

Armed drones on the European media

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RUSSIA'S NEW TERRIBLE DRONES

Russian makers of Kalashnikov rifle create 'suicide' drone

24 Feb 2019

Liz Sly, The Independent, United Kingdom

The Russian company that gave the world the iconic AK-47 assault rifle has unveiled a suicide drone that may similarly revolutionise war by making sophisticated drone warfare technology widely and cheaply available. The Kalashnikov Group put a model of its miniature exploding drone on display this week at a major defence exhibition in Abu Dhabi where the world's arms companies gather every two years to show off and market their latest wares.

- ▶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kalashnikov-rifle-drone-ak47-suicide-kamikaze-war-russia-a8794686.html>

The terrible future of the Russian army: the Kalashnikov drone

26 Feb 2019

La Stampa, Italy

The Russian company that gave the world the iconic AK-47 assault rifle has unveiled a suicide drone that may similarly revolutionize war by making sophisticated drone warfare technology widely and cheaply available. It has as much potential to change the face of war as its older cousin, the AK-47, widely referred to simply as the Kalashnikov.

- ▶ <https://www.lastampa.it/2019/02/26/esteri/il-terribile-futuro-dellesercito-russo-arriva-il-drone-kamikaze-kalashnikov-vhZwor6zLYQQTbq9ASzQQM/pagina.html>

Russia's first underwater drone-carrying submarine to be launched in 2019

20 Feb 2019

Franco Iacch, Il Giornale, Italy

Russia will launch its first nuclear-powered submarine capable of carrying the nuclear-capable underwater drone 'Poseidon,' alternatively referred to as an unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), or simply an intercontinental-range, nuclear autonomous torpedo, according to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Russian president did not specify the Russian nuclear-powered submarine class expected to receive the Poseidon.

- ▶ <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/mondo/russia-siluro-poseidon-mostrato-volta-tv-1648800.html>

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Russia launches Kalashnikov drone (video)

26 Feb 2019

Die Welt, Germany

It is relatively small, flies quickly and can destroy the target within seconds. The kamikaze drone developed by Russia could revolutionize the drone market.

- ▶ <https://www.welt.de/videos/video189470475/Militaerinnovation-Russland-bringt-Kalashnikow-Drohne-auf-den-Markt.html>

Kalashnikov presents the Kamikaze drone

28 Feb 2018

Mirjam Hecking, Manager Magazin, Germany

A Russian defense contractor, Kalashnikov Concern, named after one of the most famous small-arms designers of all time and infantry weapons supplier for Russian Ground Forces, has developed a drone capable of carrying a small explosive charge—and diving onto its target to blow itself and the target into smithereens.

- ▶ <http://www.manager-magazin.de/unternehmen/artikel/kalashnikow-stellt-billig-drohne-vor-a-1255439.html>

Kalashnikov manufacture Kamikaze UAV

20 Feb 2019

Defence24, Poland

During the IDEX 2019 arms exhibition in Abu Dhabi, the Russian firm Kalashnikov (Rostec group) presented its latest Kamikaze Kub UAV. The BSP is launched from a pneumatic catapult. This “suicide drone” delivers explosives to any terrain, bypassing systems of air defence. Capable of flying for half an hour, the KYB (Cube) can carry a payload of explosives up to 3kg. The Russians compare Kamikaze to IAI Harop manufactured in Israel.

- ▶ <https://www.defence24.pl/kalasznikow-zbudowal-drona-kamikadze>

Mysterious Russian combat drone: what do we know about “Okhotnik”?

13 Feb 2019

Sputnik, Poland

S-70 Okhotnik is a stealth heavy unmanned combat aerial vehicle developed by Sukhoi. Detailed specification is still unknown but the S-70 seems to be similar to Sukhoi’s sixth- and fifth-generation aircraft projects. The prototype was unveiled and first tested in November 2018. Latest unofficial information says that the Okhotnik is 14 meters long, has a wingspan of 19 meters, a speed of 1,400 km/h (at low altitudes) and range of 5,000 km. These parameters are superior to the previously provided specification.

