

Catch-22: How US-NATO Fighter Jet Deliveries Undermine Kiev Regime's Air Defense Capabilities

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A lot has been said about [the much-touted fighter jet deliveries to the Kiev regime forces](#) and how this would supposedly ["tip the balance of power" in its favor](#). However, the process has been [mired in controversy](#) and difficulties since the very beginning.

It includes everything from problems finding the countries willing to provide the jets to giving Ukrainian pilots enough training to make a difference while also accelerating the process as much as possible. The first obstacle was the language barrier. Of the 32 pilots sent to be trained on how to fly F-16s, [only eight spoke English proficiently enough to be able to attend lessons](#) and even they had to be given advanced courses on the usage of complex military nomenclature. [Even if it took the pilots less than six months to attain the desired proficiency](#), that was only enough for them to start basic training on how to fly the jet.

However, [being able to fly an aircraft is a far cry from being able to master its usage in combat](#), particularly against an opponent that not only has massive numerical advantage, [but is also decades ahead technologically](#). **Ukrainian pilots themselves admitted that their [Soviet-era Su-27s are superior to F-16s](#).**

The Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) operate significantly more advanced jets than the Su-27. In fact, even the modernized Russian Su-27SM3 is much more capable than its Ukrainian counterpart. There are also the newer Su-30SM and Su-30M2, to say nothing of the high-end fighter jets such as the MIG-31BM interceptor, [Su-35S](#) or the [latest Su-57](#). The last three are by far the most dangerous fighters of our age, as they've proven [far more capable than expected by Western military analysts](#) and observers, [with even the British military forced to admit it](#).

And yet, [this string of catch-22s](#) is not nearly the end of issues for the Neo-Nazi junta.

Namely, this time, another major problem with fighter jet deliveries from NATO members is not even directly connected to the aircraft themselves, but ground-based air defenses. **In essence, what this issue boils down to is the chronic lack of SAM (surface-to-air missile) systems.**

Despite losing a large chunk of the territory under its immediate control, the Kiev regime still has one of the largest land areas in Europe and [defending it all is simply impossible](#).

Thus, the Neo-Nazi junta is forced to improvise and prioritize, placing air defenses in the most important cities and oblasts (regions). This results in SAM units being spread thin and with extremely limited logistics, as the stockpile of Soviet-made missiles has effectively run out and the political West has nothing to replace them with.

However, this still doesn't tackle the more pressing issues that NATO wants resolved before any sort of fighter jet deliveries and that's **the question of air defenses for the airbases where the aircraft would be stationed.**

The Kiev regime started preparations to accommodate Western-made jets months ago, [including the effective militarization of existing civilian airports and infrastructure](#). In order to provide adequate security for these ad hoc airbases, additional air defense systems and units will need to be raised, set up and deployed. And yet, the Neo-Nazi junta has neither the human nor industrial resources to accomplish such a laborious task, [to say nothing of the financial dependence on its Western puppet masters](#). SAM systems operators have among [the highest casualty rates in the conflict](#), meaning that the soldiers aren't exactly racing to join such units.

Thus, the Kiev regime will simply have to sacrifice the protection of important administrative buildings, as well as military and energy infrastructure in order to provide air defense coverage for the new ad hoc airbases housing the Western-made jets. However, [even this can't be done very efficiently](#). Namely, the Soviet-era SAM systems cannot be readily replaced with US/NATO counterparts for the simple reason that the latter are too expensive, not to mention they have demonstrated no superior capabilities in comparison to Soviet systems. On the contrary, [most are even inferior, despite costing significantly more](#). The primary reason for this is that the Western (in reality mostly American) military doctrine focuses mainly on air superiority, [which gives air defenses a secondary role](#). In essence, it's sort of like an auxiliary force aiming to simply augment military aircraft.

This is in stark contrast to [the Soviet/Russian doctrine](#) that puts a lot of emphasis on ground-based air defenses that are designed to operate independently and even in situations where friendly fighter jets are able to provide little or no air cover whatsoever.

Still, this isn't where the problems for the Neo-Nazi junta end. In addition to regular long-range missiles and other precision-guided munitions (PGMs), the Russian military is increasingly using extended-range loitering munitions/kamikaze drones, [such as the now legendary ZALA "Lancet"](#). These drones have recently destroyed at least two aircraft parked on runways approximately 100 km away from the frontlines. This was considered effectively impossible, as the Kiev regime forces and their NATO overlords previously believed that the aforementioned drones were only limited to tactical combat situations.

Worse yet, the Neo-Nazi junta mostly lacks adequate defenses against such weapons. And just as [the Soviet-era Su-25 attack jet](#) and [MiG-29 fighter were destroyed while parked](#), the same could (or rather would) happen to US-made F-16s. Precisely this might be the reason why [Volodymyr Zelensky recently asked NATO to “lease” SAM systems](#). There’s simply no other way to protect the new militarized airfields without sacrificing something else. And this is without even getting into the aforementioned viability of old F-16s being used against modern Russian jets. What’s more, [Sweden has also offered its “Gripen” jets](#), which [I argued would happen well over a year ago](#). On paper, these fighters are somewhat more capable than F-16s, [but Sweden has a very unusual policy](#) of refusing to help a country that bought the jets from it if the said country is engaged in hostilities.

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