Dear fellow citizens,

in the first days of May, 75 years ago, joyous crowds filled the streets of the world’s capitals. They were celebrating not just release from the endless wartime suffering, but above all a great historic victory – victory over fascism.

They were celebrating the defeat of a twisted and ruthless ideology that could only have emerged from a deranged mind. Only a maniac could conceive the idea that one nation was destined to be the master race to rule the world and make all the others its slaves. It is terrifying to imagine how close this insane dream came to fruition. Hitler’s armies had occupied Paris, bombed London and come within a stone’s throw of Moscow. That is why millions of people were so delighted when they were stopped and defeated.

The men and women of the wartime generations saved the world at the cost of their lives and unimaginable suffering. They bequeathed us a world that guarantees inalienable rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. We can never thank our grandfathers or great-grandfathers enough for this. They, like their peers in Russia, Great Britain, France and the United States found the strength, courage and determination to take up arms and fight for a just and sacred cause. Today we give thanks for all our liberators and recall that in the Slovak National Uprising, we also took a stand for the right side in the battle to save the world. The struggle to preserve humanity and European civilization. The fight for our homeland and the right of its citizens to live free.

The hypothetical question of what would have happened to Slovakia and the Slovaks if fascism had won the Second World War has a documented answer. Historians have found it in the Nazi archives. Either the Slovaks would have been fully assimilated and disappeared as a nation, or they would have been deliberately limited to the lowest possible rank of civilisation. Without our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, Slovakia’s history would have come to an end. The Slovak Republic exists as a free and sovereign state only because fascism was defeated. We must never forget the truth of this, which deserves to be commemorated even after three quarters of a century.

Dear fellow citizens,

Given what we know about the historical evil of Nazism and fascism, it is very disturbing that there are people and groups that continue to sympathise with them so many decades after their defeat. They defend themselves by talking about freedom of opinion. It is our duty as a society to expose those who espouse, even in concealed or symbolic form, a criminal ideology that caused the death and suffering of tens of millions of people. It would be an insult to the victims and the legacy of the wartime generation to wave our hands at the clenched fists and tolerate this intolerance. We have a sacred duty to everyone who contributed to the defeat of fascism: We must never allow history to be repeated.

We are celebrating the Day of Victory over Fascism at a time when the world is again facing a global threat. The wartime generation succeeded in their mission because they joined forces in a great anti-Hitler coalition. We need another global coalition to save the world from its current peril. We need a global coalition against the pandemic and the economic and social depression in its wake. Our republic must again be an active member of such a coalition if it wants to stand on the right side of history. It is our duty not only to save the world of prosperity, freedom and democracy but to pass it on to our descendants in the best possible condition.

Thank you for your attention.