# The Collapse of American Air Power: The Proliferation of Counter-Stealth Systems

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- For six decades the ability to dominate the skies has been the keystone of US military power.
- For three decades stealth technology has been the keystone of the advantage held by the US Air Force.
- For almost two decades, Russia's industry and research institutes have been developing new technologies to defeat the US stealth advantage.
- At this time the US is completely reliant upon stealth technology to penetrate advanced Surface to Air Missile (SAM) and fighter defences – Russian and Chinese industry have matched or overcome most US military technologies other than stealth.
- As advanced Russian technology is now exported globally, "Counter-Stealth" presents a major risk.

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- Well implemented and advanced stealth technology makes aircraft very difficult to detect and track.
- In combat, well implemented stealth offers the advantage of surprise, as an opponent can be attacked without prior warning.
- Well implemented stealth also frustrates defences by impairing sensors used to guide missiles, thus improving platform survivability enormously.
- Survivability of combat aircraft is critical because sustained combat losses as low as ~1 percent would cumulatively reduce the size of a combat force by >50 percent over a mere 100 sorties.
- Any technology which can degrade or defeat stealth can produce disproportionate combat effect.

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#### **What Stealth Does**



- Stealth technology aims to reduce the radar, radio -frequency, infrared and visual signatures of platforms to reduce the ability of opposing sensors to detect and track them.
- In terms of importance, stealth techniques against radars are most valuable as radar is best able to penetrate adverse weather, compared to other sensors.
- Stealth techniques which aim to conceal radar and network equipment radio emissions are almost as important, for much the same reason.
- Well implemented stealth can reduce the coverage area of hostile sensors 100 to 2,000 fold, leaving enormous gaps in air defence coverage.

#### **Stealth versus Detection by Radar**



- Stealth designs built to defeat radar make use of two basic technologies *shaping* and *materials*.
- Stealth shaping bounces radar signals away from the radar producing them, leaving it with only very weak reflections from the target aircraft.
- Stealth materials are then used to soak up the remaining reflections from the target aircraft.
- A conventional fighter aircraft might reflect as much a sphere of several yards in diameter, whereas a well designed stealth aircraft will appear the size of a golfball, marble or ball bearing.
- Shaping produces much of the effect in a stealth design, with materials used mostly to further improve performance.

### **Stealth versus Emitter Locating Systems**



- Emitter Locating Systems track the radar and radio emissions from platforms, and can locate an emitting aircraft accurately in space, identify it by type and often divine its intent.
- Stealth techniques against Emitter Locating Systems aim to frustrate detection and tracking.
- Two basic technologies are used, based on controlling emission direction and making the emission hard to discriminate against naturally occuring radio noise.
- The former involves the use of *steered emissions*.
- The latter involves the use of "noise-like" signals, and hopping between frequencies over a wide band, while minimising the number of emissions.

# Limitations of Stealth vs Radar Detection



- Contrary to the commonly held belief that *"stealth confers complete invisibility to all radars"*, real stealth designs have numerous limitations, resulting from design optimisations.
- An aircraft's shaping and materials may be optimised to defeat some radar types or categories, and not defeat others.
- An aircraft may also be much less stealthy from some directions, compared to others.
- Stealth design optimisations result from the style of combat the aircraft is intended to engage in, and what kind of radars it is intended to defeat, but may also result from an intent to reduce the manufacturing cost or complexity of a design.

### **Categories of Stealth Design – By Aspect**



- A stealth design which is built to be very hard to detect from all directions is termed an "all aspect" stealth design.
- "All aspect" stealth aircraft are intended to penetrate enemy defences, where they might be painted by hostile radars from any direction.
- A stealth design which is built to be very hard to detect from only one principal direction is termed a "directional stealth" design.
- "Directional stealth" designs are not intended to be flown deep into enemy defences, and their stealth is used to defeat one threat at a time.
- "All aspect stealth" designs are much more survivable than "directional stealth" designs.

# Categories of Stealth Design – By Radar Band



- A stealth design which is built to be very hard to detect by radars operating in many frequency bands is termed an "wideband stealth" design.
- "Wideband stealth" aircraft are intended to penetrate enemy defences where they might be painted by a very wide range of radar types.
- A stealth design which is built to be very hard to detect in a small number of radar bands is termed a "narrowband stealth" design.
- "Narrowband stealth" designs are not intended to be flown deep into enemy defences, and their stealth is used to defeat one threat at a time.
- "Wideband stealth" designs are much more survivable than "narrowband stealth" designs.

# **Threat Radar Types by Frequency Band**



- Typical air defences acquire targets with search radars and guide missiles with engagement radars.
- "Metre" bands (VHF band, G/P-bands, low UHF band) are mostly used for search radars
- "Decimetre" bands (mid UHF band, L-band, low S -band) are mostly used for search radars.
- "Centimetre" bands (high S-band, X/Ku/K/Ka-bands) are mostly used for engagement radars used to guide missiles, airborne fighter radars, and homing missile guidance seekers.
- "Millimetre" bands (above Ka-band) are used for some engagement radars and missile seekers.
- Most stealth designs perform best in the centimetre bands as these are used for weapon guidance.

