

## Intel Reports: Iran to buy 250 advanced long-range Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets from Russia

Contributed by The US Navy Times / JPost  
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Iran is in negotiations with Russia to buy 250 state-of-the-art fighter jets, an Israeli newspaper reported, in a pointed response to a new American bid to sell billions of dollars' worth of weapons to potential Iranian adversaries in the Middle East.

The English-language Jerusalem Post of Israel reported Monday that top Israeli defense officials are investigating the potential Iran-Russia deal, in which Iran would pay \$1 billion for about a dozen squadrons' worth of Sukhoi Su-30 &ldquo;Flanker&rdquo; fighter-bombers. As a part of the deal, Iran would also buy aerial tanker planes that could extend the fighters' range.

Russia has already supplied Iran with modern surface-to-air missile defense systems, intended to protect nuclear facilities from potential Israeli or American airstrikes. Russian officials have defended those sales, saying they are within their rights to sell any nation weapons for its self-defense.

The Jerusalem Post report appeared two days after the American press reported that President Bush wants to ramp up American arms sales to several Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in a deal that could be worth as much as \$20 billion, in the hopes of limiting the expansion of Iranian influence in the Middle East.

An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman decried the Americans weapons deal Monday on a state-sponsored Web site.

&ldquo;What the Persian Gulf region needs is stability and security,&rdquo; said Mohammad-Ali Hosseini.  
&ldquo;Americans have been trying to disturb it by selling weapons to the region.&rdquo;

The two-seat Su-30 is a popular Russian export fighter. Models are already in service with the Chinese, Indian and other militaries, and there are variants deigned for naval aviation. The fighter can carry a maximum weapons payload of more than 17,000 pounds, according to Jane's All the World's Aircraft, and has a range, on internal fuel, of about 1,620 nautical miles, but that can be extended to 2,805 nautical miles with one midair refuel.

The Su-30's listed performance capabilities are comparable to or better than the three primary American fighters deployed to Iraq: the Navy's carrier-based F/A-18 Hornet and the Air Force's F-15 Eagle and F-16 Fighting Falcon.

If it acquired the Flankers, Iran would enjoy a quantum leap forward in its air power capability. Iran has invested much of its resources in surface-to-air missile defenses, but its fighter fleet now consists of decades-old American exported F-14 Tomcats and F-4 Phantoms, and an unknown hodgepodge of 1970s-era Russian fighters, including Su-25 &ldquo;Frogfoots,&rdquo; and newer models, including the MiG-27 &ldquo;Flogger.&rdquo;

By Philip Ewing - Staff writer - The Navy Times

Su-30Mk series Aircraft Flight Demonstration  
{youtube}xY0t\_mPv6I4{/youtube}

Iran to buy Sukhoi 30s, fuel tankers, from Russia?  
30 July 2007

Tehran and the Russian arms export giant Rosoboronexport will shortly sign a mammoth arms deal. Tehran will buy 250 Su-30MKM warplanes and 20 IL-78 MKI fuel tankers, in a deal running into tens of billions of dollars, reports indicate. Iran will get delivery of the first aircraft before the end of 2007.

However, neither Moscow nor Tehran has confirmed that any such deal is on the cards. If it does go through, this transaction will be Russia's single largest arms deal in 30 years. On the other side, it will give Iran a long-range aerial attack capability, bringing targets across the Persian Gulf and Middle East, including Israel and Lebanon, within its reach.

The Su-30 has an operating limit of four-and-a-half hours, with a maximum range of 3,000 km. Aerial fuel tankers can extend its operating sustainability to 10 hours and its range to 8,000 km, at altitudes of 10km to 13km. This will make the Iranian air force the second largest in the region, next only to Israel. The reports also indicated that Iranian aircrews were already training on the new Sukhoi aircraft, and will be ready to start flying them early next year.

Moscow has apparently agreed to sell Tehran the same Sukhoi model as India received earlier this year. However, this seems extremely unlikely, as India's Su-30s are equipped with Israeli avionics. Russia began delivering the same craft in June 2007 to Malaysia, which also sought Israeli avionics, but Tel Aviv refused point blank. Besides, some of the plane's systems are made by Thales of France, and the contract will have to be cleared with Paris as well.

