

Helicopter Sale to U.S. Just the Start

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's contract with the U.S. Department of Defense for the supply of 21 Mikoyan Mi-17V5 helicopters to Afghanistan is unique, and the military-technical cooperation with the United States should continue, said local arms exporters.

"We hope we will not stop at this point. It is not ruled out that very soon we will work on other projects," Vyacheslav Dzirkali, deputy director of the Federal Service for Technical-Military Cooperation, said in an interview with the Kommersant newspaper, published on Wednesday.

He said he was talking about the sale of Russian equipment to the United States. "The helicopter topic remains in our cooperation plans, and there may be other areas. I cannot say which just yet," Dzirkali said.

The helicopter deal with the United States is unique, he said. There have not been such deals between Russian organizations and the U.S. Department of Defense before, Dzirkali said, declining to disclose the sum of the deal, citing confidentiality reasons.

Defense experts estimate that the 21 Mi-17V5 helicopters cost the United States between \$300 million and \$360 million.

Cooperation with NATO is also advancing, in particular around a collective "trust fund" for operating helicopters stationed in NATO countries, including those involved in Afghanistan, Dzirkali said.

"Russia will contribute in the form of spare parts and specialist training. In financial terms, it will be equivalent to the contribution of the key NATO participants. We are interested in this fund because the main subject of this project is Mil helicopters. They are used quite widely in the NATO countries," Dzirkali said.

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