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#### **US Stealth Designs – Lockheed F-117A**



Wideband All-Aspect Stealth

**Designed 1970s for deep penetration** 

Small size – most effective mid/upper radar bands

Only 60 deployed, 1 lost in combat 1999

Recently retired, the F-117A was the first operational stealth aircraft, replaced by F-22A Raptor

Internal payload two laser guided bombs

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# **US Stealth Designs – Northrop B-2A Spirit**





Wideband All-Aspect Stealth Designed 1980s for deep penetration Large size – effective down to VHF band Ku-band radar upgrade to X-band AESA Only 16 combat coded 21 built out of

Only 16 combat coded, 21 built out of 132 initially planned, 1 lost in accident

Provides nuclear and conventional all weather long range strike capabilities

Large internal payload of guided bombs for conventional strike operations

Only stealth design capable of internally carrying large bunker busting bombs

Only US heavy bomber capable of penetrating modern air defences

### **US Stealth Designs – LM F-22A Raptor**





Wideband All-Aspect Stealth Designed 1990s for deep penetration Small size – effective mid/upper bands Supersonic cruise capable Capable ISR suite Only 187 currently planned Provides conventional all weather strike and air dominance capabilities

Internal payload of 8 air-air missiles or 4 air-to-air missiles and 2-8 guided bombs for conventional operations

Only US fighter capable of penetrating modern air defences, optimised to defeat long range SAM systems

**Replaces the F-117A and some F-15Cs** 

# US Stealth Designs – LM F-35A/B/C JSF





#### Narrowband Directional Stealth

Defined for battlefield strike and close air support, promoted as "multirole"

Small size – most effective upper bands, forward hemisphere

Uncompetitive aerodynamic performance

**Capable ISR suite** 

2,000+ currently planned

Provides conventional all weather battlefield strike capabilities

Intended payload of 4 air-air missiles or 2 air-to-air missiles and 2-8 guided bombs for conventional operations

JSF stealth optimised to defeat short and medium range SAMs, not built for deep penetration of modern air defences

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#### **US Stealth Designs – GA Predator C UAV**



Narrowband All Aspect Stealth In development for armed ISR role Small size – effective upper bands Slow/persistent aerodynamic design

Provides all weather ISR and limited conventional strike capabilities

Predator C / Avenger stealth optimised to defeat short and medium range SAMs, not built for deep penetration of modern air defences

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#### US Stealth Designs – NG X-47 Naval UCAS-D



Wideband All Aspect Stealth Demonstrator for Strike/ISR role Small size – best mid/upper bands

Intended for all weather ISR and conventional strike capabilities

Stealth design based on B-2A concept, optimised for deep penetration of modern air defences

Planform design maximises stealth bandwidth for given aircraft size

# **Summarising US Stealth Capabilities**



Туре	All Aspect Stealth	Wideband Stealth	Penetration Capability
B-2A Spirit	YES	YES	Excellent
F-22A Raptor	YES	YES / but limited	Excellent
UCAS-D	YES	YES / but limited	Excellent
Predator C	YES	NO	YES / but limited
F-35 Lighting II	NO	NO	Very Limited

Assessment based on airframe geometry and shaping detail dimensions; ranked by survivability

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# Russian Technological Strategy for Counter-VLO Sensors

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# **Evolution of Russian Counter-Stealth**



- During the Cold War, Russian military commanders did not believe that US stealth worked.
- The 1991 defeat of legacy Soviet radars by the F-117A resulted in a fundamental reassessment.
- After 1991, Russian research institutes set about developing radar technology to defeat stealth.
- In 1999 the Russians acquire technologies from the F-117A shot down over Serbia; Eastern European sources credit kill to digital upgrades performed on legacy Cold War P-18 Spoon Rest VHF radars.
- Post 2000 new VHF-band Nebo SVU, Nebo U, Resonans N radars disclosed.
- In 2008, Nebo M multi-band radar disclosed.
- New radar designs and upgrades to legacy radars.

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# **Russian Counter-VLO Technological Strategy**



- Russia's technological strategy is well articulated publicly, especially in interviews with researchers and engineers developing counter-stealth radars.
- US strategy for stealth design has been to target the basic physics of radar design – Russian strategy has targeted the basic physics of US stealth shaping and materials technology.
- Russian strategy exploits several effects:
- 1. Shaping loses effect in VHF-band and L-band, due to radar scattering physics vs feature size.
- 2. The "skin effect" makes it very difficult to use stealth materials in the VHF-band and L-band.
- 3. Fusion of detection and tracking data from multiple sensors using computer networks.

