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Russia Lifts Embargo on Weapons Sales to Pakistan

By The Moscow Times

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Russia is negotiating the sale of a number of Mi-35 attack helicopters to Pakistan.

Russia has lifted an embargo on weapons deliveries to Pakistan and is negotiating the sale of a number of Mi-35 attack helicopters to Islamabad, Sergei Chemezov, head of state-owned technology corporation Rostec, told Itar-Tass on Monday.

The potential delivery of weapons and military hardware to Pakistan from Moscow could create tension between Russia and India, which has a long-standing rivalry with neighboring Pakistan. Historically, Russia has sold more weaponry to India — Russia delivered just 70 Mi-17 transport helicopters to Pakistan from 1996 to 2010.

In 2012, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the defense industry, seemingly took offense to Indian journalists asking him whether Moscow could supply Pakistan with weapons in future.

Russia "always cooperates with India to ensure safety in the region. We have never created problems for India, unlike other countries. If someone says differently, spit in their face," Rogozin said, Vedomosti reported.

Boris Volkhonsky, head of the Asian sector of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, said Monday that although India has always tended to react badly to the idea of arms being supplied to Pakistan, he doesn't expect collaboration between Moscow and Islamabad to cause problems.

"I do not think that India will have any objections. After all, India and Pakistan both buy weapons from the U.S., and this has not bothered them," Volkhonsky told RIA Novosti.

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