

# Sukhoi plans to fly foreplane-equipped two-seat Su-30MK

DOUGLAS BARRIE/LONDON

SUKHOI EXPECTS to fly a foreplane-equipped derivative of its basic two-seat Su-30 in the next few months, according to senior managers at the Irkutsk manufacturing plant, where the prototype is being built.

The canard design was first associated with the Su-27K and Su-27M. Sukhoi also claims that the Su-30MK will be fitted with thrust-vector control and, potentially, a phased-array radar.

Irkutsk officials suggest that the canard Su-30MK will complement the thrust-vectoring Su-27M prototype. This aircraft, number 711, has been dubbed the Su-37, although it is not known whether the Russian air force has the funding to support a production order. It is also unclear what relationship the Su-37 has to the Su-35, as Sukhoi has previously called the Su-27M.

The canard Su-30MK project may have been at least partially funded by the Indian air force. India and Russia have agreed in prin-



On view as a model at Farnborough, the real thing could make its debut soon

ciple for New Delhi to receive up to 40 Su-30MKs, in two batches.

Delivery timescales will dictate which model of the Su-30MK India initially receives. It has been suggested that aircraft in the first batch will have a similar configuration to that of the initial Su-30MK, powered by Lyulka/Saturn AL-31F engines rather than AL-37FUs, as the thrust-vectoring variant of the engine is designated.

The Indian air force has also approached Russian radar-design house NIIP about acquiring the N-011 phased-array radar now in development. The N-011 is in-

tended for derivatives of the Su-27M and also for Mikoyan's moribund fifth-generation fighter. Competing Russian radar designer Phazotron also continues to offer alternative designs for these aircraft, sparking speculation as to whether the NIIP programme has encountered funding or technical problems.

If Sukhoi is to fit the Su-30MK with foreplanes and thrust vectoring, it will also need to include the digital flight-control system and associated cockpit systems which are now being test-flown on aircraft 711. □

## Israel equips Apache attack helicopters with Hellfire 2s

THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE has begun to arm its McDonnell Douglas AH-64 Apache attack helicopters with Lockheed Martin Hellfire 2 anti-tank missiles. The air force is the first foreign customer for the improved

missiles, which have been ordered so far only by the US Army and Marine Corps.

The Israeli air force already operates earlier versions of the weapon. The Hellfire 2 has improved flight-control and homing

systems, in addition to an enhanced warhead. Israel has been using the Hellfire air-to-surface missiles in several attacks which have recently carried out against *Hizbulab* guerilla centres located in southern Lebanon. □

## Swedish defence unit takes first upgraded Saab 105 jet trainer

THE SWEDISH DEFENCE Materiel Administration, FMV, has taken delivery of the first re-engined Saab 105 jet trainer. The aircraft, carrying the Swedish air force designation SK60, has new Williams Rolls FJ44 engines.

A test aircraft, used by Saab Military Aircraft, has also been delivered to FMV for further testing as part of a modification programme scheduled to continue through to 1998, covering 105 of the aircraft. Nine will be delivered by Saab this year. The Swedish air force Flight Training School at Ljungbyhed is also involved in the work.

The new twin-engined Saab 105 is believed to be 14% more fuel efficient and to require less maintenance than its Turbomeca Aubisque-powered predecessor.

The Saab 105 was first flown in 1963 and initial deliveries took place in 1965. Some 150 aircraft were ordered by Sweden. The upgrade is expected to keep the aircraft operating in training, attack, reconnaissance and liaison roles well beyond the year 2010. □

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### ■ HORNET BUILD-UP

McDonnell Douglas has flown the fifth F-18E/F. Aircraft E5, a single-seater, is the first of two avionics and weapon-system testbeds in the seven-aircraft flight-test programme.

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