



RUSSIA'S IL-76MD-M PLANE UNDERGOING PRODUCTION FLIGHT TESTS

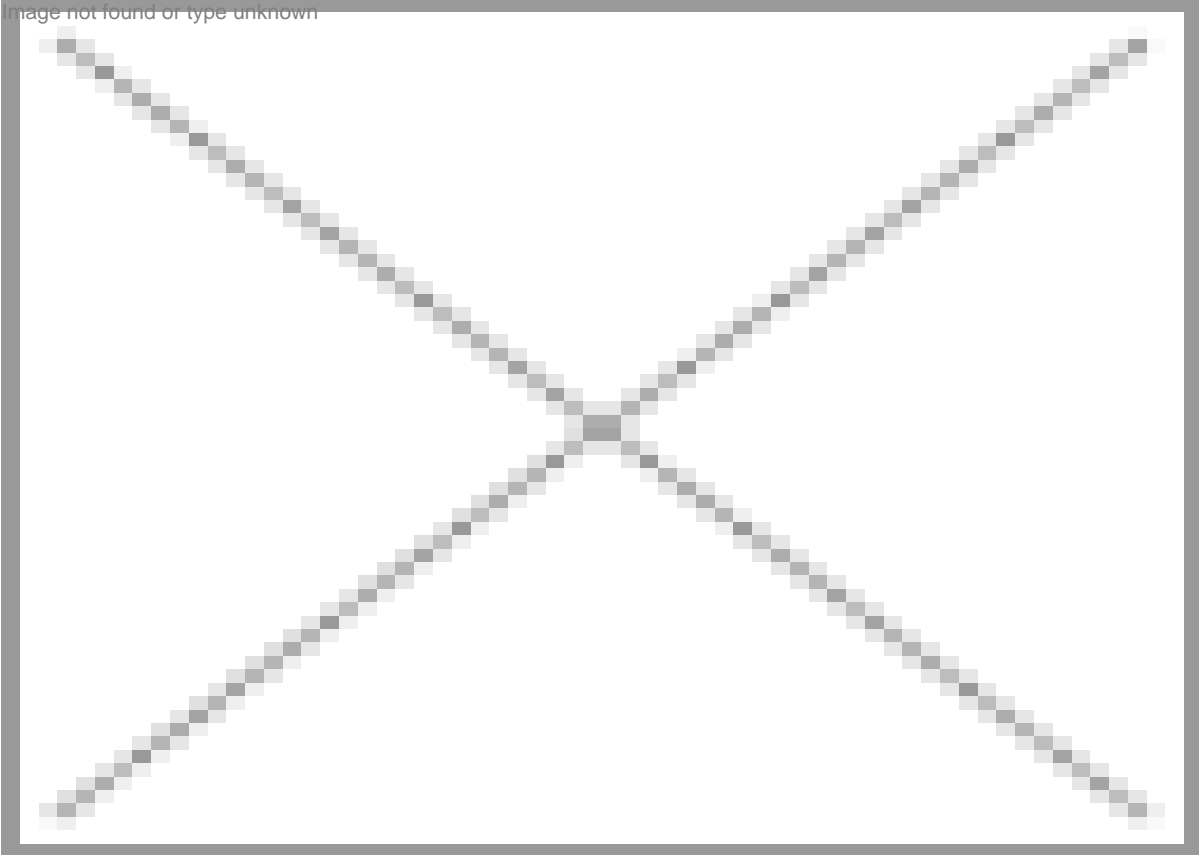
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The Ilyushin Il-76MD-M military transport plane is currently performing test flights as part of its production flight tests, the press office of Russia's Radio-Electronic Technologies Group said.

"As of today, the plane has performed ten test flights. During the upgrade, the plane's service life was extended to 40 years. The plane also received a new flight and navigation system and its lighting, airdropping, utility, self-defense and communications equipment has been replaced," the press office said.

According to the press office, a multipurpose electro-optical sighting system was installed in the Il-76MD-M plane's nose to make airdrops more accurate and safer. The system allows watching the drop zone in all weather conditions as it works in the infrared and optical bands.



"During the upgrade, the plane received some units interchangeable with parts of the advanced Il-76MD-90A military transport plane," the press office said.

According to Russia's Defense Ministry, the upgrade of the Il-76MD plane to the Il-76MD-M level is expected to cost 30% or less than the cost of advanced aircraft.

In all, 41 Il-76MD planes are planned to be upgraded to the Il-76MD-M level. Work is currently under way to upgrade the Il-78 and Il-78M aerial refueling planes to the Il-78-2 and Il-78M-2 level, respectively.

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