

**U-UAZ Successful in Mi-171 Promotion**

Ulan-Ude Aircraft Plant (U-UAZ) has been successfully promoting the Mi-171 transportation helicopter both in its civil and military varieties (Mi-171SH). Late in 2007, U-UAZ finished shipments of twenty-four Mi-171s to China and eighteen Mi-171SHs to Croatia where it plans to supply another eight aircrafts later in 2008. The shipments are seen as redemption of the former USSR's debt to former Yugoslavia.

Mi-171 is based on Mi-8, profoundly modernized; the new helicopter is highly competitive. Helicopter frames don't have to be upgraded too often, and the aircraft is equipped with the cutting-edge avionics. Mi-171 costs considerably lower than its European counterparts: French Super Puma is priced at \$ 9 million while Mi-171 – just at \$4.4 million.

The competitive prices and foreign customers' interest to its products enabled U-UAZ to obtain another large contract - with Russia's Utair servicing the oil and gas industry, mounting operations and fire fighting. Pursuant to the contract, the plant shall ship twenty Mi-171s in 2008 and another twenty in 2009 through 2010. Based on the average unit price, the value of the contract is estimated at \$175 million.

High demand for Mi-171 can be expected both in Russia and abroad. Croatian contracts proved that the NATO standards under which expensive American- and European-produced equipment must be purchased will not restrain the member states from buying machines by any different producers. A precedent was made when the European states recognized efficiency of the Be-200 amphibious aircraft in the forest fire season.

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