have set up an intergovernmental commission and business council, which are operating successfully. Naturally, our relations should be augmented by numerous economic ties that would reflect our countries’ potential.

I am very happy to see you again.

**PRESIDENT OF CHILE MICHELLE BACHELET (retranslated):** Good afternoon, Mr President. Thank you very much for this meeting. I am happy to see you again; last time we met was on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Brazil.

You mentioned that December 11 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our countries. In fact, our relations have existed even longer, because in 1909 a Russian ambassador presented his credentials to our country, which means our relations are even older.

As you have said, we are maintaining dialogue on a number of various issues. We hope we will have more specific achievements and will make progress in such areas as, for instance, drafting an agreement on cooperation in education and culture, joining efforts on combatting organised crime, ties in energy and exchange of statistical data. As I have said, we already have established ties in culture as well as in defence, where we expect to expand our cooperation with the Russian Federation in the future.

Our bilateral commission is working on a number of matters, including cooperation in the sphere of customs and energy. Tatiana Valovaya [member of Eurasian Economic Commission Board] is to visit us on November 26. We expect to have a more detailed discussion with her to consolidate the progress made. We hope to achieve practical, specific cooperation in the most important areas for our countries.

As you may know, Mr President, we are strongly interested in the prospect of working together on drafting an agreement on free trade, not only with Russia, but also with the Customs Union. We hope you will support us at the Eurasian Economic Commission as well.

We acknowledge the leading position of the Russian Federation in science and technology, and we would like to see our relations in these areas grow deeper and become more specific.

**Meeting with President of People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping**

9 November 2014, 15:15, Beijing

In view of the APEC summit, Vladimir Putin met with the President of People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping.

After the meeting, the two presidents attended the signing of a package of documents.

Among them is a Memorandum on gas shipments from the Russian Federation to the People’s Republic of China along the ‘western’ route and a framework agreement between Gazprom and the Chinese National Oil and Gas Corporation on gas shipments along this route.

The parties also signed agreements on implementing joint energy investment projects in Arkhangelsk Region, on the joint funding, construction and operation of a hydro power station in the Far East of Russia and on cooperation in the construction of hydro-accumulating power stations.

Sberbank of Russia also signed an agreement with the Export-Import Bank of China regarding credit lines and purchasing loans, while VTB Bank signed a cooperation agreement with *Huawei Technologies*. 
PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA XI JINPING (retranslated):
Good afternoon. My friend, welcome to Beijing, where you have arrived to take part in the APEC summit.

We have lately enhanced our strategic management and design in bilateral relations; we have frequent meetings and take good care of the evergreen tree of Chinese-Russian friendship.

Autumn is harvest time and a time for new achievements. Our course towards strengthening overall partnership and strategic cooperation has the full support of the people of China and Russia, meets their expectations and complies with the spirit of the times.

Whatever changes occur on the world arena, we will consider the strengthening of our cooperation as a priority area in our foreign policy, and we will strengthen mutual political trust and expand mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas.

Next year we will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of Victory in World War II. Our foreign policy agencies have come up with an impressive list of events that we intend to hold in connection with this anniversary. This will provide a new opportunity to jointly protect the post-war world order and strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our countries and peoples.

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: My dear friend, Mr President, colleagues, I would like to thank you for the invitation and for today’s meeting.

I fully agree with you that our staff and we have done a lot to develop Russian-Chinese strategic relations. I would like to stress that they are developing in practically every area. This equally applies to our political relations, our military and military-technical cooperation and the economy.

As for our economic cooperation, I would like to note that while last year our trade turnover went up by 1.3 percent, in the first nine months of this year it has already increased by 7 percent. This is a great achievement that shows that our efforts have not been wasted. It shows that our people are getting to know each other better; they are closely cooperating and achieving good results for the benefit of our economies and social spheres, to ensure that our people have a better life, that they have adequate incomes and could resolve all their daily matters.

Regarding cooperation on the world arena, I would also like to note the importance of cooperation between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation for retaining the world within the international legal framework, for making it more stable and predictable. You and I have done a great deal for this purpose and I am certain we will continue working in this direction.

Today’s meeting and this visit should give an additional impetus to our relations. We know how difficult it is to organise events of such a scale as APEC. At the same time, we know that our Chinese friends are good at hosting such major events.

We wish you success. Thank you very much.

Meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe

9 November 2014, 17:00, Beijing

Vladimir Putin met with Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Beijing.

