

Russia is now the world's No. 2 arms producer, surpassing Britain, think tank reports

HELSINKI - A Swedish think tank said Monday Russia has emerged as the world's second-largest arms producer after the United States.

Russia surpassed Britain, which had held the spot since 2002 and remains Western Europe's No. 1 arms maker.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said in its report on the world's 100 biggest armaments groups that the combined arm sales of Russian companies amounted to \$37.7 billion in 2017, or 9.5 percent of a total \$398.2 billion, recording 8.5 percent year-on-year growth.

The annual report includes both domestic and foreign sales.

SIPRI senior researcher Siemon Wezeman said Russian weapons and weapon systems producers have been on a significant growth path ever since 2011.

"This is in line with Russia's increased spending on arms procurement to modernize its armed forces," Wezeman said.

For the first time in the report's history, a Russian company — the Moscow-based and state-owned Almaz-Antey that makes advanced air defense systems among other things — was listed among the world's top 10 weapons companies.

The report noted Russia started an initiative to consolidate its arms industry back in 2007 — an ongoing process that is expected to be completed soon.

Overall, the U.S. continued to dominate the list with 42 companies accounting for 57 percent of total sales, including the world's largest arms producer, Lockheed Martin Corp.

As a notable development, the report also highlighted a 24 percent year-on-year rise in sales by Turkish arms companies in 2017. It was described as a reflection of "Turkey's ambitions to develop its arms industry to fulfill its growing demand

for weapons and become less dependent on foreign suppliers,” SIPRI senior researcher Pieter Wezeman said.

Chinese companies aren't included in SIPRI's report because of unreliable statistics.

Source: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/12/10/world/russia-now-worlds-no-2-arms-producer-surpassing-britain-think-tank-reports/#.XA384JNKiUk>

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