The Su-30 MKM has a two-member crew. The first pilot flies the aircraft, controls weapons and manoeuvres the plane. The co-pilot employs BVR air-to-air and air-to-ground guided weapons in long-range engagements, sweeps the arena for enemy craft or missiles and is the command-and-control in group missions. The closest western plane to the Su-30 MKM is the American F-15E fighter-bomber.

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 Reports: Iran to buy jets from Russia

yaakov katz and herb keinson, THE JERUSALEM POST Jul. 30, 2007

Israel is looking into reports that Russia plans to sell 250 advanced long-range Sukhoi-30 fighter jets to Iran in an unprecedented billion-dollar deal.

According to reports, in addition to the fighter jets, Teheran also plans to purchase a number of aerial fuel tankers that are compatible with the Sukhoi and capable of extending its range by thousands of kilometers. Defense officials said the Sukhoi sale would grant Iran long-range offensive capabilities.

Government officials voiced concern over the reports. They said Russia could be trying to compete with the United States, which announced over the weekend a billion-dollar arms sale to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

Despite Israeli and US opposition, Russia recently supplied Iran with advanced anti-aircraft systems used to protect Teheran's nuclear installations. At the time, Moscow said it reserved the right to sell Iran weapons, such as the anti-aircraft system, that were of a defensive nature.

The Sukhoi-30 is a two-seat multi-role fighter jet and bomber capable of operating at significant distances from home base and in poor weather conditions. The aircraft enjoys a wide range of combat capabilities and is used for air patrol, air defense, ground attacks, enemy air defense suppression and air-to-air combat.

After years of negotiations, the Indian Air Force in 1996 purchased 40 Sukhoi-30s and in 2000 acquired the license from the company to manufacture an additional 140 aircrafts.

This article can also be read at  
<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1185379034835&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

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 Iran, Russia About to Sign Massive Arms Deal  
 Monday, July 30, 2007

Russia is ready to sign its largest arms deal in 30 years, promising to deliver at least \$1 billion in warplanes and refueling tankers to Iran.

The deal includes 250 long-range Su-30 fighters, a two-seat warplane that has, in the words of Jerusalem Post, "a wide range of combat capabilities and is used for air patrol, air defense, ground attacks, enemy air defense suppression and air-to-air combat." It has a maximum range of 3,000 km, but Tehran also plans to purchase refueling tankers that will increase its range to 8,000 km.

This purchase elevates Iran's air force capabilities to a level comparable with the Israeli air force. According to debkafle, the first of these aircraft will be delivered by the end of this year.

The arms deal may be, in part, a Russian response to the U.S. decision to sell thousands of Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) units to Saudi Arabia—technology that upgrades free-fall bombs into guided smart bombs. Russia has sold military equipment to Iran before, including several air defense systems that Iran has deployed to protect its internationally condemned nuclear facilities.

But both the jets and the JDAM weapons are a serious concern for Israel. Iran acquiring enhanced warplanes is a direct threat to Israel, but defense officials expressed concern that JDAM gives Saudi Arabia the ability to strike installations in southern Israel. "We do not have a way to defend ourselves against this weapon," a senior Defense Ministry official said, concerned that the weapons could fall into the hands of Islamic extremists. It is a valid concern: Hamas now has millions of dollars in weapons that were supplied to the PLO by U.S.-backed initiatives specifically intended to oppose Hamas.

The Russian deal with Iran cannot proceed without the tacit approval of Europe: Some of the Su-30's systems are French products. According to *debfkfile*, however, President Sarkozy is unlikely to oppose the deal because of his current diplomatic outreach to the Arab world.

So an arms race will continue in the most volatile region in the world, and Russia will provide weapons to the leader who supports al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas—and who has made his plans for holy war public knowledge.

