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Putin Tours St. Petersburg Drone Manufacturing Plant

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Valery Sharifulin / POOL / TASS

President Vladimir Putin made an unannounced visit Thursday to a drone manufacturing facility in St. Petersburg that produces reconnaissance aircraft for the Russian military to use in Ukraine.

The Kremlin released a brief video showing Putin arriving at the Special Technological Center alongside Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, Kremlin aide Alexei Dyumin and other senior officials.

According to a Kremlin statement, the facility specializes in producing unmanned aerial vehicles, electronic warfare systems and communication equipment. Founded in 2001, the center oversees a full production cycle, from development to serial production, as well as maintenance and repairs.

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The manufacturing plant is known for producing the Orlan family of reconnaissance drones, which have been vital to Russian military operations in Ukraine. Former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said last year that the supply of Orlan drones had increased 53-fold since Russia's full-scale invasion.

During his visit to the facility, Putin was shown a variety of military technologies, including robotic systems, tracked platforms, kamikaze drones and barrage ammunition, according to the state-run news agency TASS.

In a videoconference later on Thursday, Putin revealed that the Russian army received 140,000 drones last year, with plans to increase supplies by tenfold in the coming year.

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