

Russian Aerospace Forces Failing in Ukraine? Moscow's "State of the Art" Su-57 Aircraft

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Even before the start of Moscow's counteroffensive against NATO aggression in Europe, Russia and its military were often denigrated and underestimated by the mainstream propaganda machine. This decades-old (or should we say centuries) practice has escalated dramatically since February 24 last year. The Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) are particularly targeted, [being presented as a supposed "failure"](#) despite obliterating most of the Kiev regime's air force in mere weeks. This is also illustrated by the Neo-Nazi junta's desperate pleas and so-called "begmanding" to get fighter jets from NATO, including the US-made F-16, [despite even the Ukrainian pilots themselves knowing they are vastly inferior to their own Soviet-era Su-27s](#).

*Russian VKS dominates the skies over Ukraine with its state-of-the-art Su-35S and superfast, high-flying MiG-31. However, what caught the attention of NATO is the usage of **Moscow's next-generation Su-57**, a platform that has essentially transcended the notion of so-called "fifth generation" aircraft. Being at the forefront of Russia's investment in aviation technology, the jet is one of the world's most advanced aircraft. Bristling with sensors, new advanced technologies and using the latest missiles and bombs, [Su-57 can truly be defined as an "overkill" against the vastly outmatched Kiev regime's air force](#). Its most important mission so far has been SEAD (suppression of enemy air defenses), most likely using Kh-59MK2 and Kh-31 cruise missiles, in addition to using its advanced electronic warfare capabilities.*

However, it should be noted that aircraft such as the Su-25 attack/CAS (close air support), Su-30 multirole and Su-34 strike jets are the "bread and butter" of Russian VKS operations in Ukraine, conducting the vast majority of missions. These have been at the center of a targeted mainstream propaganda machine campaign, aiming to underestimate their performance and capabilities. And yet, the UK Ministry of Defense is rather unconvinced, as it has "expressed concern" with Moscow's capabilities. [Back in early January, the UK MoD confirmed the reports](#) that Russian jets have managed to shoot down Kiev regime aircraft

from ranges exceeding 200 kilometers, including with platforms such as the Su-57.

The “Felon’s” (NATO reporting name for Su-57) sensor suite of six AESA (active electronically scanned array) radars and advancedIRST (infrared search and track) systems allow it to simultaneously track more targets over extreme ranges than any other fighter jet in the world. And while the VKS operates only a dozen serial Su-57s, these have been a major force multiplier. The UK military is rather worried that “Felon’s” numbers have more than tripled since 2021 and are further expected to swell to 24 aircraft this year. Combined with the Su-35S and MiG-31, the Su-57 is a deadly challenge for NATO, according to the aforementioned January 2023 assessment by UK MoD that reported the fighters were “launching long-range air-to-surface and air-to-air missiles into Ukraine since at least June 2022”.

The range of the missiles used by the aforementioned Russian fighter jets is considered a dangerous challenge for their NATO rivals. This is particularly true when it comes to the unrivaled R-37M hypersonic air-to-air missile with its staggering maximum engagement range of 400km. It is precisely this missile that was most likely used in the record-breaking 217 km shoot-down, fired by either Su-35S or Su-57. Other UK outlets, [such as The Conversation, have also reported](#) that the UK military confirmed this in mid-February, stating that “the Russian MiG-31 and Su-57 operating the R-37M long-range hypersonic missile have engaged Ukrainian aircraft at a range of over 200 km from the safety of Russian airspace”, reluctantly admitting just how hopelessly outclassed the Kiev regime forces are.

The performance of the Su-57 is of particular concern for NATO. Its usage in Ukraine already made it the first and only next-generation fighter jet to engage in high-intensity operations. Of course, unless we count [the decisive victory of the US Air Force F-22 “Raptor” over a Chinese weather balloon](#). However, in all seriousness, the USAF has operated fifth-generation aircraft for nearly 18 years, but it has never used them against advanced adversaries, as [its aggression against the world is nearly always conducted against mostly helpless opponents](#). Although the Su-57 was also delayed for several years before it entered service, the Russian military used this time to ensure that the jet was as close to full readiness as it could possibly be, which is further reinforced by its combat use in Syria years before it was officially inducted.

Engaging and easily neutralizing formidable targets such as the Su-27, which, as previously mentioned, far exceeds the capabilities of US-made F-16 fighters, is a clear indicator of just how dangerous Russian jets are. In the case of Su-57, it also shows that the jet is not limited to an initial operating capability (IOC), despite its small numbers and having been inducted into service only 2 years ago. This stands in stark contrast to the best US/NATO jets, such as the F-22, which took years to reach IOC. This lasted for nearly five years before “Raptor” reached FOC (full operational capability). The case of the F-35 is even worse, as the troubled jet is yet to reach even IOC despite being in service for almost eight years now and nearly a quarter of a century since it made its first flight.

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