



# RUSSIA'S ADVANCED STRATEGIC BOMBER MAY PERFORM DEBUT FLIGHT IN LATE 2018

News / Manufacturer



Russia's modernized strategic bomber Tupolev Tu-160M2 may perform its debut flight already at the end of 2018, Russian Aerospace Force Commander-in-Chief Colonel-General Viktor Bondarev said on Thursday.

"The first Tu-160M2 is set to take to the skies in late 2018 and then the first serial-produced aircraft will perform its flight in 2021. After that, purchases will start," the commander said, responding to the relevant question.



It was reported in 2015 that Russia had made a decision to resume the production of Tu-160 bombers in their upgraded Tu-160M2 modification and postpone the development of the new-generation bomber PAK DA (standing for prospective aviation complex for long-range aviation) to a later term.



The Russian Defense Ministry reported that the serial production of Tu-160M2 bombers should begin in 2023. The Russian Aerospace Force intends to purchase no less than 50 such aircraft. The Aerospace Force commander-in-chief said in March 2016 that the Tu-160M2 might take to the skies for the first time in 2019.



04 AUGUST 2016

**SOURCE: TASS**

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