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#### Sukhoi Su-30 Multi-Role Flanker

Role: interceptor, airborne command, multi-role fighter

Builder: Sukhoi, KnAAPO, IAIA (former IAPO), HAL (license production)

Variants: Su-30 (Su-27PU), Su-30I, Su-30K, Su-30KI, Su-30KN, Su-30M, Su-30MK, Su-30MKI, Su-30MKM, Su-30MKK, Su-30MK2, Su-30MK2V, Su-30MKV, Su-30MK3 see also Flanker variants list

Operators: Russia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Venezuela, Vietnam see also Flanker family operators list

#### Su-30: Two-Seat Interceptor & Command Post

The Su-27PU (later known as Su-30) was developed in the late 1980s as a long range interceptor and airborne command post for the Soviet Air Defense Forces. The two-seat Su-27UB combat trainer was selected as a basis for this variant because it had the performance of a single-seat Su-27 and the benefits of having a two-men crew.

To adapt the Su-27UB to its new role the aircraft was fitted with an in-flight refuelling system to increase range and the aircraft's avionics were changed, fitting special communications and guidance equipment to command formation flights of single-seat Su-27 interceptors. The rear cockpit received a large CRT display which provides the formation leader with tactical information regarding targets and interceptors. The navigation and fly-by-wire systems were also upgraded.

Since series production of the Su-30 started in 1991, the first aircraft being test flown on 14 April 1992, only a handful have entered service with the Russian Air Force.

#### Su-30MK: Multi-Role Twin-Seater

In 1993 Sukhoi converted the first series produced Su-30 into a demonstrator to market the multi-role version designated Su-30MK. MK standing for *Modernizirovannyi Kommercheskiy* ('modified commercial') indicating that this new version was developed especially for the export market. Centerpoint of the new version would be an upgraded multirole fire control system, depending on the customer's requirements. The air-to-ground capability of the aircraft is effectively greatly enhanced and a large variety of new guided missiles and bombs were added to the armament options. For the air-to-air role, the new RVV-AE (R-77) medium-range active radar homing missile was added to the options.

#### Su-30K & Su-30MKI: India's Twin-Seater Flankers

The first customer for the multi-role Su-30MK was India. To meet the customer's demands the Su-30MKI variant was developed. The Su-30MKI differs substantially from the Su-30MK.

The new variant is fitted with canards and new thrust vector controlled (TVC) engines to boast the aircraft's manoeuvrability. The nozzles of the AL-31FP engines are able to vector up to 15 degrees in both vertical and lateral direction.

The Su-30MKI is fitted with the NIIP N011M multimode phased array radar, which is also the radar of the Su-35/37 advanced single-seaters. TheIRST system was replaced with an updated version - OLS-30. The head-up display and navigation systems were replaced with systems from the French manufacturer Sextant Avionique.

The first prototype Su-30MKI (Su-30I-1) was first flown on 1 July 1997, the second prototype on 23 April 1998. Both of these were converted from series produced Su-30s. The first batch of Su-30s for the Indian Air Force was however delivered in the spring of 1997. These were of the Su-30K type ('commercial' version of the basic Su-30), sometimes also designated Su-30MK since some limited upgrade work had been done. The Su-30K/MK fleet will be replaced by new Su-30MKI aircraft, with Russia buying back the Su-30Ks.

India's orders for the Su-30MKI count 32 aircraft produced by Irkut, 140 license-built by HAL, 18 Irkut produced Su-

30MKIs as Su-30K replacements, and an additional batch of 40 license-built aircraft is being considered. As of mid-2007, at least 50 Su-30MKIs including the first 32 produced by Irkut, are believed to have entered service.

See also Su-27 Operators: India

#### Su-30MCK: China's Multi-Role Twin-Seater

The Su-30MCK multi-role twin-seat fighter was developed for China. Like the Su-30MKI it has a twin-seat cockpit with modern multifunction displays and is equipped with an in-flight refuelling system. In addition to these updates, the aircraft is also fitted with the larger fins of the Su-35 design to accommodate more fuel. However it does not have the canards and TVC engines for super manoeuvrability. The aircraft carries the N001VE radar which is compatible with the RVV-AE missile. Like other Su-30MK derivatives it carries a wide range of air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons on 12 hardpoints. The take-off weight however has been increased to 38,000 kg by airframe and landing gear strengthening. This makes the Su-30MCK the only Su-27 derivative which is capable of both maximum payload and maximum fuel carriage.