- ▶ <https://pl.sputniknews.com/swiat/201902139811206-sputnik-rosja-dron-ochotnik/>

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Revolution in armaments? Kalashnikov introduces a new assault kamikaze drone

26 Feb 2019

Echo24, Czech Republic

Russian weapon manufacturer Kalashnikov presented its KYB-UAV, a new assault kamikaze drone, at IDEX defense exposition in Abu Dhabi in February 2019. This small drone with an autonomy of about 30 minutes is able to fly at up to 130 km/h. The design of the new weapon was inspired by combat experience in Syria, where Russian military repeatedly faced attacks by small civilian drones. While similar drones are already on the market, the new Russian weapon should be considerably cheaper than US or Israeli drones.

- ▶ <https://www.echo24.cz/a/SdYxC/video-revoluce-ve-zbrojeni-firma-kalashnikov-predstavila-novy-utocny-kamikaze-dron>

BRITAIN WANTS MORE DRONE TOO...

UK will deploy drone squadron after Brexit, says defence secretary

11 Feb 2019

Dan Sabbagh, The Guardian, United Kingdom

The British defence secretary has revealed plans to invest £7m in a swarm squadron of drones theoretically capable of jamming enemy air defences, in a bellicose speech in which he spelled out how the UK could “enhance its lethality” after Brexit. Gavin Williamson said he wanted the RAF to form a new “concept unit” composed of hundreds of small flying craft, although some experts in the field questioned whether the technology described existed yet.

- ▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/11/uk-will-deploy-drone-squadrons-after-brexit-says-defence-secretary-gavin-williamson>

‘Drone swarms’ led by F-35 jets will overwhelm Britain’s enemies, Defence Secretary announces

11 Feb 2019

Dominic Nicholls, The Daily Telegraph, United Kingdom

Britain’s new F-35 jets will be able to deploy “drone swarms” to “confuse and overwhelm” enemy forces by the end of the year, Gavin Williamson has said. The Defence Secretary has announced groups of unmanned aircraft will seek to penetrate enemy air defences, all controlled by a pilot in one of the RAF’s new F-35 stealth jets.

- ▶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/02/11/drone-swarms-led-f-35-jets-will-confuse-overwhelm-britains-enemies/>

Swarms of drones may be smart defence policy

13 Feb 2019

Shashank Joshi, The Times, United Kingdom

Gavin Williamson’s proposal of pitting drones against air defences was heavily criticized, but his vision is laced with good ideas. Enemy air defences are getting better. Russia has deployed a thicket of missiles on its western borders and in its exclave Kaliningrad, nestled between Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic Sea, a bristling outpost in the heart of Nato’s eastern flank. China has imported Russia’s top air defence systems and is busy making its own. How to slice through these shields? Drones may be part of the answer.

- ▶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/swarms-of-drones-may-be-smart-defence-policy-x7wm2q39c>

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Royal Navy wants armed drone ships

17 Feb 2019

Marco Giannangeli, Daily Express, United Kingdom

THE Royal Navy could have missile-carrying robot drone ships within the decade, defence sources say. The craft would accompany flagship aircraft carriers, freeing up the rest of the fleet to patrol elsewhere. A senior serving admiral said last night: “We are developing vessels which can be both manned and unmanned; unmanned when escorting taskforces - with the ability to overcome anti-air and ship capabilities - and manned when deployed on more manpower-intensive tasks”.

▶ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1088518/royal-navy-armed-drone-ships-atlas-minesweeping-uk-news>

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...THE REST OF EUROPE IS NOT WASTING TIME...

Belgian Army to begin drone training

25 Feb 2019

Jules Johnston, The Brussels Times, Belgium

Belgium's Army will begin the training of an estimated 60 drone operators following an agreement with the Belgian supplier Antwerp to receive a number of 'Commercial Off The Shelf' (COTS) drones. The COTS drones will be used to investigate how the unmanned aerial vehicles can be used in defence. They will also be used to explore the different applications in which drones can play a supporting role.

► <http://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/14207/belgian-army-to-begin-drone-training>

No fear of espionage: the police have purchased Chinese drones

19 Feb 2019

Politiken, Denmark

The national police bought 7 drones from Chinese firm DJI for use in rescue operations. The US military refuses to buy drones from Chinese firms due to concerns over espionage and cyber-attacks, but this is not a concern in Denmark, where both the national police and the military have bought DJI drones. The drones will be used in rescue operations; not for anything relating to intelligence or sensitive infrastructure. Nonetheless, politicians are demanding explanations from the justice minister.

► <https://politiken.dk/indland/art7046636/Politiet-har-k%C3%B8bt-kinesiske-droner>

Defense-drone flirts with weapons

4 Feb 2019

Olof van Joolen, Telegraaf, Netherlands

This new military drone has the option to be armed, though the decision to do this is politically sensitive. The UK and France started flying them unarmed, before arming them at a later stage. The official line is that there is no discussion of arming them as long as there is no mandate from parliament.

