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Russians: New Fighter Will Match F-22

By Sharon Weinberger  July 17, 2008 | 9:00:00 AM Categories: [Crazy Ivans](#), [Planes](#), [Planes](#), [Copters](#), [Blimps](#)

The Farnborough International Air Show is taking place this week in the United Kingdom, and the Russians are there in full force promising that their fifth generation fighter will match our fifth generation fighter, the stealthy F-22 Raptor. Where's the PowerPoint slide that proves it?

Flight International's [Steve Trimble](#) is running advance snippets of what looks like a very interesting article about the Russian fighter, known as PAK FA (also known as the T-50).

"Russian air force commander Gen. Aleksandr Zelin expects its prototype to fly in 2009 and pass trials in 2013," *Flight* reports. "Zelin came to Farnborough to watch performance of the Raptor in the company of Sukhoi general director Mikhail Pogosyan. Zelin told the media on the eve of the show that 'from what we have seen', the F-22A does not exceed the Su-35 in maneuverable fight performance."



Sukhoi's Pagosyan apparently said that the Su-35, a "transitional" aircraft between fourth and fifth generation fighters, so it may not be a match for the F-22, but the PAK FA will be. *Defense Technology International* ran an excellent article last year describing some of the basic features the plane may have, such as stealth, but frankly, the Russians really aren't revealing much.

Will the PAK FA be a match for the F-22? Without details, it's hard to say, but it takes a leap of faith to believe that Russia could in under a decade, and no doubt with much less funding than the U.S. Air Force, build an aircraft that's on a par with all of the F-22's capabilities, though it might be able to match it in some ways. It's also worth remembering that in 1999 MiG rolled out what it claimed was a fifth generation stealth fighter; skeptics called it a bluff. This it not to say the PAK FA is a bluff, but it's worth being a bit skeptical about any claims not backed up with solid numbers.

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You know, if Russia rolls out a stealth fighter equivalent to the F-22, won't all dogfights of the future degrade to the equivalent of two kids, blindfolded with earplugs, trying to beat each other with baseball bats? Noone knows where the other is until you quite-nearly ram them. Of course, this is barring the development of a stealth countermeasure.

Posted by: Arad | Jul 17, 2008 6:17:47 AM

when has russian hardware in the field ever outperformed western hardware? the iraqis saw their russian air defense systems come apart.

Posted by: slntax | Jul 17, 2008 6:44:46 AM