In 1999 Sukhoi converted the T10PU-5 (first Su-30 prototype) into the first Su-30MCK, first flying on 9 May 1999. It was quickly followed on 19 May 1999 by the first production Su-30MCK '501' built by KnAAPO made its maiden flight. In the summer of 1999 another production Su-30MCK was rolled out, this aircraft carrying serial '502' was painted in similar colors as the Chinese Su-27SK/UBK fleet. Series production has begun of about 50 aircraft destined for the PLAAF. Follow up orders consist of the updated Su-30MK2 and Su-30MK3 specification (alternative designations are Su-30MCK2 and Su-30MCK3 respectively).

See also Su-27 Operators: China

#### Other Export Twin-Seaters

The multi-role two-seat Su-30MK variant are attractive candidates for many countries that are in the market for a fourth generation fighter. Indonesia followed India and China by obtaining two Su-30MCK variants. No official designation has been appointed to this variant. They are believed to be equivalent to the PLAAF Su-30MCK and/or Su-30MK2 variants. Earlier, Indonesia cancelled a contract for single-seat Su-30s (see below) because of monetary issues. The selection of the Su-30MK seems more to be an issue of having a modern combat-capable trainer, since Indonesia also obtained two single-seat Su-27SK in the same deal, than to have a multi-role two-seater. Indonesia plans to place a follow-up order of 6-8 aircraft to establish a full Flanker squadron, but the order is yet to be placed. It remains to be seen which variant will be chosen.

See also Su-27 Operators: Indonesia

Vietnam also placed an order for a slightly modified version of the Su-30MK2, reportedly designated Su-30MK2V and featuring upgraded communications suite and improved ejection seats. The four two-seat aircraft were delivered in November 2004.

See also Su-27 Operators: Vietnam

Malaysia signed a contract for 18 Su-30MKM fighters in 2003. The Su-30MKM is another multi-role Flanker variant based on the Su-30MKI, tailored to the customer's requirements with regards to its avionics suite. For example, Israeli-produced ECM systems as seen fitted on the Su-30MKI are replaced by Russian and South African systems. Two of Sukhoi's Su-30MKI pre-production aircraft (bort numbers 04 and 05) served as Su-30MKM prototypes. The Su-30MKMs are being manufactured at the Irkutsk Plant and the first two aircraft were delivered in April 2007, with all aircraft to have been delivered by 2008. The Su-30MKM proposal was pitted against the Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet. Malaysia opted to order the Su-30MKM first, but is still considering to buy Super Hornets and have a mixed fleet. Alternatively, additional Su-30MKMs may be ordered. Malaysia currently operates a mixed fighter fleet, with both the Russian MiG-29N Fulcrum and F/A-18D Hornet. RMAF officials were quick to counter early reports that the new Su-30MKM aircraft would replace the Fulcrums, saying that the MiG-29s will remain in service as a pure air defense fighter.

See also Su-27 Operators: Malaysia

In 2005, Thailand formally requested information for the possible acquisition of the Su-30 (probably for the two-seat multi-role Su-30MK). The Russian offer is believed to include a minimum of ten aircraft. Thailand is also reviewing advanced block F-16s and the Gripen. A Gripen deal seems unlikely, because Thailand prefers a barter deal, the reason why Thailand is now considering Russian fighters, despite it having been operating Western fighters thus far.

In 2006, Venezuela ordered 24 Su-30MK2 AMV (also known as Su-30MKV) multi-role Flankers with the first deliveries taking place in late 2006. The Su-30MKV is based on the Su-30MK2.

See Su-27 Operators: Venezuela for more information

#### Su-30KI: Multi-Role Single-Seat Su-30

KnAAPO started development of an upgrade programme for the single-seat Su-27SK in 1995, then designated Su-27SMK. The upgrade would improve range and combat effectiveness by making it multi-role. The first phase of this upgrade resulted in the Su-30KI single-seat tactical fighter in 1998. Based on the Su-27SK, it was fitted with IFR probe, satnav receiver, ILS/VOR navigation and landing systems, RVV-AE missile capability. The next phase implements new advanced avionics, computers, phased array and weapons.