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### **Russian Counter-VLO Technological Strategy**

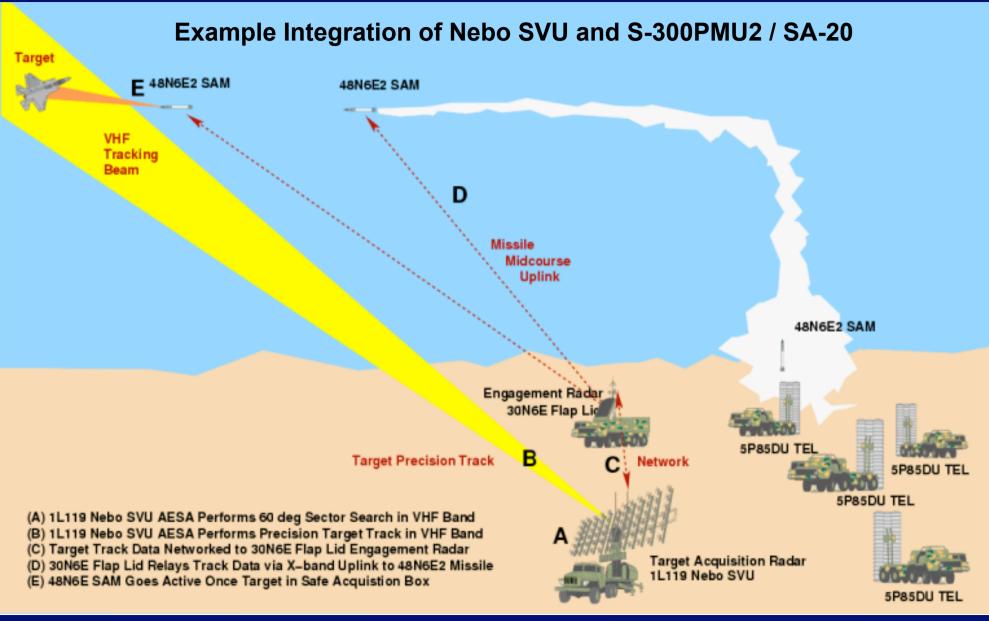


- Russian reasoning on counter-stealth is rooted in basic physics, and the systems they have developed will demonstrate varying degrees of effectiveness against specific US systems.
- The greatest enabler for Russian counter-stealth has been free access to advanced Western commercial computer and radio-frequency electronic components, open-source software and computer networking technology.
- Russia's NNIIRT institute has been designing VHF radars since the 1950s, producing most recent designs; KB Radar in Minsk, ByeloRussia, recently developed their own radar; the VNIIRT institute has been developing L-band designs.



- Russian counter-stealth designs can be broadly divided into detection/tripwire systems, and precision tracking systems.
- The former are intended to provide warning of stealth aircraft, but cannot support targeting.
- The latter are intended to provide sufficiently accurate tracking to provide cueing and in some instances midcourse tracking and targeting data for Surface to Air Missile batteries.
- In missile engagements, or intercepts by fighter aircraft, the precision counter-stealth sensors would guide the attacking missile or fighter close enough to attack the stealth aircraft, overcoming the limitations of the missile or fighter sensors.

### **Counter-VLO VHF-Band Radar CONOPS**

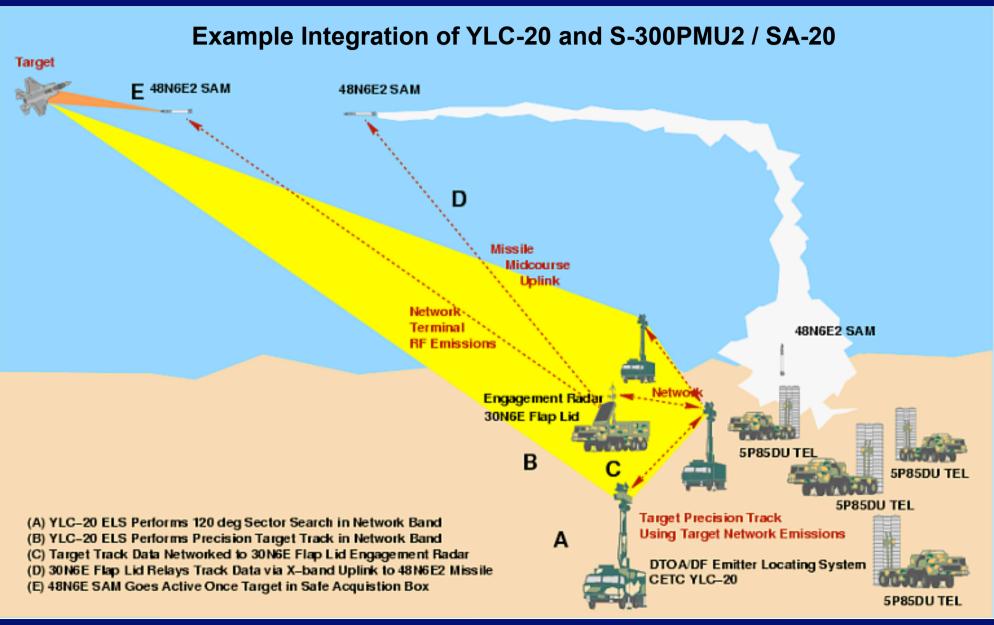


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# **Passive Emitter Locating System CONOPS**