The parties confirmed their readiness to maintain contacts in all areas, including work on the peace treaty. The President of Russia and the Prime Minister of Japan covered in detail the list of bilateral projects pertaining to trade and economic cooperation made after the latest visit by the Japanese Prime Minister to Russia.

The two leaders also covered a number of international issues, particularly the situation in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin gave a detailed account of Russia’s position.

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PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN: Mr Prime Minister, colleagues, welcome.

Only yesterday, I had the pleasure of attending a festival of Japanese martial arts in Moscow. I would like to thank you, Mr Prime Minister, and those of your colleagues who were involved in the organisation of this event, for the pleasure they gave to Russian fans of martial arts. This is not only sports, but also a significant part of Japanese culture, and this, in turn, is the best basis for developing bilateral relations, which have been making good progress in the past years both in the economy and politics.

When I speak of politics, I am also referring to the renewal of our talks on a peace treaty. In this connection, I am happy to have this opportunity to meet with you again here, on the sidelines of the APEC summit and together analyse all the aspects of our cooperation.

Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN SHINZO ABE (retranslated): Mr President, I am very happy to see you again after our brief meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe summit in Milan. In fact, this is the tenth time we meet if we take into account our meetings during my first term as Prime Minister.

I would like to thank you for attending the festival of Japanese martial arts. I believe that your knowledge of Japanese martial arts as a judo wrestler means a better understanding of Japan in general. This is beneficial for the further development and strengthening of Japanese-Russian relations.

Today I would like to focus on an exchange of views on the peace treaty and on certain international issues.


Expanding the manufacturing industry in the North Caucasus

5 November 2014 16:30 Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic
Excerpt from the meeting of the Government Commission on Socioeconomic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District.

Excerpts from Dmitry Medvedev’s opening remarks:
The North Caucasus has huge import substitution potential, and the Caucasus can play a significant role in implementing the related roadmaps, building up its economic capacity and creating more jobs in manufacturing and agriculture.

The industrial base of the North Caucasus Federal District has several major projects that can significantly reduce or eliminate imports in the chemical and timber industries, among others. With some technical upgrades, local enterprises can also be used for import substitution purposes in the aviation, medical, pharmaceutical, electronics, and defence industries, as well as light industry. All these areas are important in the context of import substitution and improving the quality of Russian-made goods.

We should use existing mechanisms of government support, and create additional incentives for investors in some cases, in order to implement these projects. The working group on industrial production in the North Caucasus district at the Government Commission will be in charge of these issues.

We need to take a comprehensive approach to implementing these projects both as regards import substitution and the availability of resources. I’d like to cite one example. Experts analysed the possibility of launching the production of hard-alloy metal cutting tools in the district. In their estimate the market for such tools is worth 15 billion roubles. Today foreign companies receive the bulk of these funds. Last year 85 percent of these tools were imported.
Meanwhile, the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic has the nation’s largest tungsten molybdenum deposit, which can supply the entire production cycle of hard-alloy instruments in Russia. The Government is interested in such projects and will support them.

Agriculture is no less important, all the more so since the nature of the Caucasus offers expansive opportunities for its development. Now that competition with European agricultural producers has substantially declined following the Government’s restrictions, we must concentrate on increasing vegetable and grain production and developing horticulture, winegrowing and livestock breeding, which are so characteristic and natural for the republics of the North Caucasus and the Stavropol Territory.

We should develop the logistics for storing, processing and selling produce in proportion to the larger harvests.

Investors are showing growing interest in agricultural production. As of 1 October 2014, 658 investment projects had been subsidised to the tune of 28 billion roubles. Over 5.5 billion roubles have already been transferred.

Businesses can expect government support in implementing promising projects that further import substitution, other strategic areas of North Caucasus’ economic development, including the creation of a tourism cluster. To support active companies, the Government is granting special loan guarantees for such projects. All procedures should be as transparent as possible and understandable for potential investors.

Communications are very important for business development. On the one hand, the Caucasus is a large area, but the fairly big territorial entities there are densely populated. Many people live in the Caucasus and the birth rate is high. Therefore, it is very important to improve local roads and communications there.

*Press Office of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

**Press release on the approval of the Russian draft of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly resolution on No First Placement of Arms in Outer Space**

The overwhelming majority of the UN member-countries represented on the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) of the 69th UN General Assembly voted for the Russian draft of the resolution on No First Placement of Arms in Outer Space. The resolution was approved by a recorded vote of 126 in favour to 4 against (the United States, Israel, Georgia and Ukraine).

