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Russia Unveils Stealth Fighter Jet to Compete With F-35s

By AFP

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A prototype of Russia's new Sukhoi Checkmate Fighter. **Alexey Nikolsky / Pool / AFP**

Russia on Tuesday unveiled its new Sukhoi stealth fighter jet designed to compete with the US F-35 and capable of striking six targets simultaneously.

Dubbed "The Checkmate," the plane was first shown to a reportedly "pleased" President Vladimir Putin before the launch at a biennial airshow outside Moscow.

Reports first surfaced that the jet was being manufactured in May last year.

According to the launch video it was developed "in record time."

Few details had previously emerged about the plane that was developed by defense and technology giant Rostec and the state-controlled United Aircraft Corporation.

"Our task is for this plane to be offered en masse to customers starting from 2026," general

director of the United Aircraft Corporation, Yury Slyusar, said.

Rostec describes the aircraft as a fifth-generation light single-engine fighter jet that incorporates "innovative solutions" including artificial intelligence.

The jet can attack up to six targets simultaneously on land, air or sea, "even under conditions of strong electronic interference," the manufacturers said.

With a price tag of between $25-30 million (21-25 million euros), it will be able to carry drones and launch them during flights.

Slyusar said he expected nearly 300 orders in the next 15 years mainly from the Middle East, Asia and Latin America for a price "seven times lower" than the F-35.

He said plane is capable of destroying "fifth generation foreign aircraft" and "is designed to withstand the sixth generation systems that may appear in the coming decades."

An auto-pilot version is also being developed.

Slyusar said he believed Putin was "pleased" when he saw the plane.

Putin praised Russia's aviation industry as he unveiled the biennial MAKS air show earlier Tuesday.

"Russian aviation has great potential for development, and our aircraft industry continues to create new competitive aircraft," Putin said.

Putin has made investing in the army and developing new weaponry a priority over his two-decade rule.

Russia has boasted of developing several weapons that circumvent existing defense systems, including the Sarmat intercontinental missiles and Burevestnik cruise missiles.

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