



Let the Army Expo and Games Go On

OE Watch Commentary: Primarily because of coronavirus concerns, only a modest number of high-level, international delegations attended this year's massive Victory Day parade on 24 June in Red Square. Nevertheless, millions, both within Russia and abroad, watched the parade virtually. Indeed, from the Kremlin's perspective, the public relations benefits from staging such an elaborate affair may be nearly as important as commemorating those who fought in the Great Fatherland War (WW II). As the brief excerpt from the popular daily *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* suggests, positive publicity may also be a driving factor behind the decision to hold the "VI international military-technical forum 'Army' ... from August 23 to 29 in the Military-Patriotic Park," located outside of Moscow (Army expo website: <http://mil.ru/army2020.htm>).



Logo for the Army 2020 international military-technical forum.

Source: Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, <http://mil.ru/army2020.htm>, CCA 4.0 Intl

This annual event is designed to both showcase Russian military equipment as well as provide an international forum where Russian officials can explain their perspectives on various security issues. Despite a steady rise in the number of new COVID-19 cases within Russia, the Army-2020 exposition will be held, and according to the excerpt "over a thousand domestic and foreign companies" will display "more than 25 thousand different exhibits of weapons and military equipment." Furthermore, as the excerpt points out, in a change from past exhibitions, "for the first time the forum will be held along with the opening of the Army International Games." These competitive military games allow Russian arms manufacturers to advertise their wares, as well as provide another forum for the Russian armed forces to demonstrate their prowess (since the games began in 2015, Russia has been the overall victor every year). While the article does not mention which countries will send representatives to the Army expo, it does assert, "official delegations from 133 countries have already been invited to the upcoming military-technical forum 'Army,'" reminding readers that last year, "official representatives of one hundred and twenty countries took part... and [the event] was visited by over a million people."

The current Kremlin leadership remains intent on impressing audiences, domestic and foreign, that the Russian military is a force to be reckoned with. And despite pandemic concerns, they also appear determined to increase the country's share in foreign military exports. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

"For the first time, the Army International Games will open simultaneously with the Army forum..."

Source: Maxim Kislyakov, "Более тысячи предприятий будут участвовать в предстоящем форуме 'Армия' (More than a thousand enterprises will participate in the upcoming Army forum)," *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 26 June 2020. <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2020/06/26/bole-tysyachi-predpriyatiy-budut-uchastvovat-v-predstoyashhem-forume-armiya.html>

...The world will see more than 25 thousand different exhibits of weapons and military equipment at the VI international military-technical forum 'Army'. They will be represented by over a thousand domestic and foreign companies.... It is also noted that for the first time the forum will be held along with the opening of the Army International Games.

...The international military-technical forum 'Army' will be held from August 23 to 29 in the Patriot Military-Patriotic Park.... For the first time, the Army International Games will open simultaneously with the Army forum.

The Ministry of Defense admitted: they expect that such a new format will increase the quality and effectiveness of all events, make them more attractive to visitors. And the most important thing in the framework of the Army forum: it will expand the possibilities of official negotiations and meetings.

Already more than a thousand domestic and foreign companies want to participate in the upcoming forum have already announced more than one thousand. They are ready to provide over 25 thousand different types of weapons and military equipment.

...The heads of defense ministries and departments, as well as official delegations from 133 countries have already been invited to the upcoming military-technical forum "Army".

Official representatives of one hundred and twenty countries took part in the last anniversary forum "Army," including more than forty high-level delegations. In total, "Army-2019" was visited by over a million people.