The Su-30KI (No 40-02) prototype being converted from the Su-27SMK demonstrator, first flew on 28 June 1998. The

aircraft is painted in a grey-black-blue paintjob and first was revealed at the MAKS '99 international aerospace show. Earlier in 1997 Indonesia placed an order for 24 Su-30KI fighters, believed to be the same standard as the 'Su-30KI upgrade' although some sources say it was specifically developed for Indonesia. The order was cancelled.

#### Su-30KN: Multi-Role Upgrade

The Irkutsk Aircraft Industrial Association (IAIA), jointly with Sukhoi Design Bureau, "Russkaya Avionika" Design Bureau and Russia's Air Force developed an upgrade for operational two-seat fighters, the Su-27UB, Su-30 and Su-30K. The Su-30K prototype was upgraded to Su-30KN standard. The first phase of the upgrade enables the aircraft to operate guided ASM and bombs by adding a new mission computer, upgrading the N001 radar and weapons control system. The cockpit has been equipped with colour MFDs. It also adds to the RVV-AE (R-77) missile to its inventory. This first phase can be followed up by a second stage upgrade which enhances the air-to-air capabilities by replacing the slotted antenna with a phased-array antenna. Other suggested improvements include modern avionics and bigger MFDs.

It is only a matter of time before the next export variant of the Su-30 is announced.

#### Specification Su-30 (Su-27PU) Flanker

Powerplant: two 122.58 kN (27,550 lb st) Saturn Lyul'ka AL-31F afterburning turbofans

Dimensions: length 21.935m (72 ft 9 in) ; height 6.357m (21 ft 5 in); wing span 14.7m (48 ft)

Weights: empty 17700 kg (39,021 lb); Max Take-Off Weight 33000 kg (72,752 lb)

Performance: max level speed at high altitude Mach 2.0 or 2125 km/h (1,320 mph); at sea level 1400 km/h (870 mph); service ceiling 17,500m (57,410 ft)

Armament: one internal GSh-301 30mm cannon with 150 rounds; up to 8000 kg (17,637 lb) of ordnance carried on eight external hardpoints, including R-60, R-73, R-27, RVV-AE (R-77) AAMs, freefall and cluster bombs, unguided rockets, external fuel tanks and ECM pods.

#### Specification Su-30MKI Multi-Role Flanker

Powerplant: two 130 kN (29,400 lb st) Saturn Lyul'ka AL-31FP TVC afterburning turbofans

Dimensions: length 21.935m (72 ft 9 in) ; height 6.357m (21 ft 5 in); wing span 14.7m (48 ft)

Weights: empty 18400 kg (40,564 lb); Max Take-Off Weight 34000 kg (74,956 lb)

Performance: max level speed at high altitude Mach 2.0 or 2125 km/h (1,320 mph); at sea level 1400 km/h (870 mph); service ceiling 17,500m (57,410 ft)

Armament: one internal GSh-301 30mm cannon with 150 rounds; up to 8000 kg (17,637 lb) of ordnance carried on up to twelve external hardpoints, including R-60, R-73, R-27, RVV-AE (R-77) AAMs, freefall and cluster bombs, unguided rockets, external fuel tanks, guided bombs and air-to-surface missiles.

#### Specification Su-30MCK Multi-Role Flanker

Powerplant: two 122.58 kN (27,550 lb st) Saturn Lyul'ka AL-31F afterburning turbofans

Dimensions: length 21.935m (72 ft 9 in) ; height 6.43m (21 ft 5 in); wing span 14.7m (48 ft)

Weights: empty 18400 kg (40,564 lb); Max Take-Off Weight 38000 kg (83,775 lb)

Performance: max level speed at high altitude Mach 2.0 or 2125 km/h (1,320 mph); at sea level 1400 km/h (870 mph); service ceiling 17,500m (57,410 ft)

Armament: one internal GSh-301 30mm cannon with 150 rounds; up to 8000 kg (17,637 lb) of ordnance carried on up to twelve external hardpoints, including R-60, R-73, R-27, RVV-AE (R-77) AAMs, freefall and cluster bombs, unguided rockets, external fuel tanks, guided bombs and air-to-surface missiles.

Sources:

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