



Russian Robots on Parade

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past decade the Kremlin leadership has used the Victory Day parade on 9 May both to recall the country's tremendous sacrifice during the Great Patriotic War (WW II) and to impress upon the nation that today's Russia is fully prepared to defend against any possible aggressor. Since 2008, the parade has included models of the country's latest weapon systems. The 2018 parade was no exception and as the brief excerpt from the normally centrist, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye (Independent Military Review)* asserts, this year's parade will include "the Uran-9 multifunction robot engineering combat system (and) the Uran-6 multifunction robot engineering demining system...."

The article's author claims that the decision to include these new robotic systems in the parade has caused "a fit of panic in Western experts" since not only have these Russian robots "already been tested in war," but that the equivalent Western technology has "failed spectacularly." The article goes on to list some of the specifications of the Uran-6 and Uran-9 systems, asserting that these "multifunction combat systems" are "capable of doing everything." The article ends on a belligerent note, pointing out that Russia and the West are not "playing on the same side anymore," and that given Russia's advanced robotic technology, in the future, "stars-and-stripes Marines (will) surrender unconditionally to 'red' robots."

As in many matters related to Russia's defense industry, the elaborate rhetoric does not always match the commonplace reality. Russia did indeed include the robotic Uran-6 and Uran-9 systems during the Victory Day parade on 9 May, but instead of being remotely piloted through the streets of Moscow and across Red Square, they were merely secured to the back of a Kamaz military truck. Russia continues to make advances in robotic technology and their involvement in Syria provides a demanding testing site for these new systems. However, these technological advances, despite what their media parades, will continue to be hampered by larger systemic weaknesses within the Russian economy, society and political system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“For if the Russians are showing a multifunction combat system – to put it more simply, a system ‘capable of doing everything’ – at the parade in honor of the Great Victory, then this means that they have far from just one model of it, and that it has already been tested in war.”

Source: Vladimir Shcherbakov, "Американцы в шоке от новых роботов Шойгу; Решение Москвы включить в парадный расчет на 9 мая боевых роботов вызвало приступ паники на Западе (Americans Shocked by Shoygu's New Robots: Moscow's Decision To Include Combat Robots in 9 May Parade Detail Occasions Fit of Panic in West,)" *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 27 April 2018. http://nvo.ng.ru/armament/2018-04-27/100_uran9.html

When making the decision to include the latest robot engineering systems in the parade detail to participate in the 9 May Victory Parade, General of the Army Sergey Shoygu, Russian Federation Defense Minister, probably did not presume that it would occasion a fit of panic in Western experts....

...What, then, occasioned such unfeigned interest, bordering on fright, among Western analysts? By all accounts, the cause lies in just which models will be shown in the parade. Let us recall that the Defense Minister said on 18 April, Unified Military Acceptance Day, that the Uran-9 multifunction robot engineering combat system, the Uran-6 multifunction robot engineering demining system, and Korsar short-range UAVs would participate in the parade.

...the Uran-9 multifunction robot engineering combat system has been designed: to conduct reconnaissance and give fire support to forward and reconnaissance subunits of tactical-link combined-arms formations; to enhance the efficiency of the fulfillment of combat tasks and reduce subunit personnel losses when conducting combat operations, including on urbanized terrain and under urban conditions.

At the same time the Uran-9 system is not just a single robot but several at once: Each system incorporates four reconnaissance and fire support robots, each of which is armed with a 2A72 30-mm automatic cannon, a PKTM 7.62-mm machine gun, an Ataka antitank missile system, and RPO PDM-A Shmel-M infantry incendiary rocket launchers.

...According to the developer, the system is capable of destroying stationary and moving "tank"-type targets with antitank missiles at ranges of up to 5,000 meters by day and 3,500 meters by night, as well as destroying various stationary and moving targets with cannon and small arms at any time of day or night.

...Even a cursory glance at the fine Uran-9 multifunction robot engineering combat system and superficial familiarization with its specifications are sufficient to understand why General of the Army Sergey Shoygu's words caused such a commotion abroad. For if the Russians are showing a multifunction combat system – to put it more simply, a system "capable of doing everything" – at the parade in honor of the Great Victory, then this means that they have far from just one model of it, and that it has already been tested in war.

...At the same time the attempts of American generals to use ground robots armed with small arms to resolve combat tasks – according to some information, the simplest tasks, like guarding the perimeter – have failed spectacularly...

...General of the Army Shoygu has quite a few "inhuman" models of arms in reserve that will repeatedly present Western politicians, military people, and analysts with surprises. What did you want? We will not be playing on the same side anymore....

...It is hard to contemplate what title he will now be able to think up for his new work on Russian combat robots. However, it could well be this: "Stars-and-stripes Marines surrender unconditionally to 'red' robots." This is by no means even a fantastical supposition.