
RUSSIA CONSIDERS NUCLEAR AIRCRAFT CARRIER DEAL WITH INDIA AMID GROWING RELATIONS

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As Russian and Indian officials look to build closer ties, Moscow has offered to sell a nuclear aircraft carrier to New Delhi, officials said late Monday. The large expected price tag on the "Storm" carrier has defense experts wondering if the Kremlin will find an eager buyer in India as Moscow looks for more buyers around the globe.

It is doubtful if Indian will be able to source a 65,000-ton carrier from another country, and [it] will be too expensive to buy, retired Indian Navy commodore Anil Jai Singh told Defense News, which first reported the offer. Does the Indian Navy really think it would have the kind of global footprint to justify that expense in the next 15 years or so?

While the asking price of the carrier has not been reported, it could cost as much as \$5 billion, according to estimates for other ships within Russia's fleet. India set aside roughly \$40 billion to fund its military budget in 2016, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Russia and India are also planning to move forward on \$4 billion investments to jointly develop a fifth generation fighter aircraft and upgrade Sukhoi-30MKI aircraft, Russian news agency Tass reported.

The announcements come as Russia looks to increase its military exports by capitalizing on its participation in the Syrian civil war. Sanctions against Russia levied by the European Union and the U.S. after Moscow's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in March 2014 have forced the Kremlin to turn to other countries, including India and China, for trade relationships.

The exports of Russian-made weapons and military equipment have reached \$4.6 billion, and our contract portfolio is worth more than \$50 billion, President Vladimir Putin said last week. Russian

weapons and military equipment have proven efficient and reliable in vastly different conditions.

Putin said Russian weapons and military exports were growing in their geographical reach arriving in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

While Indian officials review Moscow's offer, American officials are discussing technology transfer for another nuclear aircraft carrier the INS Vishal, Defense News reported. India is expected to announce its procurement tender for the INS Vishal, the Diplomat reported.

Kaynak/Source: