

New Main Battle Tank Unveiled By China

OE Watch Commentary: The Chinese military recently confirmed at an exhibit at the National Museum of China that it has a new lighter-weight tank, the Type 15, in development. The accompanying excerpted article notes the new tank’s suitability for amphibious and airborne operations, both missions that are seeing greater emphasis in the PLA. Much of China’s southern areas are unsuitable for the heavier Type 96 and Type 99 main battle tanks (MBTs). In an amphibious role the Type 15 would likely be used by the PLA Navy Marine Corps [海军陆战队], which has seen rapid expansion, including the establishment of several new brigades. In this role, it would be used alongside the Marines’ current inventory of amphibious tanks. Popular publications in China have also speculated on Chinese Landing Craft Air Cushion’s and other hovercraft’s ability to carry Type 15s.

For China’s Airborne forces, the Type 15 would represent a significant increase in the firepower available to their units. While it is unclear how many Type 15s could be carried by China’s Y-20 or other transport aircraft, the speculation in the article makes it clear that it is meant to be airlift-capable and potentially airdropped. The Chinese Air Forces’ Airborne Corps currently fields the much lighter ZBD-03 air droppable light tank. The models displayed in Beijing showed a combination of reactive frontal armor and slat armor. NORINCO, one of China’s main state-owned defense companies, previously displayed an export-focused VT-5 that shares many characteristics with the Type 15. The Type 15 appears to be filling an important niche between China’s heavier Type 99 and Type 96 MBTs on the one hand, and its light tank and armored personnel carrier forces. The potential for inclusion in rapid-reaction airborne and amphibious forces make it a strong candidate for inclusion in modernizing PLA units **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

Type 15



Type 88



Type 96



Type 99



	Weight (tons)	Length (meters)	Height (meters)	Speed (km/hr)	Crew	Main Gun (mm)	Engine (hp)	Power-to-weight ratio	Range (km)
Type 15	35	9.2	2.5	70	3	105	1000	27-30 ⁱ	450
Type 88	39	9.3/6.3	2.3	57	4	105	730	19	430
Type 96	42	10.7	2.3	57	3	125	780	18	600
Type 99	54	11/7.3	2.4	70	3	125	1200	24	450

ⁱAll statistics estimates from open sources



Continued: New Main Battle Tank Unveiled By China

“Two scaled models for the Type 15 were displayed at the National Museum of China as part of a grand exhibition to mark the 40th anniversary of the country’s reform and opening-up in Beijing.”

Source: “Light-weight Type 15 better suited for mountain warfare, island landing,” *Global Times*, 25 November 2018.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1128943.shtml>

China has recently unveiled its new 30-ton-class light tank, the Type 15, with experts saying it can outperform other Chinese tanks in combat operations in plateau areas like Tibet while also holding advantages in island landing missions.

Two scaled models for the Type 15 were displayed at the National Museum of China as part of a grand exhibition to mark the 40th anniversary of the country’s reform and opening-up in Beijing.

Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military analyst, told the Global Times on Sunday that “the Type 15 is equipped with a 105-millimeter main gun capable of firing armor-piercing rounds and gun-launched missiles, making its firepower not much inferior to a heavier main battle tank.”

Compared with the Type 99 and Type 96, two main battle tanks in service of the People’s Liberation Army, the Type 15 is significantly lighter, weighing about 32-35 tons, Wei said, noting that its engine can provide 1,000 horsepower driving force.

...Another military expert, who asked not to be named, told the Global Times on Sunday that the tank is a great choice for China’s southern area, given its mountainous terrain there.

The Type 15 can also be quickly deployed in Southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region if border dispute reoccurs, the expert said. He referred the Type 15’s light weight as advantage when compared with heavier ones in the past. Although the Type 15 was spotted several times by Chinese citizens in the past, this is the first time that China officially introduced its latest light tank. Although the Type 15 was spotted several times by Chinese citizens in the past, this is the first time that China officially introduced its latest light tank.

In July, a tank suspected to be a Type 15, which was painted with naval camouflage was photographed in China at an unknown location. The photo sparked discussions among military observers, with some saying that China could deploy the tank when there is a need to seize an island.

Wei said that the light-weight Type 15 can be transported to an island via landing ships, as the tank can provide strong fire support and cover for infantry.

After gaining ground on the shore, a tank like Type 15 can work better than an amphibious tank when charging into deeper areas due to its higher mobility, Wei noted. The anonymous military expert stressed that the tank can be used in a potential landing operation in case force has to be used to keep Chinese territory integrated.

Wei highlighted the fact that the tank is so light, it is possible for transport aircraft to airlift it to the frontline. Although a traditional airdrop might be difficult, the transport aircraft can fly low and slowly and drop the tank protected by large parachutes, Wei said.

Boasting a similar 105-millimeter main gun, the 30-ton-class VT-5 made by China North Industries Group Corporation is a made-for-export light tank that is also compatible with various types of terrain.



China’s cyber policy appears to have three vectors—peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner—that dominate China’s cyber policy. Some are always hidden from view while others are demonstrated daily. Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195610/download>