
Libya to Buy Russian Fighter Jets for \$1 Billion: Report

[The following article was originally published by Agence France-Presse, 19 October 2009.]

Libya is planning to buy more than twenty Russian fighter jets in a billion-dollar arms deal with Moscow, the Interfax news agency reported October 19, 2009, citing a military-diplomatic source.

Libya is planning to buy 12 to 15 Su-35 multipurpose fighters, four Su-30s, and six Yak-130 combat training planes from Russia, the unnamed source was quoted as saying.

The contracts could be signed at the end of this year or the beginning of 2010 and would have a total value of about \$1 billion (670 million euros), he said.

Many of the contracts are already fairly well worked out from a technical viewpoint and are practically ready for signing. The financial aspects still need to be resolved, the source told Interfax.

A spokesman for Rosoboronexport, the state-owned arms exporter that oversees Russia's foreign arms sales, could not be reached for comment October 19, 2009.

Libya, a longtime pariah state that has moved to rejoin the international community in recent years, was reported to be discussing arms deals with Russia when Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi visited Moscow late last year.

Much of the North African state's arsenal was purchased from the Soviet Union in the last years of the Cold War.

Earlier this month a Russian MiG-23 fighter jet crashed during an air show in a suburb of the Libyan capital Tripoli, killing the two-man crew and injuring several people on the ground.

The air show had been meant to showcase Russian fighter jets for possible customers in North Africa.