

Inside Drones Production Factory at SEZ 'Alabuga'



In-Depth Report

August 19, 2023

In June, 2023 [National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the US intelligence believe there is a plant in Russia assembling Iranian drones](#). The White House released satellite imagery showing the factory being built in Tatarstan region of Russia.



Figure 1: Satellite imagery released by The White House (Source: [AP News](#))

The plant is located on the territory of the special economic zone “Alabuga”. This SEZ was established in 2006. The legal entity of the zone is subordinate to the government of Tatarstan, it also provides industrial buildings for rent, called industrial parks. At the moment, there are two parks open in Alabuga: Synergy and A Plus Park Alabuga.

The alleged drone factory is located in one of the Synergy buildings:



Figure 2: Screen capture of the SEZ Alabuga Synergy buildings. (Source: Youtube)

The buildings marked in the picture are buildings of alleged drones production. World News Monitors team has collected comprehensive visual data on the interior and exterior of the buildings. The result of the research is presented below.

The building, where drones are believed to be manufactured, is painted pink, as seen in the satellite image. However, the color of the building cannot be seen in the photos released by US intelligence. Below WNM provides the picture with enhanced contrast:



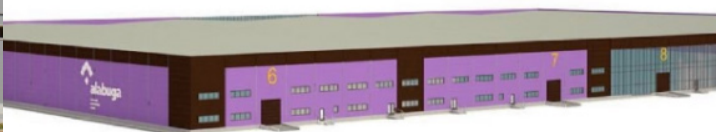
Figure 3: The alleged drones production building painted pink. (Source: Google Earth/ Maxar)

Based on materials published on the Alabuga Development portfolio, the buildings are part of the Synergy 8 Industrial Park and are named Synergy 8.1 and 8.2:

КОРПУС 8/2



КОРПУС 8/1



Figures 4,5: Photo and 3D render of Synergy 8 complex
(Source: [Alabuga Development](#))



Figure 6: Location of Synergy buildings 8.2, 8.1 and 4.2, 4.1
(Source: Google Earth/ Maxar)

Synergy 8.1 and 8.2 buildings are located next to the Synergy buildings 4.1 and 4.2. Moreover, satellite imagery shows the similar patterns in the location and construction of buildings. Building 4.1 is occupied by the Alabuga Polytechnic College (“Alabuga Politekh”) and the Aurus automobile company. Building 4.2 houses the office of the Alabuga Development company, which is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the infrastructure on the territory of the special economic zone.



Figure 7: Screen capture of buildings 8.2, 8.1, 4.2, 4.1
(Source: Youtube)

Synergy 8 industrial park was built by Alabuga for leasing, and as soon it was completed, Albatros, a company specializing in the production of unmanned aerial vehicles, became its resident.

The company's website already has a new address – on the territory of the SEZ, in building 8.1:

Контакты ООО «Альбатрос»

Мы готовы продемонстрировать вам имеющееся оборудование, непосредственно в нашем главном офисе на территории ОЭЗ Алабуга, а также провести демонстрационные и показательные мероприятия.

Основной офис:

423601 Республика Татарстан, городское поселение город Елабуга, территория ОЭЗ Алабуга, ул.Ш-1, стр.8/1

*Figure 8: Screenshot of LLC Albatros contact address, saying "SEZ Alabuga, building 8/1"
(Source: [LLC Albatros](#))*

Text on the picture: "Contacts of Albatros LLC. We are ready to demonstrate the available equipment to you directly at our main office in the Alabuga SEZ, as well as hold demonstration events. Main office:

423601 Republic of Tatarstan, urban settlement city of Elabuga, territory of the SEZ Alabuga, street Sh-1, building 8/1"

in addition, there is an advertisement of vacancies on the company's website, where Albatros is looking for 16-21 year old Junior Specialists, offering a very competitive wage and requiring only simple technical skills.

Вакансии в ООО «Альбатрос»

Внимание соискателям на вакансии ОЭЗ "Алабуга"!

Открыт дополнительный набор сотрудников.

Позиция "Младший специалист"

ЗП: 90 000 (до вычета)

Рекомендуемый возраст: парни 16-21 год

Обязанности:

- выполнение технологических операций по подготовке и сборке;
- слесарная обработка полуфабрикатов и изделий;
- использование ручного резательного, слесарного и мерительного инструмента;
- контроль размеров готовых изделий;
- умение пользоваться шуруповёртом, отверткой.