► <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/3105451/defensiedrone-flirt-met-wapens>

Nobody escapes the watchful eye of the Dutch Reapers

4 Feb 2019

Raymond Boere, Algemeen Dagblad, Netherlands

On a US military base Dutch pilots are learning to fly Reaper drones, of which the Netherlands has bought four. They are not allowed to use bombs, but for the pilots the work can still be very intense. Whether the drones will one day be armed like American drones is still to be seen. The issue is politically sensitive. According to Commander of the Air Force Dennis Luyt, arming the drones is not on the agenda. He claims to be more than happy with the drones for their intelligence-gathering alone.

► <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/niemand-ontkomt-aan-het-wakend-oog-van-nederlandse-reapers~a9086699/>

The Reaper is no killer-robot: air force trains in United States with reconnaissance drone

4 Feb 2019

Olof van Joolen, Telegraaf, Netherlands

Though the F35 has drawn the spotlight over the last few weeks, the Dutch air force has been working on a new, equally important, project in the desert of New Mexico. The Reapers can be armed with missiles, which is how the US kills terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen. But the air force has not received a mandate from parliament to arm them.

▶ <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/3104921/luchtmacht-traint-in-vs-met-verkenningsdrone-mq-9>

...BUT THE US DOESN'T WANT TO LOSE ITS LEADERSHIP

Boeing unveils unmanned combat jet developed in Australia

27 Feb 2019

Jamie Freed, Reuters, United Kingdom

Boeing Co unveiled an unmanned, fighter-like jet developed in Australia and designed to fly alongside crewed aircraft in combat for a fraction of the cost. The U.S. manufacturer hopes to sell the multi-role aircraft, which is 38 feet long (11.6 meters) and has a 2,000 nautical mile (3,704 kilometer) range, to customers around the world, modifying it as requested. The prototype is Australia's first domestically developed combat aircraft since World War II and Boeing's biggest investment in unmanned systems outside the United States.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-airshow-boeing-unmanned/boeing-unveils-unmanned-combat-jet-developed-in-australia-idUSKCN1QF2XT>

Boeing is building big Orca drone subs for the Us navy

15 Feb 2019

Franco Iacch, Il Giornale, Italy

The U.S. Navy has hired Boeing to build four Orca extra-large unmanned undersea vehicles, or XLUUVs. The service plans to use the Orcas to explore and refine future concepts of operation for underwater drones of this size, which could include gathering intelligence, emplacing or clearing naval mines, attacking other ships or submarines, conducting stand-off strikes, and more.

- ▶ <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/mondo/stati-uniti-droni-sottomarini-orca-produzione-1646102.html>

US Unable to Down Advanced Russian Missiles, says Us general

28 Feb 2019

Sputnik, Italy

The United States will have problems containing state-of-the-art Russian missiles in the future, which is why it is necessary to extend the new Strategic arms reduction treaty (Start) so that it covers such weaponry, General John Hyten, head of the US Strategic Command (Stratcom), told the Senate armed services committee on February 27. He specifically referred to Russia's Poseidon' nuclear-powered underwater drone torpedo, an intercontinental-range cruise missile and a hypersonic nuclear warhead, which he said are not covered by the Start treaty.

- ▶ <https://it.sputniknews.com/mondo/201902287349894-usa-armi-russia-newstart/>

Drone Volt, the French PME who provides the American army

13 Feb 2019

Jean-Michel Normand, Le Monde, France

Airshadow, the new professional quadricoptere designed by the French manufacturer Drone Volt, weighs only two kilos, can fly for twenty minutes and recognizes license plates and even faces. In addition, the company does not provide any communication with a server for updates, which excludes any access or transfer of information remotely and without the user's knowledge. The US Army, as well as several public agencies and American security companies, have become big customers of Drone Volt, which charges this drone more than 20.000 euros.

- ▶ https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/la-foire-du-drone/article/2019/02/13/drone-volt-la-pme-francaise-qui-fournit-l-armee-americaine_5423002_5037916.html

Small and light but capable of carrying rockets and cameras: army falls in love with UAVs

16 Feb 2019

Marcin Kaczmarczyk, Gazeta, Poland

Nowadays drones are becoming basic military equipment. The US Air Force has its latest stealth bomber the Northrop Grumman RQ-180, whose predecessor participated in an operation to capture Osama bin Laden. Another exceptional US system is the Black Hornet PRS, a micro UAV (0,17m; 33g) equipped with HD camera. Technologically advanced armies use drones even for combat operations (American MQ-1 Reaper and MQ-9 Predator). The military use of drones continues unabated.