The voting result has confirmed that the Russian initiative on preventing the weaponisation of space is winning growing support in the international community. This is the first time this draft resolution, co-authored by 33 countries, has been presented at the UN General Assembly.

This resolution was drafted in furtherance of the draft resolution on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, alternately presented by Egypt and Sri Lanka for many years.

The draft resolution on No First Placement of Arms in Outer Space provides the basis for further action to keep outer space free from any kind of weapons and to ensure that all countries have an equal opportunity for the peaceful use of outer space.

One of the key provisions of this document is the beginning of talks without delay at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva with a view to drafting and adopting a binding international treaty to prevent the placement of arms in outer space and the threat or use of force.
against outer space objects. The updated Russian-Chinese draft of this treaty was submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in June this year.

The draft resolution also includes an appeal to all states to adopt a political commitment on no first placement of arms in outer space. So far, 11 countries have assumed this responsibility, including Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan.

Adopting a commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space by all nations with major space capabilities would greatly facilitate a legally binding ban on the placement of any kind of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. Further efforts to spread the pledge not to be the first to place weapons in outer space across the globe would be a major addition to the efforts of all the UN member countries towards equal and indivisible security and stability.

4 November 2014

**Address by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the world thematic conference, World War I and the Destinies of Russian Compatriots, Moscow, 6 November 2014**

Mr Naryshkin, friends,

On behalf of the Government Commission on Compatriots Living Abroad I am pleased to welcome you to Moscow and our forum.

Present here in the audience are representatives of the Russian community from over 70 countries: the descendants of participants in World War I, experts, historians, journalists from foreign Russian-language media, members of the World Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad, delegates of youth organisations of our compatriots who personify the continuity of generations. This continuity is vital for us to be able to restore the ties of time and preserve the historical memory, which is indispensable for consolidating our efforts to ensure the growth and prosperity of our homeland.

The First World War was a tragedy of global proportions that claimed millions of lives, caused huge economic losses and dramatically altered the political landscape in Europe. In fact, the Great War or the Big War, as it was then called, marked the beginning of a new era in global development.

Russia did not want that war, and strove to keep other nations from taking this fatal step. Back then, as it does now, our country advocated strong relations based on trust between states, and peaceful and bloodless conflict resolution. But our voice was not heard, and the war parties prevailed.

Russia fulfilled its duty as an ally. The heroism of Russian soldiers saved France and laid the foundation for the victory of the Entente. However, Russia didn’t benefit from sacrificing its soldiers, as the country was swept up by the chaos of the revolution and the civil war.

The revolution opened the door to the first wave of emigration. According to various sources, up to one and a half million Russians – creative people in the prime of life, who were deeply and sincerely concerned about the future of their country – ended up scattered all over the world. Their descendants today include millions of people for whom Russia is not just the land of their ancestors, but a subject of constant focus, spiritual connection, compassion and concern.

Living in difficult conditions, these Russian émigrés managed to preserve their spiritual and cultural traditions. Russian emigration gave the world such great masters of art as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky, Feodor Chaliapin, and Wassily Kandinsky, as well as many eminent scientists, including the creator of the first helicopter, Igor Sikorsky, and the inventor of modern television, Vladimir Zworykin. Three Russian émigrés became Nobel laureates: Ivan Bunin in literature, Wassily Leontief in economics and Ilya Prigogine in chemistry.
Hardly could six-year old Lev Tarasov, whose parents emigrated from Moscow, imagine that he, under the name of Henri Troyat, would join the Immortals of the French Academy, would author more than a hundred of books of history and fiction, and would become one of France’s most widely read writers.

It is safe to say that the Russian community abroad has become an important factor promoting the interweaving and harmonisation of cultures, building trust and understanding between nations and peoples, and acts as a stabilising element providing a positive influence on the minds in Europe and all over the world.

In the words of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, it’s about the universal sympathy of the Russian soul, which needs “the union of all people” coupled with absolute respect for “complete freedom of the people.”

World War I offered many lessons that are relevant in our time as well. One of them is the importance of practicing state wisdom when making foreign policy decisions. Today, the demand is high for comprehensive approaches to overcoming conflicts and searching for answers to common global challenges and threats. No country can be guided by goals such as promoting fleeting interests or imposing exceptionality of one particular nation, or acting unscrupulously in achieving one’s goals.