Мы предоставляем:

- Работу без опыта и профессионального образования
- Жилье для иногородних
- Сменный график 2/2 или 5/2

Контакты:

Телефон: 8(987) 270-11-21

https://t.me/albatros_elabuga

Телефон: 8 (987) 270-11-21

Figure 9: Screenshot of job opening at LLC Albatros (Source: [LLC Albatros Vacancy](#))

Text on the picture:

"An additional set of employees has been opened.

Position "Junior Specialist"

RFP: 90,000 (before deduction)

Recommended age: boys 16-21 years old

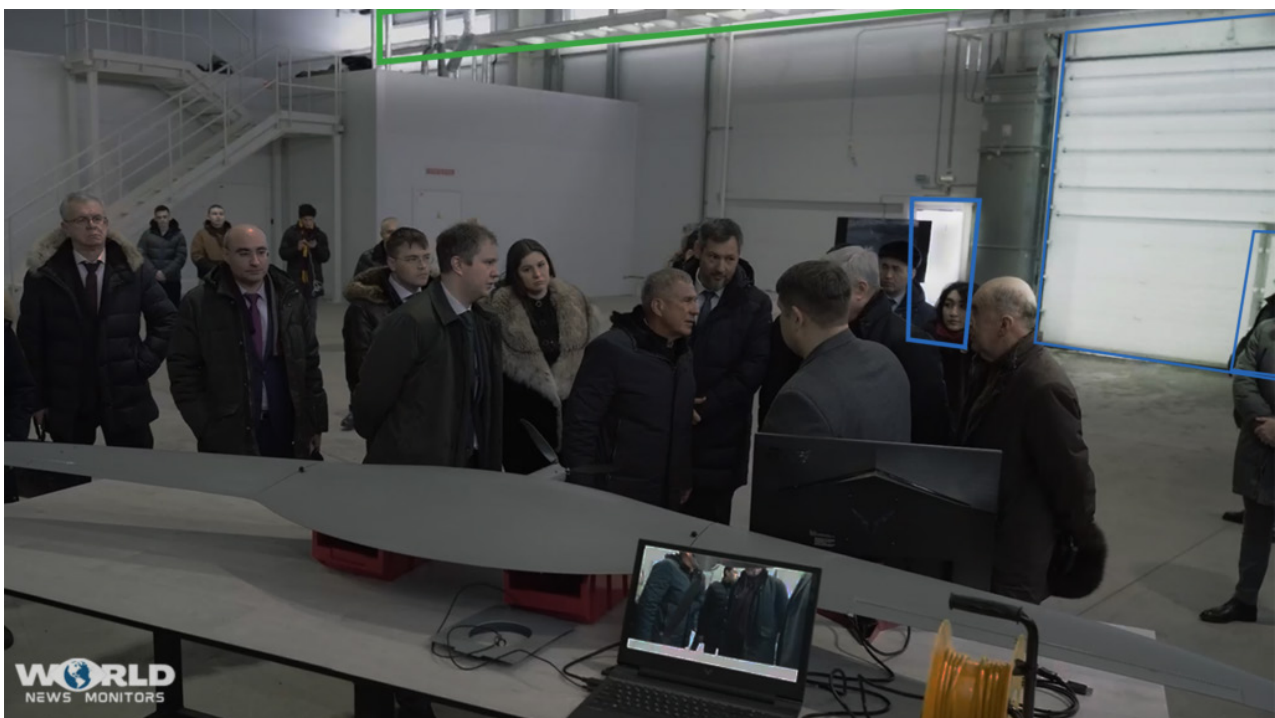
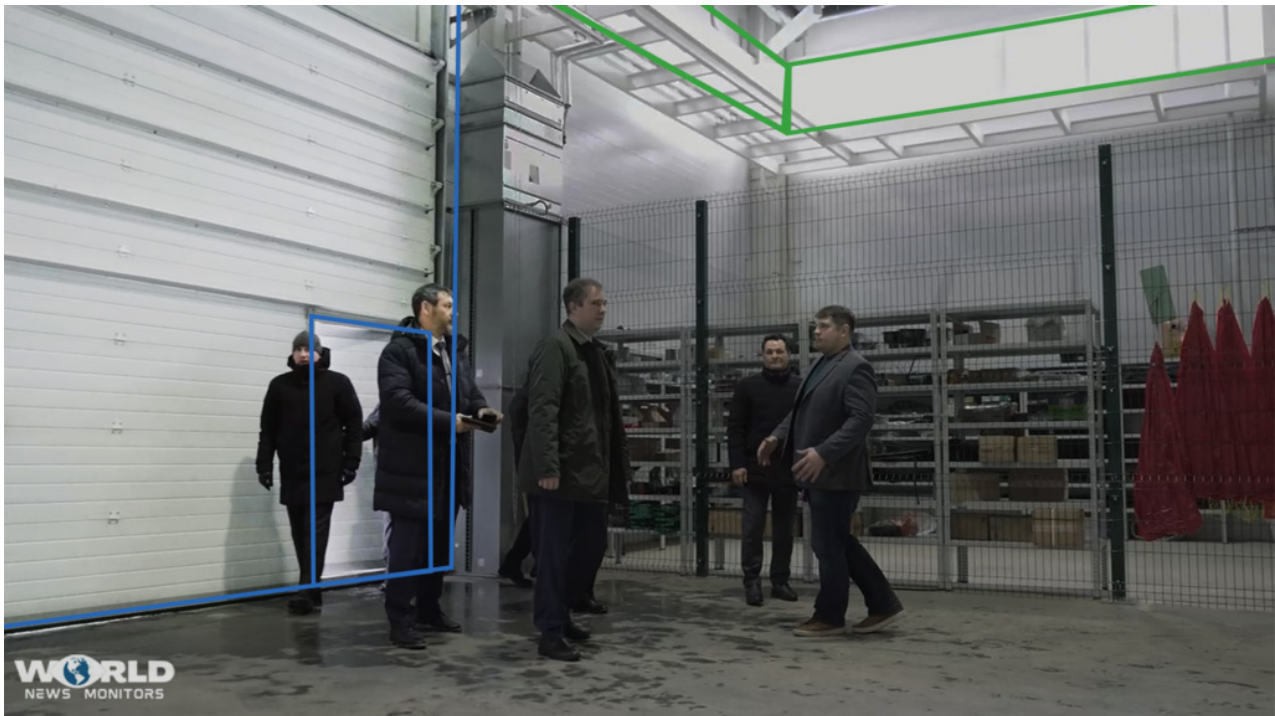
Responsibilities:

- performance of technological operations for preparation and assembly;
- locksmith processing of semi-finished products and ready items;
- use of manual cutting, metalwork and measuring tools;
- control of the sizes of finished products;
- ability to use a screwdriver."

Such a young age is indicated by the company for a reason – the main feature of Alabuga Politekh, an educational institution operating on the territory of the SEZ, is the so-called dual education program. In addition to studying, students also work at SEZ enterprises. Thus, Alabuga Polytechnic College is associated with many businesses in the territory, and the Albatros company is no exception.

After the Albatross settled in the new building, the Head of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rustem Minnikhanov came to inspect the enterprise.

After analysis of the videos posted, WNM was able to identify where the Albatros production is located and create the layout of the room visited.



Figures 10, 11: Screen captures of video visits to LLC Albatros. Windows and doors are marked by WNM (Source: Youtube)

By the pattern of windows, one can see that the room is located at the corner of the building. Moreover, the entrance to it is from the back of the building, since there is only one gate, to the left of which there is a door. Of all the Synergy buildings, only the pink building matches this pattern.



Figures 12, 13: Video still indicating the pattern of windows and doors in buildings 8.1 and 8.2.
Notes by WNM (Source: Youtube)

The next task was to draw up an internal plan of the building to establish the location of the factory and other premises. On the SEZ Alabuga website there is an advertising image with a plan of a generic Synergy building. The infographics provides us with the area dimensions featuring the modules of different sizes.