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- Mature and entirely new technologies employed, some indigenous and some Western:
- 1. AESA radar technology for agile beamsteering, monopulse angle tracking and heightfinding
- 2. STAP (Space Time Adaptive Processing)
- 3. Data fusion (cf US Navy CEC system) via networks
- 4. Multi-static and bistatic radar systems
- 5. Multi-band radar systems
- 6. Mature 3/8 dipole/Yagi, and new antenna element designs such as the Kharchenko square loop.
- 7. DTOA (Differential Time Of Arrival) and interferometric emitter location techniques.
- 8. COTS digital processing and software



- The effectiveness of Russian counter-stealth systems will vary widely, between systems and specific types of target, and deployment.
- Digital upgrades to legacy Cold War VHF-band radars are likely to provide some detection or tripwire capability, but only a limited capability to support fighters and missile batteries.
- New design high power VHF-band radars such as the Nebo U, Nebo SVU, and Nebo M RLM-M will be much more effective due to better detection range and precision 3D tracking capability.
- Emitter Locating Systems are potentially very effective against network terminals and aircraft AESA radars operating in high duty cycle modes.

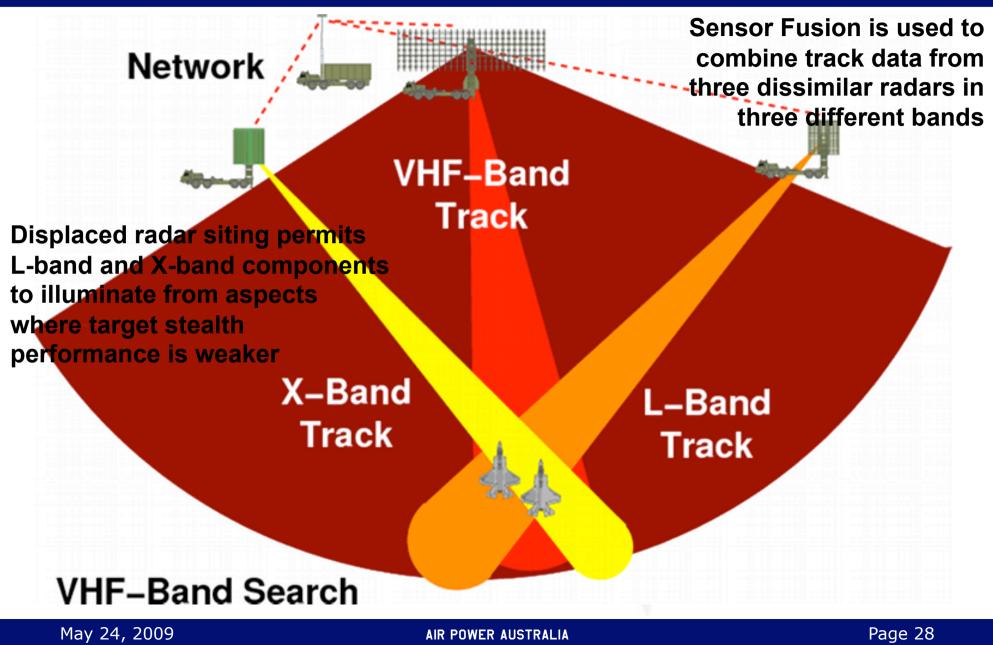
#### **Russian Counter-VLO – Sensor Fusion**



- Western computer and network technology is the key "enabler" for sensor fusion technology.
- Sensor fusion allows a system to combine intermittent and often poor quality tracking data from multiple sensors, such as several radars (US Navy CEC) and/or Emitter Locating Systems.
- While each individual sensor track may be of poor quality, "fusing" multiple sensor tracks permits an often good quality track to be produced, overcoming the limitations of individual sensors.
- Sensor fusion is being introduced in Russian designs, i.e. the integration of Emitter Locating Systems with the S-400/SA-21 SAM system, or the new Nebo M networked multiband radar system.

# **NNIIRT** Nebo M Multiband C-VLO AESA Radar





#### **Russian Counter-VLO – Deployment**



- Currently disclosed Russian deployment strategy has been to integrate counter-stealth sensors with their highest performing long range Surface to Air Missile system, the S-400 / SA-21, which is now entering the global export market.
- Once integration with the S-400 is completed, Russian practice would be to offer such sensors as upgrades to related missile systems such as the heavily exported S-300PMU/1/2 / SA-10/20.
- ByeloRussia's KBR is targeting users of Cold War legacy SAM systems with their Vostok E radar.
- A package of networked counter-stealth sensors integrated with legacy Soviet era missile systems would overcome the limitations of legacy radars.



