

Performance of Russia's Defense Industry: Buoyant Weapons Exports, Despite the Sanctions

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After the special military operation (SMO) started well over a year and a half ago, the political West imposed sanctions and restrictions that initially prevented countries from doing business with Russia.

While this nuisance certainly caused damage in the first several months of 2022, Moscow and its numerous international partners found ways to circumvent sanctions and continue their close economic cooperation.

However, one aspect of [Russia's resurgent economy](#) that was most targeted by the political West is its massive military industry.

It should be noted that this segment of its economy was under attack years before the SMO started. Namely, the infamous 2017 CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) was passed in the United States precisely with the intention of hurting Moscow's military exports (among other things).

Needless to say, the aforementioned sanctions were [tightened significantly in the aftermath of the SMO](#). The mainstream propaganda machine was soon flooded with boastful predictions of the supposedly "impending collapse of the Russian economy", which was also supposed to "lead to an inevitable crash in arms exports". And indeed, it seemed that was the case, as certain countries canceled procurement deals. However, the effect of these restrictions soon proved to be grossly overblown. Despite laughable attempts to portray Moscow as the "losing side", the performance of Russian weapon systems in Ukraine [only reinforced its status as a virtually unrivaled military and technological superpower](#). Coupled with its [firm stand against Western aggression](#), this persuaded international partners to continue military cooperation with Russia.

This year's Dubai Airshow was [the latest example of Moscow's resilience and the sheer](#)

[quality of its defense products.](#)

Despite restrictions, foreign clients showed remarkable interest in the Russian defense industry, particularly weapons such as the top-of-the-line Su-35 fighter jets, Ka-52 attack helicopters, T-90 tanks, TOS-1A heavy flamethrowers, regular and rocket artillery, missiles, drones, electronic warfare systems, etc. Deputy General Director of Rostec, Vladimir Artyakov mentioned all of the above and more, stating that there is a significant increase in demand for these systems, primarily because of their combat usage. He also specifically mentioned the “Msta-S” self-propelled howitzers, “Tornado-G” and “Tornado-S” MLRS (multiple launch rocket systems), as well as ZALA “Kub-E” loitering munitions, in addition to air defense systems and small arms.

[In an interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta](#), Artyakov said that the performance of Russian systems, particularly against the grossly overhyped NATO weapons, resulted in an increase in interest and demand for these systems, despite the looming threat of sanctions. Artyakov further stated that all of Rostec’s customers keep a close eye on the combat performance of Russian weapons, making assessments on how they could fit the roles they need. He also explained that the industry works directly with the Russian military, constantly making adjustments. Officers, military officials, designers and engineers are all coordinating their efforts in this regard, resulting in timely updates and improvements, while also increasing cost-effectiveness. All this is done despite continued attempts to artificially undermine Russian competitiveness in the ever-changing international market.

Artyakov also refuted [the March data published by the Swedish SIPRI](#) (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) which claims that the US share of global arms exports rose from 33% to 40%, while Russia’s supposedly fell from 22% to 16% during the 2013-17 and 2018-22 period, respectively. He stated that “the portfolio of orders of Rosoboronexport is stable” and that “[it] currently stands at over four trillion rubles” ([roughly \\$45-50 billion](#)). Artyakov said that “we are constantly working to expand the geography and range of supplies to friendly countries, promoting products for all types of armed forces and branches of troops” and that “the most promising areas are now considered the air force, air defense, armored vehicles, and small arms”. And indeed, there is a long line of countries expecting access to the latest Russian weapon systems.

According to Alexander Mikheyev, the chairman of Rosoboronexport, there’s a strong interest in the multi-purpose, super-maneuverable Su-35 fighter jet, [one of the most advanced air superiority platforms on the planet](#). The now legendary Ka-52 “Alligator” is also among the most sought-after Russian systems, particularly after it left hundreds of pieces of NATO-sourced armor burning in the endless steppes of Ukraine. The “Alligator” was among the most prominent Russian assets that halted the Kiev regime’s much-touted counteroffensive. At least half a dozen countries have expressed interest in acquiring the Russian attack helicopter. What’s more, Rostec Director General Sergey Chemezov stated that even the members of the American delegation at the Dubai Airshow 2023 were curious about the Ka-52 and approached their Russian counterparts.

“It’s not as if military officials will use the show to rip us off. First, it’s not that easy. One would first have to disassemble the helicopter, its systems, equipment, and so on. They [demonstrated] an interest in the helicopter, which is involved in military activities. It proved very effective, and everyone is aware of that,” [Chemezov commented on the US delegation’s visit and inspection of the Ka-52](#) displayed at the Dubai Airshow.

American interest in Russian attack helicopters is hardly surprising. The Ka-52 is particularly important in this regard due to its unique coaxial rotors, as US companies are struggling to develop similar designs, with the Sikorsky S-97 and SB-1 “Defiant” ([canceled in December last year](#)) being the most prominent examples. While the “Alligator” has suffered some losses during the SMO, considering the frequency of its usage, as well as the fact that the Neo-Nazi junta forces [received hundreds of billions worth of advanced Western weapons](#), its performance has been nothing short of exceptional. While the US and its vassals and satellite states keep claiming that Russian weapons supposedly “perform poorly”, in reality, they’re terrified of them and are [trying everything in their power to prevent the export of these systems to other countries](#), as they too might use it just as effectively [against Western aggression](#).

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