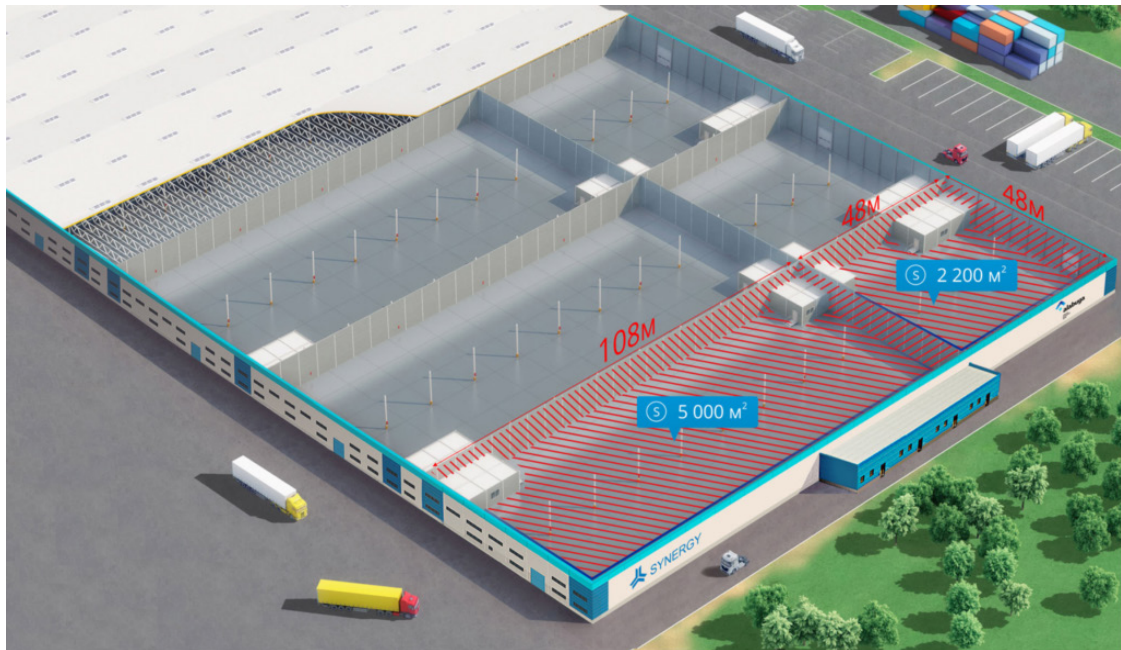


Figure 14: Commercial infographics providing the layout and indicating the size of the Synergy buildings (Source: [SEZ Alabuga](#))

This layout matches the satellite imagery taken during the construction on 10/04/2021:



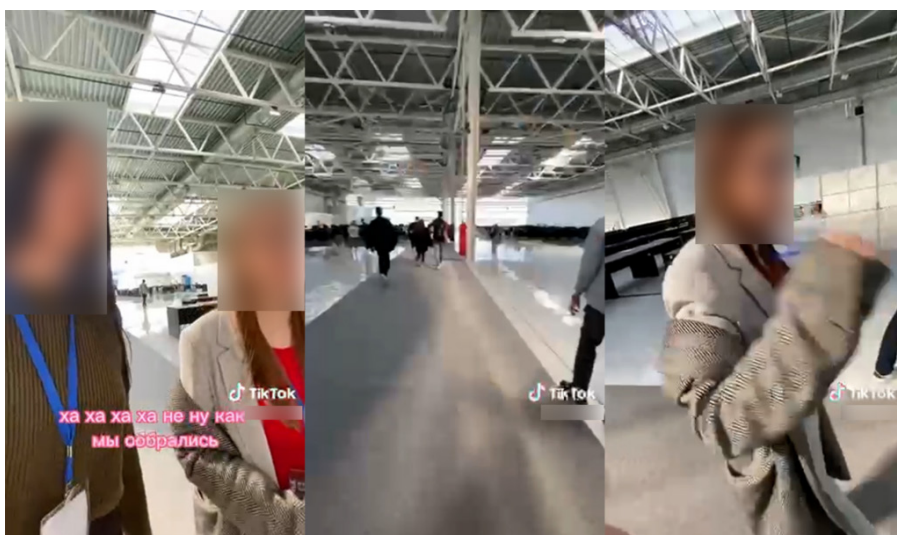
Figure 15: Synergy buildings 8.1 and 8.2 at the stage of construction (Source: Google Earth/ Maxar)

However, the building is also occupied by the Alabuga Politekh. Its visitors posted a video with the tour on Tiktok. WNM does not expose the author's face and user name for safety.



Figure 16: 8.1 building exterior recreated from Tiktok video
(Source: Tiktok)

The group goes in the main entrance of the pink building filming the interior.