- The US B-2A heavy bomber is the least vulnerable to counter-stealth technology, as it is large enough for its shaping to be effective against new technology long range VHF-band radars.
- All other US systems are likely to be detected at useful ranges by new technology long range VHF
   -band radars – their survival then depends on how good their stealth performance is against centimetre band fighter radars, SAM engagement radars and missile seekers, and whether they are fast and agile enough to evade such threats.
- This will present survivability problems for US designs in which stealth performance has been intentionally compromised to meet other aims.

### **Russian Counter-VLO vs F-35 Lightning II**



- Of all US designs, the F-35 will be most susceptible to Russian counter-stealth technologies.
- The F-35's stealth design was compromised from the outset, by assuming sufficient F-22As would always be available to kill the most capable threat systems, thus exposing the F-35 only to much less capable threat systems, such as battlefield SAMs.
- The result of this is that the F-35 lacks the stealth performance in the rear hemisphere to survive against advanced threat systems, and many legacy threats, if cued by counter-stealth systems.
- Because the F-35 is much slower than the F-22A, it cannot retreat quickly enough to escape a SAM shot or evade a hostile fighter attack.

#### **Russian Counter-VLO - Operational Impact**



- Counter-stealth sensors will render US legacy aircraft unusable, as they will easily overcome any applied radar absorbent materials.
- The stealth limitations of the F-35 will make it unusable in situations where counter-stealth sensors have been deployed to support advanced SAM systems, and in some instances, also legacy Cold War era SAM systems.
- Only the B-2A and F-22A can penetrate such air defences with acceptable loss rates.
- All other US systems will need to be generously supported by F-22A escort fighters to deter fighter and SAM system attacks. The number of available F-22A squadrons will bound US capability.

#### **Russian Counter-VLO – Strategic Impact**



- Counter-stealth sensors will severely limit US capability to deal with hostile air defence systems, unless the US fundamentally changes planning for its future combat fleet.
- As most of the new design counter-stealth systems are highly mobile, they will be very difficult to find and kill off during an air campaign, if found they will be difficult to attack successfully due to defensive countermeasures and defensive weapons directed against US smart munitions.
- The currently planned number of 187 F-22As will severely limit the size of contingencies the US can handle with acceptable combat losses – whether F-22As are used as bombers or used as escorts.

#### **Russian Counter-VLO – Conclusions**



- Over the coming decade, counter-stealth sensors will fundamentally change the balance of global conventional military power, at the expense of the United States and its allies, unless current OSD mandated fighter force planning is abandoned.
- Motivated by commercial interest, Russian and Chinese industry will proliferate such equipment worldwide, to exploit the available opportunity.
- Many more F-22A Raptors need to be built and deployed over the next decade, to provide a robust capability to overcome this technological advance.
- The United States cannot wait another two decades to develop and deploy a new "sixth generation fighter". The time to act is now.

# Counter-VLO Sensors in the Global Marketplace

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#### NNIIRT Nebo M Multiband C-VLO AESA Radar



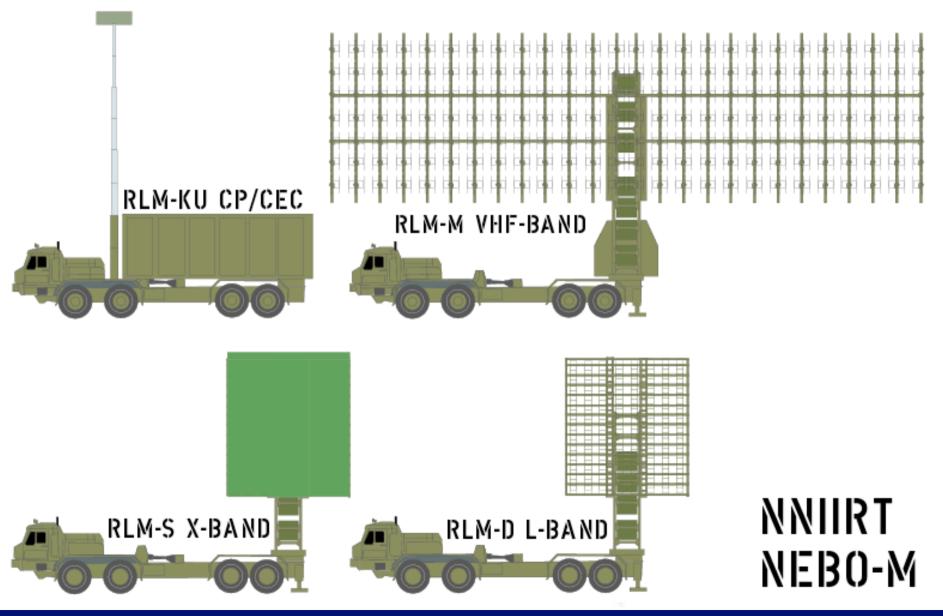
Integrated Multiband System VHF-Band / L-Band / S/X-band Operation

