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## Confirmed: Pakistan Is Buying New Attack Helicopters From Russia

By Franz-Stefan Gady  
August 21, 2015

In a move possibly inspired by the deepening of U.S.-India defense cooperation, Russia decided to approve the sale of four Mi-35M attack helicopters to Pakistan The Express Tribune reports.



“An agreement was signed between Pakistan and Russian authorities in Rawalpindi for the purchase of four Mi-35 helicopters,” according to a senior Pakistani military official quoted in The Express Tribune.

The military official did not offer details on the planned delivery date of the aircraft or the helicopters’ technical configuration. The deal was likely concluded during Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif’s visit to Russia in June of this year.

Initial talks over the purchase of the helicopters were already held last June. “We are currently holding consultations. We are talking about Mi-35 helicopters, we plan to supply them at the request of the Pakistani anti-drug trafficking agency,” a Russian official said back then. Pakistan plans to officially use the helicopters to fight drug trafficking.

“Following the results of the talks held earlier on helicopters, which Pakistan would like to get from Russia, a draft contract on the delivery of four Mi-35M gunships has been sent to the Pakistani side. Pakistan is now studying the document,” a source within Russia’s state arms exporter Rosoboronexport told The Express Tribune.

Last June, Russia lifted a self-imposed arms embargo against Pakistan, in place since the Soviet-Afghan War, although Moscow, according to Pakistan’s foreign ministry, never fully adhered to it.

The Mi-35M gunships will in all likelihood replace part of the Pakistani military’s fleet of obsolete U.S. made AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters, which are primarily used for counterinsurgency operations in the country.

The Mi-35M attack helicopter, the export version of the Mi-24 gunship, was developed by the Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant and has been produced in Russia since 2005. Next to serving in the Russian military, the aircraft has been exported to Azerbaijan, Brazil, Iraq, and Venezuela.

The company website of Russian Helicopters notes that the Mi-35 is particularly suited for mountainous terrain and can be deployed “round the clock” in adverse weather conditions. The website notes that the helicopter offers “combat use of guided and unguided weapons in regular and challenging climate conditions” and is “operational for attack flights at altitudes of 10-25 m daytime and 50 m at night over land or water.”

The helicopter can be deployed for a host of different missions, including transporting up to eight paratroopers and carrying military supplies weighing up to 1,500 kg internally and 2,400 kg externally.