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Kalashnikov's Daughter Slams U.S. Company's Plans to Manufacture AK-47

By The Moscow Times

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The daughter of Russian assault rifle designer Mikhail Kalashnikov criticized plans by an American company to produce the famed AK-47 in the United States, but the weapon's Russian manufacturer shrugged off the move, saying it merely confirmed the gun's "leading position on the U.S. market."

The late designer's daughter Yelena, who heads a Kalashnikov heritage foundation, said she was "bewildered" by a recent announcement by the Russian Weapons Company (RWC) — the exclusive Kalashnikov distributor in the United States — that it would launch domestic production, news agency Interfax reported Wednesday.

"On the one hand, this is to some degree an acknowledgment: Why would anybody take something nobody needs? This looks like a confirmation that the AK-47 is still needed by someone," she was quoted as saying. "But on the other hand, it's clear that our weapons should remain ours."

Russian arms manufacturers' rights would be violated “if other people use what doesn't belong to them,” she said, adding, however, that she was not familiar with details of the contract between Russia's Kalashnikov Concern and its U.S. distributor.

Kalashnikov Concern's press service told the TASS news agency that it had no objection to the move, but also no involvement. “We aren't working with them,” a spokesperson said, adding that RWC would produce the famously simple Kalashnikov designs independently.

RWC's plans, announced earlier this week, were an attempt to find a way around Western sanctions against Moscow, which ban arms imports from Russia.

“We were forced to stop doing business with them [Kalashnikov] because of the sanctions,” RWC CEO Thomas McCrossin told CNN earlier this week. “We are not permitted to pick up the phone and talk to them.”

Kalashnikov Concern's press office said sanctions against the company had “significantly boosted interest in [Kalashnikov] products.”

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