

China Involved in Developing Pakistan's Main Battle Tank

By Matt Stein
OE Watch Commentary

Pakistan's defense industry has experience developing and producing a main battle tank (MBT) for the country's army, specifically the Al-Khalid, a third generation MBT jointly developed with China and which entered service in Pakistan in 2001. A few hundred Al-Khalids are currently in service in Pakistan's army with deliveries of additional tanks taking place annually. While the Al-Khalids appeared to be the foundation of Pakistan's armored units for the foreseeable future, Pakistan's army announced this past year that it would acquire up to 300 VT4s, a third generation MBT from China. The accompanying excerpted article from Pakistani news website *Quwa.org*, which focuses on defense issues in Pakistan, provides an update on deliveries of the VT4s and how China continues to be involved in production of the Al-Khalid.

The article reports that in "May 2021, Pakistan took delivery of both additional VT4 main battle tanks (MBT) and subassemblies or components for the al-Khalid Improved (al-Khalid I) from China's Norinco Group." The article also mentions how the army "evaluated the VT4 as part of its Haider MBT program" and that officials "planned the Haider program as an off-the-shelf solution to accelerate its tank modernization efforts (alongside the al-Khalid-series)." Army officials are planning to use the VT4s alongside the Al-Khalids and to eventually replace the aging inventory of T-59s (Chinese origin). The article goes



Kiribati Island.

Source: Vladimir Lysenko (I.), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kiribati\(003\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kiribati(003).JPG), Attribution: CC x 4.0

on to note that the army "has a \$859 million U.S. contract in place for 176 VT4 tanks" and that "in terms of the al-Khalid I, the army currently has an order for 110 units in place with Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT)." HIT is the state-owned defense company that developed and produced the al-Khalid with China.

Lastly, the article mentions how the Chinese-owned "Norinco Group has been delivering components for the al-Khalid I through 2020 and 2021" and that "based on these deliveries, it is possible that the P[akistan] A[rmy] will induct another batch of al-Khalid I MBTs in late 2021 or early 2022."

“In May 2021, Pakistan took delivery of both additional VT4 main battle tanks (MBT) and subassemblies or components for the al-Khalid Improved (al-Khalid I) from China's Norinco Group.”

Source: "Pakistan Receives Additional VT4 and Al-Khalid-I Parts," *Quwa.org* (news website focusing on Pakistan defense issues), 20 June 2021. <https://quwa.org/2021/06/20/pakistan-receives-additional-vt4-and-al-khalid-i-parts-3/>

In May 2021, Pakistan took delivery of both additional VT4 main battle tanks (MBT) and subassemblies or components for the al-Khalid Improved (al-Khalid I) from China's Norinco Group...The Pakistan Army (PA) had evaluated the VT4 as part of its Haider MBT program. The PA planned the Haider program as an off-the-shelf solution to accelerate its tank modernization efforts (alongside the al-Khalid-series).

...According to sources, the PA has a \$859 million U.S contract in place for 176 VT-4 tanks...In terms of the al-Khalid I, the PA currently has an order for 110 units in place with Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT). HIT delivered its most recent al-Khalid I batch to the PA in August 2020...

Norinco Group has been delivering components for the al-Khalid I through 2020 and 2021. Based on these deliveries, it is possible that the PA will induct another batch of al-Khalid I MBTs in late 2021 or early 2022. Likewise, one can expect another VT4 induction announcement around that timeframe as well...