

Russia Unveils 20-Ton Sixth Generation Drone Fighter

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Russian defense industry sources have recently unveiled a massive, 20-ton stealth drone fighter to be flight-tested later this year — will be the prototype for their sixth-generation jet, according to [TASS](#), a Russian state-owned media outlet.

According to the defense official, the sixth generation jet program “has not yet taken full shape, its main features are already known.”

“First of all, it should be unmanned and capable of performing any combat task in an autonomous regime. In this sense, the stealth drone will become the prototype of the sixth generation fighter jet,” the source said, adding that the drone will be able to “take off, fulfill its objectives and return to the airfield.”

“However, it will not receive the function of decision-making regarding the use of weapons – this will be decided by a human,” he said.

TASS notes, in the report, that they were not able to officially confirm the information provided by the defense official.

Another defense expert told TASS that the single-engine Okhotnik (“Hunter” in Russian) stealth drone has a top speed of roughly 621 mph (.809 Mach), and would start flight tests in the second half of this year.

“The Russian Defense Ministry and the Sukhoi Company signed a contract for developing the 20-ton Okhotnik (Hunter) heavy unmanned strike aircraft in 2011. The drone’s mock-up model was made in 2014. According to unconfirmed reports, composite materials and anti-radar coating were used to create the Okhotnik. The drone is equipped with a reaction-jet propulsion and is supposed to develop a speed of 1000 kilometers per hour,” said TASS.

Earlier this month, Popular Mechanics published a picture of the Okhotnik, which was posted on a Russian aviation forum called paralay.iboards.ru.



On Tuesday, Defense One published another alleged picture of the Okhotnik aircraft.



Here is another photo of the stealth drone circulating defense forums.



Sam Bendett, a researcher at the CNA Corporation and a member of CNA's Center for Autonomy and AI, told [Defense One](#), "Sounds like Russia wants everything to be included into the new design at once. In reality, they will probably have to compromise, selecting more realistic qualifications for the new aircraft. Most importantly, this will be an expensive endeavor, further pushing Russian designers and the Ministry of Defense to be more selective in approving the final aircraft specs. However, some qualifications, like optional manning, autonomy and some form of artificial intelligence will probably be included."

Bottom line, said Bendett: *"Ohotnik is barely flying yet and some time will pass before it becomes an operational variant. Nonetheless, this unmanned aerial vehicle and Russia's future combat aircraft plans offer a glimpse into Moscow's thoughts on future warfare."*

Defense One notes that Russia's new stealth jet could include radio-photon radar, anti-radar skin, directed energy and electromagnetic weapons, and have the ability to store missiles and precision-guided bombs internally.

While Russia appears to be building a sixth-generation aircraft, the Sukhoi Su-57, a twin-engine multirole fifth-generation jet fighter, has recently tested some sixth-generation systems, including the radio-photon radar.

At this point, you are starting to develop the critical knowledge of how the next round of hybrid wars, expected to start in the mid-2020s will be fought.

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As shown in the 53.5 Year War Cycle, there is an increasing probability that from now until the mid-2020s, domestic and international unrest remains elevated.



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