- ▶ <http://next.gazeta.pl/next/7,151003,24463941,sa-mniejsze-od-wrobla-lub-waza-kilkanascie-ton-przenosza-kamery.html>

US DARPA wants a submarine drone for dirty work

13 Feb 2019

Stanislav Mihulka, VTM, Czech Republic

US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) announced it is seeking to develop a submarine drone that would be able to perform an autonomous exploration and manipulation on the deep ocean seafloor. This would include wiretapping of undersea communication cables and recovery of debris for analysis after a missile impact. This new "Angler" drone should replace scuba divers who currently perform this "dirty work".

- ▶ <https://vtm.zive.cz/clanky/americka-darpa-chce-autonomni-podvodni-dron-na-spinavou-praci/sc-870-a-197202/default.aspx>

DRONE DILEMMAS

Call to ban killer robots in wars

15 Feb 2019

Pallab Ghosh, Bbc, United Kingdom

A group of scientists has called for a ban on the development of weapons controlled by artificial intelligence (AI). It says that autonomous weapons may malfunction in unpredictable ways and kill innocent people. Ethics experts also argue that it is a moral step too far for AI systems to kill without any human intervention. The comments were made at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Washington DC.

- ▶ https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-47259889:intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cljev44xo5lt/drones&link_location=live-reporting-story

How killer robots overran the UN

18 Feb 2019

Janosch Delcker, Politico, Belgio

Militaries and manufacturers are working on weapons that could one day be deployed to fight on their own. The killer robots are coming, and it won't be the United Nations that'll stop them: that's the conclusion some activists are coming to, as an effort to ban "lethal autonomous weapons systems" under the U.N.'s Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons seems set to fall apart. One possibility would be to go back to the U.N. and ask the General Assembly to vote for a ban. A second possibility the activists are exploring would be to work outside of the U.N. framework, using the 1997 Ottawa Treaty that banned anti-personal mines as a model.

- ▶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/killer-robots-overran-united-nations-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems/>

Autonomous weapons out of control

24 Feb 2019

Julia Merlot, Der Spiegel, Germany

Autonomous weapons could soon decide wars. Unlike remote-controlled drones, which are already operating in war zones, this new weapons don't need the human element: they could determine the target, even in complex field situations. According to many experts, this is the third major revolution in warfare, after the invention of gunpowder and nuclear weapons.

- ▶ <http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/technik/autonome-waffen-ausser-kontrolle-a-1253320.html>

German army is preparing to repel drones

9 Feb 2019

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

The German armed forces will significantly increase their equipment to combat dangerous drones. For this purpose, five stationary systems and 30 portable devices for detecting and repelling drones will be built. At the moment the army has a fixed device for drone detection and two mobile jamming devices for defense.

- ▶ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/bundeswehr-ruestet-zur-abwehr-von-drohnen-auf-16032451.html>

Death of Fabien Clain: “Drone are the perfect weapon to fight terrorism”

23 Feb 2019

Timothée Boutry, Le Parisien, France

After the announcement of the death of Fabien Clain in Syria, shot by an UAV flight by the west coalition, the academic David Cumin speculates on the legal issues of this type of military operations. According to Cumin, France is legally entitled to eliminate its nationals when they are part of an opposing armed organization. In this context the use of drones is not irrelevant and the weapon that made the strike against Fabien Clain was not French.

- ▶ <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/mort-de-fabien-clain-le-drone-est-l-arme-par-excellence-contre-le-terrorisme-23-02-2019-8018742.php>

India’s air strike on Pakistan - the strategy and the risks

3 Feb 2019

Aditi Shah, Neha Dasgupta, Reuters, United Kingdom

India said its warplanes struck a militant training camp inside Pakistan on Tuesday, raising the risk of conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbors. India used 12 Mirage 2000 fighter jets, an airborne early warning and control (AWAC) aircraft system, a mid-air refueller and drones (for surveillance use).

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-jets-factbox/factbox-indias-air-strike-on-pakistan-the-strategy-and-the-risks-idUSKCN1QF1W4>