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One of Russia's Most Powerful Tanks Is Coming to the Middle East

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We just don't know where in the Middle East.

Russia has found a buyer in the Middle East for its advanced T-90MS main battle tank. However, while the Russians have apparently signed a contract, Moscow is not disclosing which nation is buying the powerful new tank.

“A large-scale contract was signed with a Middle East country in December. Another contract on this type of military output is expected to be signed soon,” the Kremlin’s industry and trade minister Denis Manturov told the Moscow-based Tass news agency.

The new tank—which is geared toward the export market—is currently in low rate production. “We have established the low-rate initial production of these vehicles,” Gen. Alexei Maslov told Tass. “The technological processes that allow increasing of the serial production volumes have been fine-tuned.”

Meanwhile, the Russians seem to have learned the lessons of their previous exports and are focusing more on improving sustainment. However, it remains to be seen if Moscow delivers on promises of improved customer support—which has been a persistent problem for operators of Russian and Soviet-built hardware.

“We offer a full system of technical maintenance for the whole life cycle of the vehicle,” Maslov said during his sales pitch. “The technical solutions can be implemented in both stationary service centers and field environment. We are planning to deliver mobile maintenance facilities, for instance, mobile monitoring-and-checkout vehicles that allow conducting of diagnostics and maintenance of gun and fire control system to full extent. The training simulators that are being continuously enhanced are included in the delivery set.”

The Russians seem to be finding success on the export market with the new tank. In addition to the customers that has already signed on, the Russians expect to sign more deals in the near future. “We are discussing the matter with a number of states in the Middle East. However, it is too early to talk about the actual results,” Alexey Frolkin, deputy director of Russia’s Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSMTC) told Tass.