

The Telegraph. – 23.03.2015

By Tom Parfitt

Leaders' snub of Moscow victory parade 'insult to soldiers', says Russia  
Boycott by David Cameron and other EU leaders is an "unseemly campaign", says  
Russian official

*Відмова приїжджати на московський парад Перемоги світових  
лідерів, це «неповага до солдат», говорить Росія.  
Бойкот Девіда Камерона та інших лідерів ЄС це «непорядна кампанія»  
заявляє російський чиновник*

*Російські чиновники заявили, що ця непристойна кампанія була розгорнута навколо  
ювілею Перемоги, вона не робить честі тим політикам, які приймають у ній участь, і  
ображає пам'ять російських солдатів. Європейські лідери, в свою чергу, говорять, що для  
них є неприйнятно перебувати на військовому параді у країні яка веде агресію проти  
України.*

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11490770/Leaders-snub-of-Moscow-victory-parade-insult-to-soldiers-says-Russia.html>



The decision of **David Cameron** and other European leaders to snub celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the end of Second World War in Moscow is an insult to the memory of Allied soldiers, a **Russian** official said on Monday.

Vladimir Chizhov, Russia's ambassador to the EU, said an "unseemly campaign" had been initiated by European politicians over the May 9 Victory Day parade, which is marked annually with great pomp and ceremony on Red Square.

The Prime Minister and the leaders of Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have said they will not attend, while Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, has announced she will travel to Russia a day later and join Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Speaking via a video link from Brussels at a Moscow press conference, Mr Chizhov said: "The fact that in several countries of the European Union an unseemly campaign has been deployed around the Victory anniversary, which does no honour to those politicians taking part in it, and insults the

memory of Soviet soldiers, of their own compatriots who fell in the battles with fascism - this will clearly have to be left on their consciences."

The comments appeared to be targeted mainly at the ex-Soviet Baltic states but could also be taken to mean the leaders of any former Allied countries who are refusing to take part.

Downing Street announced earlier this month that **Mr Cameron would not go to Moscow.**

A spokesman for David Cameron said at the time: "We will be considering our representation in light of our ongoing discussions with Russia, and our concerns about their activity. We don't have plans for the Prime Minister to attend, and I'm sure we will set out who will represent the government in due course."

He and other European leaders are thought to be boycotting the event in protest at Russia's alleged aggression in Ukraine. **Barack Obama**, the US president, has also refused to go, citing a tight schedule.

Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, said last week that he had received an invitation but would not attend because his "presence at a military parade beside the current aggressors and the person who uses weapons against civilians eastern in Ukraine would be, for me to put it mildly, too ambiguous".

Ironically, Mr Chizhov's scolding of EU leaders was uttered as Russian authorities said they would be taking measures to intercept any of their own Second World War veterans who tried to get on to Red Square on May 9 without being officially invited to the ceremonies.

The Kommersant newspaper said that only one veteran and a companion from each Russian region would be allowed on to the tribune.

Veterans who turn up in Moscow without invitations to the parade will be able to take part in other events to mark the occasion and will be helped to find cheap accommodation, city officials said.

Milos Zeman, the Czech president, is thought to be the only EU leader who has so far confirmed he will be at the May 9 parade.

Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said last week that 26 world leaders had confirmed their attendance. Among them are leaders from China, India, Cuba and North Korea.

Last week, Mr Putin said that May 9 was a "day of glory, a day of pride for our entire nation, a day of supreme veneration of the victorious generation".

The president said there were now "attempts at distorting the events of that war", some of them "downright ravings", in order "to undermine Russia's power and moral authority". He did not give details.

German forces surrendered to the Allies on May 7, 1945, with all hostilities scheduled to cease at 23.01 Central European Time the next day. That was already the early hours of May 9 to the east in Moscow, which marks Victory Day on that date, rather than the May 8 V-E Day celebrated in the US, Britain and other parts of Europe.