Tiktok videos exposed the layout of the workspace and new construction details



Figures 17, 18: Interior details shown in a video. Video exposed construction patterns.
Captions by WNM
(Source: Tiktok)

According to the official marketing presentation this wall part is used to merge modules into bigger production space



Figure 19: Commercial materials showing the same construction pattern seen in video (Source: [SEZ Alabuga](#))

The construction is visible on videos including R. Minnikhanov's visit and marketing materials



Figure 20: Video of Tatarstan leader visit showing more interior details (Source: [SEZ Alabuga/VK Video](#))



Figure 21: Another video of visit showing composite production on the background
(Source: [BUISNESS Online/ Youtube](#))





Figures 22, 23: Promotional video showing the storage and composite production layout (Source: [Youtube](#))

Based on available video materials WNM team created the layout scheme of the building and Albatros production room. The wall patterns are marked with black polygons.

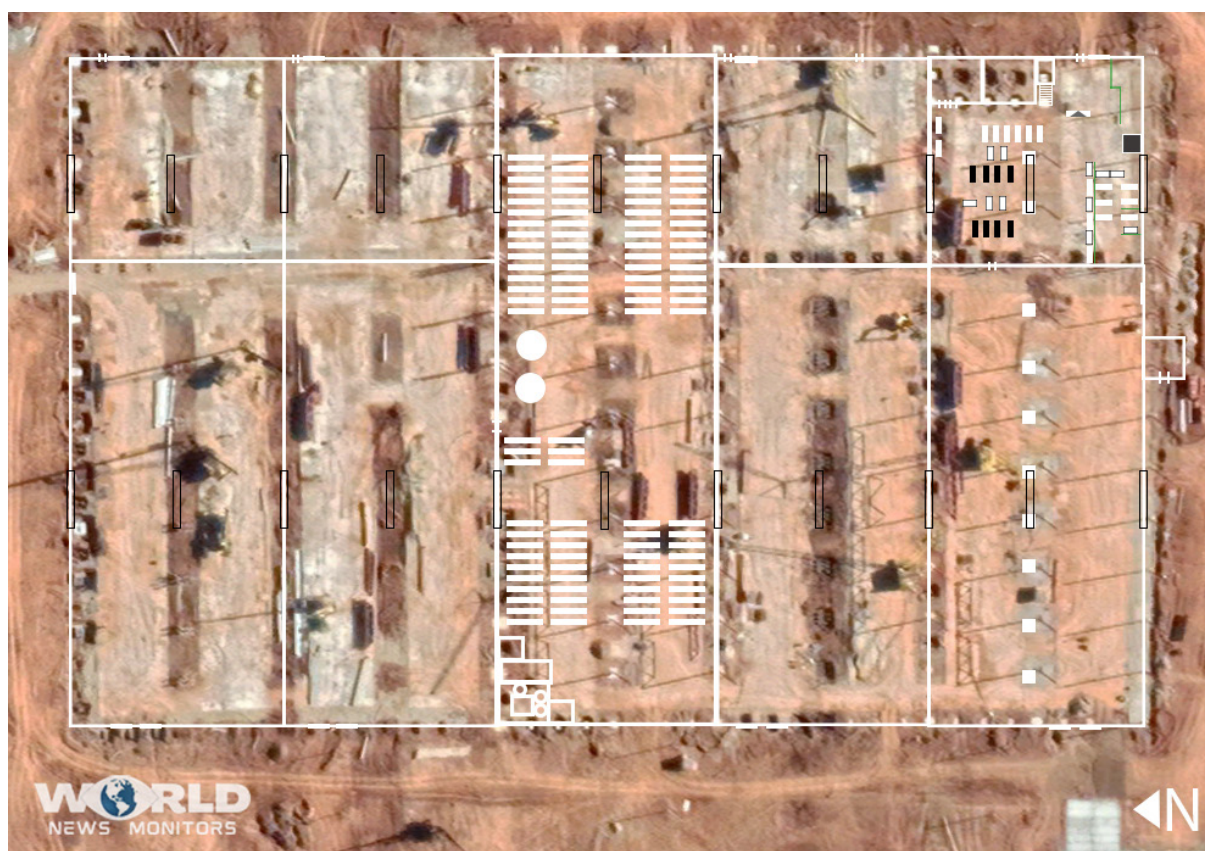


Figure 24: Layout of Synergy 8.1 building

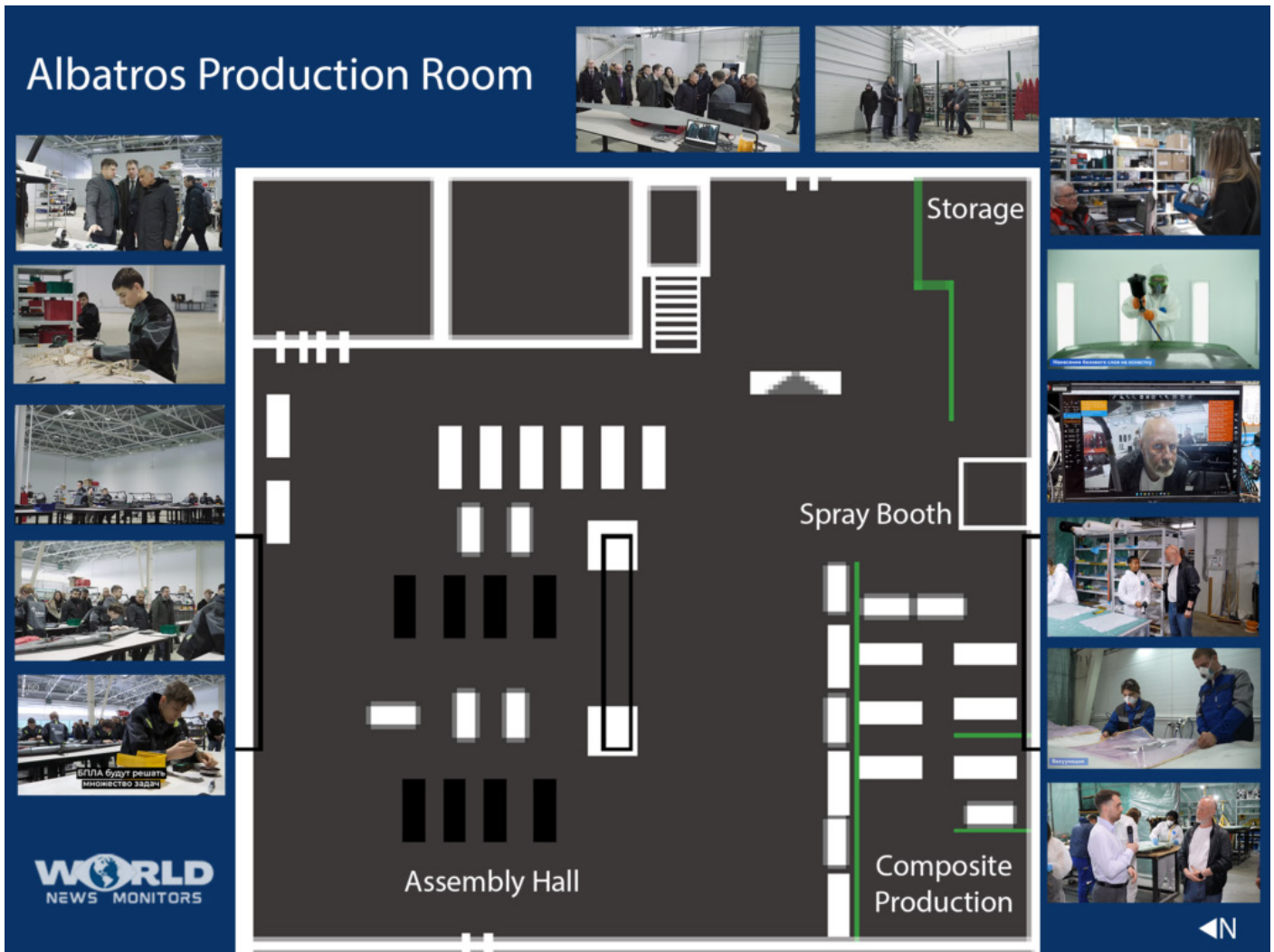


Figure 25: Layout of Albatros LLC production room

Thus, the Albatros company's shown room is a 48 by 48 meter room, which houses assembly, painting, and the production of composite materials. All published videos show only this room, however, the production of the declared number of drones seems doubtful with such capacities and scale. The activities of the Albatros company and the SEZ Alabuga in the field of AUV production still leave many inconsistencies and questions. Stay tuned for new materials in which WNM team will cover them in more detail.

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