- **CEC style Track Fusion via Networking of Component Radars**
- High Angle/Range Accuracy to Support SAM Batteries
- Frequency Diversity to Defeat VLO Shaping and Defensive Jamming
- **All Component Radars Digital AESA**
- Derived from existing Gamma S1, Protivnik G and Nebo SVU / U Designs
- All Components Self Propelled for High Mobility and Survivability

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### **NNIIRT Nebo M Multiband C-VLO AESA Radar**



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#### NNIIRT RLM-M Nebo M 3D VHF AESA Radar





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#### NNIIRT 1L119 Nebo SVU 3D VHF AESA Radar



Mobile / Semitrailer ~20 min Stow/Deploy 2 Metre Band Operation Stated Counter-VLO **Digital AESA Technology / STAP** High Accuracy – Intended Midcourse **Guidance of SAMs** 

#### **Nebo M RLM-M vs Nebo SVU Performance**

*
*

RLM–M Nebo M	1L119 Nebo SVU	
Aperture Area		
Nebo SVU		4 X Power-Aperture
Nebo M		
Detection Rang	ge	
Nebo SVU		
Nebo M		Improved
Azimuth Error		Angular
Nebo SVU		Resolution
Nebo M		
Elevation Error	r	
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#### KBR Vostok E 2D VHF C-VLO Search Radar





#### NNIIRT 55Zh6 Nebo UE 3D VHF CVLO Radar



Relocatable / Static 2 Metre Band Operation Long Range 3D VHF Radar Digital MTI Processing Stated Counter-VLO Integrated with S-400 / SA-21

#### **Rezonans N/NE 3D VHF Bistatic Radar**

\* \* \*

Relocatable Long Range 3D VHF Bistatic Radar Digital MTI Processing Stated Counter-VLO

### **CETC YJ-27 Long Range 2D VHF CVLO Radar**



Semi-Mobile ~1 hr Deployment Long Range 2D VHF Radar **Digital MTI Processing Stated Counter VLO PLA Deployed** 

#### NNIIRT 1L13 Nebo SV 2D VHF Radar





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### NITEL P-18 Spoon Rest 2D VHF Search Radar



#### 2D VHF Radar – Widely Exported Analogue Variants

Legacy / Upgraded to Digital MTI Processing / Mobile ~45 min Stow/Deploy



#### **CETC YLC-8/8A VHF 2D Surveillance Radar**





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#### NITEL 5N84AE Oborona-14 / Tall King



Long Range 2D VHF Radar Legacy / Upgraded to Digital MTI Processing Relocatable 24 hr / Static

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#### **Barrier E Bistatic Early Warning Radar**

\*\*\*\*

Short Range 1D VHF Bistatic Radar Remote Sited Low Power Tripwire System Stated Counter-VLO Relocatable / Static

#### 67N6E GAMMA-DE L-Band 3D AESA Radar





VNIIRT 67N6E Gamma DE / 40V6M (Deployed)

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#### **NNIIRT RLM-D L-Band 3D AESA Radar**





## VNIIRT 59N6E Protivnik GE L-Band 3D Radar





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#### **29N6 Delta L-Band Bistatic Radar**





## 85V6 Vega/Orion Emitter Locating System





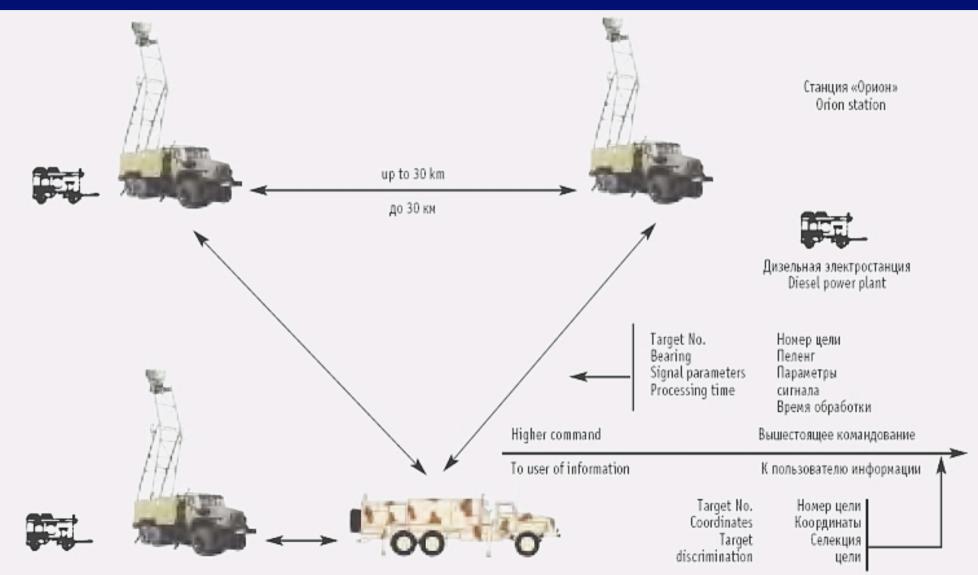
Russian Design – Export/Domestic Passive Detection / Geolocation DTOA/Interferometer Technology Networked Operation Integrated with S-400 / SA-21

