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Russia is Working on a New Stealth Fighter

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But will it ever enter production?

Russia's RSK-MiG is working on a new lightweight fifth-generation stealth fighter to replace the Mikoyan MiG-29 and MiG-35 Fulcrum series fighters.

Called the *Liogkiy Mnogofunktsionalniy Frontovoi Samolyet* (LMFS)—or Light Multi-Function Frontal Aircraft in English—United Aircraft Corporation is developing the new aircraft out of its own funds, reports aviation journalist Piotr Butowski in the French-language trade journal *Air & Cosmos*.

According to a posting on the BMPD blog [3]—a product of the Moscow-based Center for the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies—the LMFS will use a canard configuration reminiscent of the now-defunct Mikoyan Project 1.44 design, which was developed in the late 1980s as the Soviet Union's answer to the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor.

The aircraft will likely have an empty weight of roughly 33,000lbs and a maximum takeoff weight of 55,000lbs. The aircraft will be equipped with internal weapons bays and advanced avionics—assuming it ever reaches fruition.

As currently envisioned, the new fighter will be equipped with a pair of the Klimov VK-10M afterburning turbofans—which are advanced derivatives of the MiG-29-series' RD-33 powerplant—rated at 22,000lb thrust each. That should enable the aircraft to reach speeds of between Mach 1.8 and Mach 2.0 with a range of 2485 miles when configured with external droptanks.

It is possible that Mikoyan may revise the design into a single-engine configuration if the PAK-FA's next-generation *izdeliye* 30 engines reach a suitable level of maturity in time. There are few details available about the *izdeliye* 30 engines, but the new powerplant is expected to deliver 24,054lbs dry thrust and 39,566lbs [4] of afterburning thrust.

Only time will tell if Russia and RSK-MiG can shepherd the LMFS into production. Developing a fifth-generation fighter is a long and expensive endeavor as the Sukhoi is discovering with its T-50 PAK-FA air superiority aircraft.