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Russia's Terminator-Style Killer Robot to Learn to Run

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin (C) looks at a human-like combat robot during a visit to the Central Research Institute for Precision Machine ("Tochmash") in Klimovsk, outside Moscow, Jan. 20, 2015.

A prototype terminator-style Russian combat robot in development at an advanced military research foundation will learn to run and complete an obstacle course by the end of this year, the fund's head told news agency RIA Novosti on Monday.

The battlebot development program comes amid a massive decade-long $20 trillion ruble ($360 billion) arms buildup through 2020 that aims to restore Russia's position as a first-rate global military power.

The new killer robot gained Internet notoriety last year, when state news outlet RT published a video of President Vladimir Putin watching on as the robot jerkily maneuvered around a driving course aboard an all-terrain vehicle at one of the army's premier research institutes.

Now, the robot is upping its game by learning to run and clear an obstacle course by the end of the year, said Andrei Grigoryev, head of the Foundation for Advanced Research Projects — Russia's answer to the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which is making killer robots of its own.

“Its intended purpose is to work in extremely dangerous conditions,” Grigoryev told RIA. A human will control the robot remotely from a safe location, he added.

Grigoryev also said Monday the foundation had completed a project to create a special computer interface that will allow human users to control robots with their mind, RIA reported.

Russia has become an enthusiastic proponent of killer robots: The manufacturer of Russia's new Armata battle tank, UralVagonZavod, has said the tank will eventually be used as the basis for a completely automated drone tank with no human drivers aboard.

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