

## Understanding VOSTOK-18

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Russia's VOSTOK-18, the largest military exercise of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (conducted September 11-17) passed little noted and less understood by Washington and press fixated on now Justice Kavanaugh's adolescent sex life. A few hugely significant highlights:

*VOSTOK-18 mobilized 300,000 troops, 36,000 tanks and other vehicles, 1,000 aircraft, and 80 ships.* Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu described it as the largest exercise since ZAPAD-81, the largest Cold War exercise that, 37 years ago, simulated invading NATO.

VOSTOK-18 apparently utilized other forces not advertised, including Russia's Mediterranean fleet fighting a real war in Syria and the Strategic Rocket Forces Missile Armies, simulating a global nuclear World War III.

VOSTOK-18 is perhaps the biggest military exercise in world history.

*VOSTOK-18 was a joint Russia-China exercise, signifying de facto alliance against the United States.* Russia and China conduct many joint military exercises. Their nuclear collaboration began February 2001 in a combined nuclear war scenario against the U.S. over Taiwan. The Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty (July 2001) promises their military cooperation "will further strategic stability and security around the world."

*VOSTOK-18, though conducted in Siberia, may well be full-dress rehearsal for conquering NATO, practicing new nuclear warfighting techniques.* Siberian operations are harder for the U.S. to monitor, so new strategies and tactics can be exercised secretly.

Russia's new nuclear doctrine (similar to Khrushchev-era thinking, like Marshal Sokolovsky's 1962 "Military Strategy" on steroids) relies on nuclear firepower and relatively small armies, but highly mobile and survivable, to knife through Europe in a week or two. Russia's new generation nuclear weapons for strategic EMP attack and tactical battlefield use make this possible.

Theoretically, Russian invasion of NATO by 300,000 troops, 36,000 tanks and other vehicles, and 1,000 aircraft could overrun NATO paralyzed by EMP attack and outgunned by tactical nuclear weapons 10-to-1. A single nuclear weapon detonated 60 kilometers above NATO HQ in Brussels would generate a paralyzing EMP field from Poland to Scotland, like a magic carpet to the English Channel.

*VOSTOK-18 practiced civil defense and recovery operations unrivaled in the West.* “Eastern Military District engineer formation mopped-up in aftermath of a simulated technogenic emergency during VOSTOK-18 maneuvers,” according to the Russian Defense Ministry, “The military engineers launched bridges and ferry crossings, restored demolished roads, prepared passage through rubble...evacuated the population, and cleared terrain of simulated explosive objects and radioactive and chemical waste.”

These same operations could support an invasion of NATO.

But the most important part of VOSTOK-18 was invisible.

*Russian and Chinese military doctrine also advocates a revolutionary new way of warfare rendering obsolete traditional military power by relying on cyber-attacks, sabotage, and EMP to collapse adversary electric grids and life-sustaining critical infrastructures, thereby achieving victory by “Blackout War”* (see “Blackout Wars” Amazon.com).

Few analysts comprehend that recently discovered Russian cyber-attacks against U.S. and allied electric grids are the “edge of the wedge” for this new way of warfare that could culminate in unleashing of a VOSTOK-18 for real—or make VOSTOK-18 unnecessary for global conquest.

In July 2018, two months before VOSTOK-18, the Department of Homeland Security revealed Russian cyber-weapons Dragonfly and Energetic Bear penetrated hundreds of U.S. electric utilities and could cause a nationwide blackout.

Former senior Pentagon official Michael Carpenter warned: “They’ve been intruding into our networks and are positioning themselves for a limited or widespread attack. They are waging a covert war on the West.”

Warned cyber-security subcommittee’s Senator Ed Markey: “Unless we act now, the United States will continue to remain vulnerable to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century cyber-armies looking to wage war by knocking out America’s electricity grid.”

Russia during VOSTOK-18 “coincidentally” conducted a major exercise recovering electric grids in regions where are located Strategic Rocket Forces Missile Armies and their headquarters, according to Russian press: “The Ministry of Energy...conducted a large-scale complex special training on the topic Ensuring The Security Of Power Supply.”

Significantly, Moscow tried to conceal the purpose of the grid recovery exercise and divorce it from VOSTOK-18 by suggesting it was to prepare for the Siberian winter.

However, the Russian Energy Ministry scenario entailed “an emergency situation associated with a massive de-energization of consumers” that “exercised rapidly replacing transformers, towers, powerlines and temporary re-routing.”

Moreover: “Power engineering specialists...carried out work on replacement of power transformers and supports, power transmission lines...and installing a quick-erect and dismantable support of the 35-110 kV air line, which allows reducing time for emergency repairs.”

Unmanned aerial vehicles helped repair electric grids rapidly. College students were drafted to help military engineer units.

Moscow’s purpose is: “To develop the most effective approaches to mobilizing technical, material, and human resources for eliminating technological disruptions in networks and maximizing the rapid restoration of electricity supply.”

The Congressional EMP Commission recommends protecting against the worst threat—nuclear EMP attack—will mitigate all lesser threats, including cyber warfare.

Hardening electric grids against nuclear EMP and cyber-warfare would defang these super-weapons that potential adversaries have high hopes to rely upon as the “tip of the spear” to achieve decisive victory—perhaps even without the necessity of traditional warfare, like VOSTOK-18.

Defense Secretary Mattis, please read the Commission reports in “EMP Manhattan Project: Organizing Survival Against An Electromagnetic Pulse Catastrophe (Amazon.com).

*Dr. Peter Vincent Pry is Executive Director of the Task Force on National and Homeland Security, served as the Chief of Staff of the Congressional EMP Commission, Director of the U.S. Nuclear Strategy Forum, in the House Armed Services Committee and the CIA. He is author of Blackout Wars and EMP Manhattan Project.*