On 1 August, the Day of Remembering Russian Soldiers who died in 1914-1918, President Putin, speaking at the ceremony of unveiling a monument to WWI heroes on Poklonnaya Gora in Moscow, said that their feats and sacrifice in the name of Russia have for many years remained in oblivion. Today, we have Nikita Lobanov-Rostovskiy and Alexander Troubetzkoy in the audience who, at the Fourth World Congress of Compatriots in 2012, proposed raising funds to build this monument. My sincere thanks go out to everyone who responded to this call and implemented this idea.

The Foreign Ministry and all our diplomatic missions abroad participate in the events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. The Ministry’s website has posted detailed information about dozens of exhibitions, conferences, presentations, newly unveiled monuments and restored memorials.

In May 2015, we will celebrate the 70th anniversary of victory in WWII. Together with our compatriots' organisations, we will continue our efforts to perpetuate the memory of the fallen, preserve historical truth, and combat the glorification of Nazism and revision of the outcome of World War II. History lessons require uncompromising opposition to all forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and chauvinism.

Dear friends,

We highly value your willingness to strengthen ties with your historical homeland and your contribution to the unbiased perception of our country in the world, as well as the promotion of the Russian language and Russian culture abroad. Your efforts help build a strong and prosperous Russia, a country that remains true to its age-old traditions and moral values, and that is open to equal and fair cooperation with all those willing to cooperate on these terms.

I wish you fruitful work and all the best.

Comment by the Information and Press Department on the escalating tensions in East Jerusalem

Recently tensions in East Jerusalem have escalated to a dangerous level. After an activist of a radical Palestinian group attempted to assassinate right-wing Israeli Rabbi Yehuda Glick on 29 October, Israeli authorities took the unprecedented step of temporarily shutting down access to one of the holiest Muslim shrines – the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Although they loosened the restrictions later, tensions in the city continue to escalate and there are regular clashes...
between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces. This is largely due to the attempts by a number of Israeli right-wing leaders to penetrate the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

The growing extremist attitudes among Palestinian and Israeli radicals are seriously aggravating the tense situation. On 5 November two Palestinian drivers rammed their cars into Israelis, killing a police major and wounding a dozen people. A number of media outlets described these incidents as deliberate attacks.

Russia is seriously concerned about the events in East Jerusalem. Condemning any acts of violence without reservation, we are urging Israelis and Palestinians to take urgent steps to deescalate tensions. In this context we would like to emphasise the 2 November statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the unacceptability of fanning religious strife. The Palestinian leaders shared this attitude. We proceed from the premise that all issues related to the status of the shrines of Jerusalem, a holy city for the followers of three monotheistic religions, should be resolved at Palestinian-Israeli peace talks on a solid foundation of international law.

6 November 2014

Comment by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on settling the Ukrainian crisis

Politicians have recently proposed resuming talks on the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis in the so-called Geneva format, which means with the involvement of Russia, the EU, the United States of America and Ukraine. This idea was proposed the other day by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the current head of the Ukrainian government.

We would like to say in this connection that the foreign ministers of Russia, the EU, USA and Ukraine and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy coordinated a joint statement at their meeting in Geneva on 17 April 2014, which stipulated initial measures to de-escalate tensions and restore security for all citizens.

It said that the conflicting sides should refrain from “violence, intimidation, or provocative actions.” The participants strongly condemned and rejected all expressions of extremism, racism and religious intolerance, including anti-Semitism. They also stressed that “the announced constitutional process will be inclusive, transparent and accountable. It will include the immediate establishment of a broad national dialogue, with outreach to all of Ukraine’s regions and political constituencies, and allow for the consideration of public comments and proposed amendments.”

It is now clear that Ukraine has flouted these agreements. Instead of de-escalating tensions, Kiev has stepped up hostilities and is using heavy weaponry in the southeastern regions, which has claimed thousands of lives and led to large-scale destruction. Instead of initiating constitutional reform and a dialogue with the people, it has undertaken indistinct behind-the-scenes manipulation, which has not produced any concrete result aside from empty promises.

A look at the current situation makes one wonder about resuming negotiations in a format that has not produced the desired effect. Maybe Kiev should instead try to fulfil the previous agreements and pledges?

6 November 2014
Question: Mr. Lavrov, can you talk to us about the cease-fire in Ukraine, and whether Russia still respects its legitimacy?

S.Lavrov: The ceasefire has been signed between the rebels and the government. It is for them to finalize the disengagement, what they are doing right now.

Question: So, is Russia sending troops and tanks into Ukraine now?

S.Lavrov: Even J.Psaki said that the State Department doesn’t have information about this.

Pool: What is your information?

S.Lavrov: Well, if J.Psaki doesn’t have it, I don’t.