

Deputy-Secretary-General's Remarks

Remarks by Secretary-General at the General Assembly Meeting to Mark the Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War, 6 May 2010

The names and places resonate, despite the passing of many years.

Stalingrad and Kursk.

Auschwitz and Dachau.

D-Day and the final battle for Berlin.

Today, we mark the anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe — the last, we hope, of the world's total wars.

Its cost was beyond calculation... beyond comprehension.

Forty million civilians dead; 20 million soldiers.

Nearly half of those in the Soviet Union alone.

Those were years of unspeakable atrocities... of lost faith and lost humanity.

Those years saw extraordinary bravery, as well. World War II was one of the most epic struggles for freedom and liberation in history.

And in the end, idealism had its triumph, too.

Sixty five years ago, in San Francisco, delegates had just begun writing the Charter of the United Nations... an organization founded on that most human of hopes... an end to the "scourge of war";.

So it is fitting, today, that we commemorate the war's end at a moment when nations are gathered to advance the cause of peace.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is also a document of hope... a vision for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Thanks to you, we are making progress along that road.

Thank you for helping us to remember the past, so that we may better shape our future.

Ban Ki-moon