Effective Against: Datalink Terminals Link-16 Network Terminals Multimode Radars IFF Transponders Navaids (TACAN)

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#### 85V6 Vega/Orion Emitter Locating System





#### 1L222 Avtobaza ELINT System





Russian Design – Export/Domestic Passive Detection Interferometer Technology Networked Operation Integrated with S-400 / SA-21

Effective Against: Datalink Terminals Link-16 Network Terminals Multimode Radars IFF Transponders Navaids (TACAN)

#### **Topaz Kolchuga M Emitter Locating System**





Ukrainian Design - Exported Passive Detection / Geolocation DTOA/Interferometer Technology Networked Operation

Effective Against: Datalink Terminals Link-16 Network Terminals Multimode Radars IFF Transponders Navaids (TACAN)

### **CETC YLC-20 Emitter Locating System**



**Passive Detection / Geolocation** 

**DTOA/Interferometer Technology** 

Networked

**Chinese Design Based on** 

#### Kolchuga M and Tamara/Vera E

## Advanced Russian and Chinese Air Defence Weapons







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## S-300PMU1/2 / SA-20 Gargoyle – 80-110 NMI





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## S-300PMU1/2 / SA-20A/B Gargoyle Radars



#### 5N66M/76N6 Clam Shell / 40V6MD

#### 5N66M/76N6 Clam Shell / 40V6M

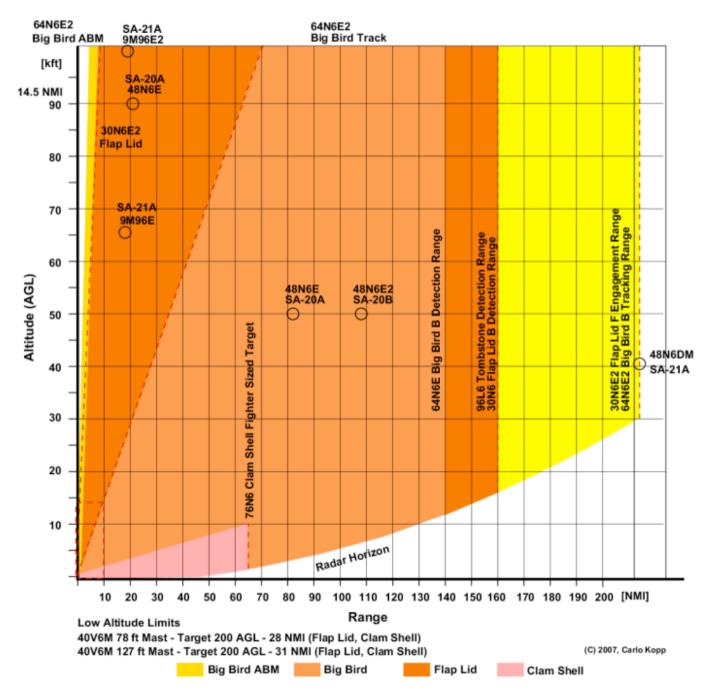
Low Level Acquisition Radar 40V6M – 24 Metre Elevation 40V6MD – 39 Metre Elevation Both masts available for: Flap Lid / Tomb Stone / Grave Stone; Tin Shield ; Cheese Board; Gamma DE Cruise Missile Defeat

2-4 hr Deployment Time



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#### S-300PMU-2 Favorit (SA-20 Gargoyle) Engagement Envelope S-400 Triumf (SA-21 Growler) Engagement Envelope



#### CPMIEC FD-2000 / FT-2000 / HQ-9





HT-233 Engagement Radar YLC-2V Acquisition Radar SA-10/20 technology FT-2000 anti-radiation round 2-18 GHz



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#### S-300VM / SA-X-23 ~110 NMI





9S32M Engagement Radar
9S15MT2 Acquisition Radar
9S19M ABM Radar
High Performance SAM/ABM
Growth 9S19-based Antenna in 9S32M

