

Russia set to show off its first stealth fighter

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A new Russian twin-engine T-50 jet fighter lands at Zhukovsky airfield as it takes part in MAKS-2011, the International Aviation and Space Show, in Zhukovsky, outside Moscow, on August 14. Russia was due Tuesday to unveil its first stealth fighter, a T-50, to the public, lifting the curtain on a secret project designed to flood the market with cheaper versions of veteran US jets.

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The Sukhoi Tu-50, being developed jointly by Russia and India, made its maiden flight at a Far East air base on January 29, 2010 but is being presented to the public at the MAKS airshow outside Moscow for the first time.

Two [prototypes](#) of the single-seater fighter are expected to fly over the Zhukovsky air field in a show of Russian military confidence in the much-delayed project.

Russian officials said the final version of the jet will not be ready until the end of 2016. India was reported to be interested in up to 200 T-50 fighters for its air force while Russia was planning to order at least 150.

"The T-50 jet will provide the backbone not only of the Russian air force but also that of India," said Mikhail Pogosyan, president of the United Aircraft Corporation state aviation holding company.

"Russia's cooperation with India on this project will help it promote the fifth-generation jet on the foreign market," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Pogosyan as saying.

Pogosyan had previously voiced plans to develop up to 1,000 jets over the coming decades, while state television said Russia hoped to control up to a third of the stealth fighter market in the coming year.

India, Russia's biggest arms client, agreed to develop the project in tandem with Moscow during a December 2010 visit to New Delhi by President [Dmitry Medvedev](#).



New Russian twin-engine T-50 jet fighters fly over Zhukovsky airfield during MAKS-2011, the International Aviation and Space Show, in Zhukovsky, outside Moscow, on August 14. Russia was due Tuesday to unveil its first stealth fighter, a T-50, to the public, lifting the curtain on a secret project designed to flood the market with cheaper versions of veteran US jets.

The agreement put new life into a project that was first mooted in the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union identified a need to replace its existing Mig-29 and Su-27 [jets](#).

The first US prototype of a [stealth fighter](#) -- the F-22 Raptor -- emerged nearly two decades ago and Russia only awarded the development contract in 2003.

Russia's state media reports last year said up to \$10 billion was being poured into the jet's development but that the fighter would cost no more than \$100 million.

The US raptor sells at \$140 million a piece, a price tag that prompted Washington to order a halt in new jet purchases in 2009.

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