



A Militarized Silicon Valley in Russia?

OE Watch Commentary: Perceived technological backwardness has been a recurrent theme throughout much of Russian history. Some suggest that the country's political and economic systems have contributed to this seeming lag in technology. The Kremlin leadership has often directed considerable resources to compensate for this technological lag, particularly in the realm of defense armaments. In a recent interview from Russia's main military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Deputy Defense Minister General Pavel Popov described the plans for a new "technopark" which will allegedly "provide for the search, development, and pioneering of advanced ideas and developments and breakthrough technology in the defense sphere."

Ever since Putin returned to the presidency in 2012, there has been much discussion within Russian defense circles about developing and harnessing all of the country's technological assets (military, civilian, academic) to restore and modernize Russia's defense capabilities. According to the excerpt, this new "Technopark-Era" will apparently encompass "foremost scientific employees, promising young scientists, and the best specialists of scientific companies of the Armed Forces." Moreover, the facility will be co-located with representatives of Russia's top arms manufacturers which will "facilitate the growth of the efficiency of interaction among educational, industrial, and research organizations." By bringing together the best and brightest in the field of "breakthrough technology," the Russian leadership hopes to see "development in such fields as nanotechnology and biotech, information and telecommunications technology, and data protection."

The new technopark will reportedly be constructed near the city of Anapa (Krasnodar Region) on the northern coast of the Black Sea. The more favorable climate and resort reputation of the region will likely be an added incentive for employees and military personnel. The new facility will not be operational until 2020 (at the earliest). As the excerpt points out, this new technopark "will be a base for the development and pioneering of a model of the interaction of scientific, educational, and industrial organizations," which will "ensure a synergetic impact in the field of an enhancement of the quality of the training of personnel, primarily for catering for the requirements of military science and enterprises of the defense industrial complex." It will be interesting to see if the enthusiastic rhetoric surrounding this new research and development project achieves its lofty objectives. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Dmitriy Semenov, "Эра заряжена на прорыв в будущее (Era Is Primed for a Breakthrough into the Future)," *Krasnaya Zvezda Online*, 28 February 2018. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/component/k2/item/36313-era-zaryazhena-na-proryv-v-budushchee>

One of the principal objectives of the Defense Ministry of Russia when it comes to state support for innovation activity for 2018 is the building of the Era Military Innovation Techopark....

...The project is essentially to shape an innovation infrastructure which provides for the search, development, and pioneering of advanced ideas and developments and breakthrough technology in the defense sphere. Execution of this initiative, the Defense Ministry of Russia notes, will make it possible to enhance the efficiency of applied scientific research, create a base of new technology, and provide for the pro-active development of military systems. Foremost scientific employees, promising young scientists, and the best specialists of scientific companies of the Armed Forces will work in the technopark.... How the idea of the building of the Era Military Innovation Technopark is being embodied in practice was described for your Krasnaya Zvezda correspondent by General of the Army Pavel Popov, deputy RF defense minister.

[Semenov] Pavel Anatolyevich, the project which the Defense Ministry of Russia is currently bringing to fruition is undoubtedly a requirement of the times. What is the main goal, the arterial line, of the building of the military technopark?

[Popov] I will say for a start that this concept is fully in keeping with the priorities of policy in the sphere of state support and development of innovation activity.... The format of the technopark itself will make it possible to shorten the time from the inception of innovative scientific projects to their materialization in the form of the building of specific models of arms and military and special equipment. This project, which is being executed on the initiative of the Defense Ministry of Russia, is designed to further the development of applied science and upgrade the scientific and production base of enterprises of the defense industrial complex and other enterprises and organizations, including medium-sized and small business engaged in the field of military and dual-purpose technology. The development of the Era project is also to facilitate the growth of the efficiency of interaction among educational, industrial, and research organizations and to create the conditions for productive interdepartmental and interbranch cooperation....

[Semenov] Pavel Anatolyevich, what main types of activity are scheduled for exercise in the technopark?

[Popov] The key areas, like I say, involve the search, development, and implementation of advanced ideas and developments and breakthrough technology corresponding to the interests of consolidation of the country's defense capability. We are talking about scientific research and development in such fields as nanotechnology and biotech, information and telecommunications technology, and data protection....

As a whole, Era will be a base for the development and pioneering of a model of the interaction of scientific, educational, and industrial organizations such as will afford an opportunity for use of the resources and results obtained in various fields. I would note also that the building of a production, scientific and educational, and social infrastructure and the pooling of production and scientific and educational resources will make it possible to ensure a synergetic impact in the field of an enhancement of the quality of the training of personnel, primarily for catering for the requirements of military science and enterprises of the defense industrial complex....

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Continued: A Militarized Silicon Valley in Russia?

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President Putin and Defense Minister Shoigu being briefed on Technopark-Era, Kremlin, 23 Feb 2018.

Source: Russian Presidency, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56923>, CC BY 4.0.



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

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