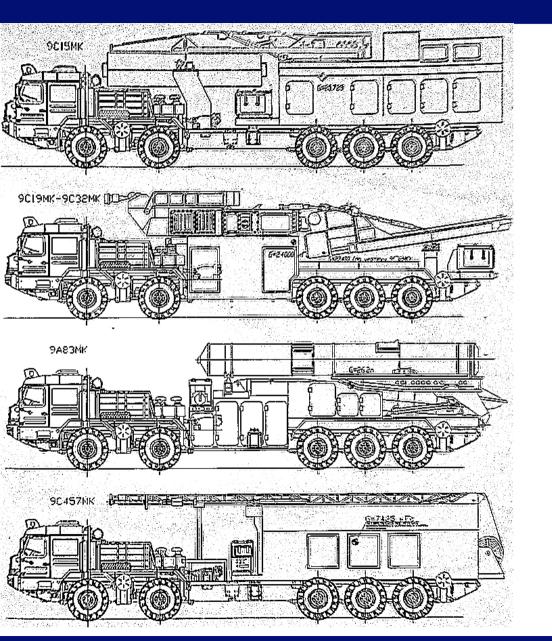
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Image © Miroslav Gyűrösi

Image © Mircsiav Gyűrösi

#### S-300VMK / SA-X-23 ~110 NMI





Wheeled High Mobility Variant 9S32M Engagement Radar 9S15MT2 Acquisition Radar 9S19M ABM Radar High Performance SAM/ABM Growth Antenna in 9S32M

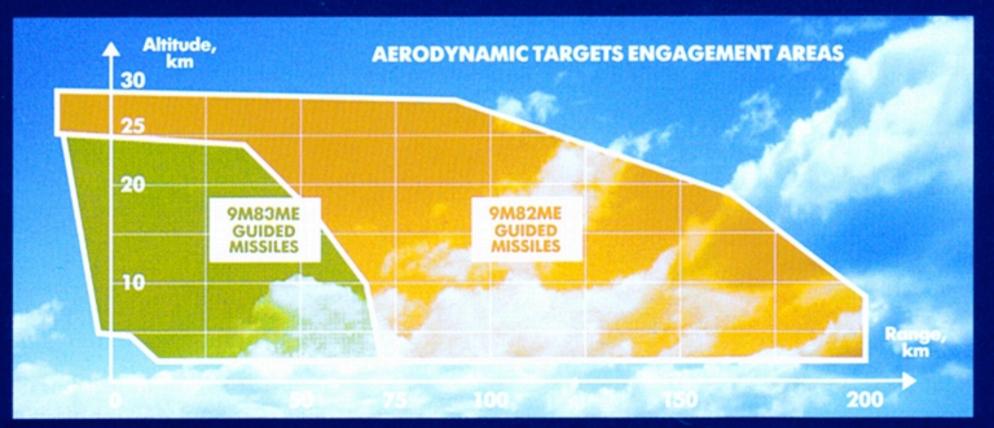
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## PERFORMANCE

#### S-300VM / SA-X-23 Envelope [km]

75	200
40	40
3000	4500
1100	2500
25	30
24	36
1700	2600
5	5
	40 3000 1100 25 24 1700



### S-300V / SA-12 Giant/Gladiator ~40 NMI



9S32 Engagement Radar **9S15 Acquisition Radar** 9S19 ABM Radar **High Performance SAM/ABM** 

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Image © Miroslav Gyűrösi

Image © Mircsiav Gyűrösi

#### Tor M2E / SA-15D Gauntlet D



#### Primary Role:

Interception of HARM and JDAM PGMs in Flight

Interception of Cruise Missiles

**Phased Array Engagement Radar** 

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#### Tor M1 / SA-15C Gauntlet C





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#### Pantsir S2 / SA-22B Greyhound B





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### 2S6M1 Tunguska M / SA-19C Grison C





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#### LR66 / Type 347G / LD-2000 SPAAG





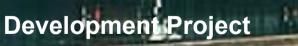
- Primary Role: Interception of HARM and JDAM in Flight
- **Interception of Cruise Missiles**
- Based on naval CIWS with 30 mm Gatling

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#### **Almaz-Antey Laser Directed Energy Weapon**

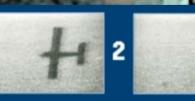




Modelled on US THEL, but mobile

Director on MAZ-793

Demonstrator with CO<sub>2</sub> GDL





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D.C.E.

#### **SA-2** Guideline Mobility Upgrades





Fully Mobile Deployment PLA developed HQ-2 TEL Cuba rehosted Soviet SA-2 on T-55 chassis

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#### SA-3 Goa Mobility Upgrades





Fully Mobile Deployment ByeloRussian Wheeled TEL Cuban, Polish T-55 chassis TEL



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#### SA-5 Gammon/SA-20 Hybridisation





Square Pair controlled by modern Tomb Stone / Grave Stone phased array

## Improve jam resistance and lethality of SA-5 Gammon



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#### HQ-2/SA-2 Guideline Hybridisation





H-200 phased array engagement radar for KS-1A SAM

Candidate Fan Song replacement in hybrid SA-2 batteries.

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