The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Buys Back Military Parts Exported to Asia

June 05, 2023



Armored vehicles loaded onto a train at the UralVagonZavod plant in Nizhny Tagil. **Uralvagonzavod Press Service / TASS**

Russia is reimporting parts for tanks and missiles previously sold to India and Myanmar, potentially to improve older weapons and equipment destined for use in Ukraine, the financial news outlet Nikkei Asia reported Monday.

According to customs clearance data analyzed by journalists, Russian defense industry manufacturers have been buying back equipment that they had previously produced and exported to foreign buyers in Asia.

For example, Uralvagonzavod, which manufactures tanks for the Russian military, imported $24 million worth of its own products from the Myanmar army in December 2022.

The reimported equipment included over 6,000 sighting telescopes and some 200 cameras for installation in tanks, which analysts who spoke to Nikkei Asia said could be used to modernize Russia's old T-72 tanks currently sitting in storage.

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Similarly, a Russian missile manufacturer in August and November purchased $150,000 worth of its own components for night-vision sight on anti-air missiles from the Indian defense ministry.

Customs clearance data examined by Nikkei Asia suggested the components were returned to Russia because they were defective.

However, analysts who spoke to the publication said the large number of military products involved in the imports and the timing meant defects were an unlikely cause for the buybacks.

At the same time, there are no records of items being sent back to their original buyers after repairs, according to Nikkei Asia.

Since launching its invasion of Ukraine last year, the Russian military has suffered heavy equipment losses, and Western sanctions against Moscow's defense industry have hindered its ability to replenish its stocks.

According to Oryx, an open-source intelligence analysis website, Russia's army has suffered more than 2,000 tank losses during the invasion.

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