

# Russian Air Force doctrine and OOB

## Russian Doctrine

The Russian air force is a giant in numbers, but with limited capabilities. They missed something more than a decade compared to the western counterparts in terms of development, and they are in the way of restructuring the internal organisation, and upgrading many airframes.

### Defensive Posture

Russian air command is aware of their inability to take the initiative against western air force for the reason we are going to cover in this document. They will rely on playing a defensive strategy, using a very strong and wide SAM coverage as their home territory. It's very unlikely for the Russian air force will take frontal air to air engagements with equal numbers, preferring to rely on an asymmetric doctrine.

This means their operations will be reactive, to delay or counter-attack any blue movements. We should expect great numbers of airframe scrambled on our strikes, hit and run tactics with pop up attacks, or sitting in the very inner side of umbrella offered by SAMs sites.

They will fight as much as possible on their conditions, or not fight us at all, unless for desperate cases.

### Command and Control

The Russian system is more rigid, but faster, and simpler. The advantage is spending less time planning, getting there quickly with firepower and mass, having momentum, and sticking to how you trained to fight. Inflexibility also has its down side, as forces could quickly execute a plan that results in disaster. That said, the Russian approach is not robotic, simply a different way of doing business. In an environment where situational awareness is substantially degraded, and communications unreliable, this approach might work better than one that depends on a lot of command and control technologies for coordination and situational awareness.

Russian Air Force has a very limited if not absent inter-agency coordination. Ground forces and Air Defence forces have limited means to cooperate with the Air Force, and different Districts cannot operate together on high tempo operations.

This is due to organisation design, command structures, lack of specific training and limited technology for the ground forces.

The main cooperation between the different agency is through big operations that are planned by a central command, through a wider period of time. Such operations can happen far in between and just with a good C&C structure in places, but they can deploy great numbers on such occasions.

## **Readiness**

On a regimental level, we may expect a good readiness on the number of airframes they can deploy, around 70% - 80% of the actual numbers, with the remaining airframe in maintenance.

On a strategic level, new squadrons can be assigned to the North Caucasus Military District in a matter of days for the high readiness squadrons in other districts, and several other weeks for the new reserves.

## **Noncontact Warfare**

This is where the Russian forces can hurt us.

With the rise of Russian GLONASS satellite network, they can direct long range attack on fixed position with operational-tactical missiles and cruise missiles. Their number in the theatre is unknown. Airports are high value target for them, since they don't need to use actionable intelligence to know when to strike.

The ghost of the soviet-era long range bombers is still a very much present threat for the navy in the black sea. The Russian air force can deploy Tu22 Backfire and Tu95 Bombers from different districts outside this theatre to engage our CV Task force

## **Reconnaissance**

This is the Achille's heel of the Russian airforce.

They have limited means, and airframes to gather intelligence.

For ground operations, they have specially fitted Su24 with soviet-era sensors and tactics.

They also lack in numbers for EAW and AWACS planes for air operations, and they rely heavily on ground EW radars or GCI to control the air space.

The poor inter-agency cooperation then definitely hinders any ability to have a constant flow of information, and this translates in greater latency in any reactions.

This means that quicker and smaller operations are for them harder to counter, while great strikes and packages that take time to gather and prepare, are more inclined to face a swarming opposition.

## **Mission types capability**

This is an analysis on the different missions the Russian air force can perform

### **Night Operations**

Almost none.

Even the most advanced airframes at their disposal have very limited if no ability to conduct operations at night, and a very little amount of guided munitions.

This also means that intercepts will be conducted by higher altitudes by fighters mostly guided by GCI, and the ability to use terrain to sneak up on blue operations is almost impossible.

### **CAP**

Despite being actually capable, CAP missions will be not done as much, due to the known inferiority on frontal approaches and the defensive posture. Most likely we will see CAP zones just on high value targets to defend, and the only reason for that is to delay blue forces until greater numbers will scramble on position.

If the Russian command decides to put the foot forward and launch a strike mission, it is more likely that the fighters will take an Escort mission.

### **Sweep**

This mission will be the common for their air command. Their fighters will use the number advantage to quickly overcome our forces, with speed and firepower, using as much cover as possible given by the terrain.

### **Strike - Bombing**

This kind of mission will be rather limited for the Russian air command.

Despite having good numbers of attack aircraft, their inability to receive and digest a quick and constant flow of informations, means that they will be more likely to attack fixed target, like logistics as roads and bridges.

They can actually prepare and perform an attack against blue ground forces, if those forces are big and slow enough to be in the same area of operations as they were spotted several hours before.

## **CAS**

Unable.

The lack of specific training, inter agency poor cohesion, and the lack of specific equipment prohibits Russian airframes that could perform CAS missions to actually perform them.

## **SEAD / DEAD**

Capable through their weapon systems, but it was reported bad training on this kind of missions.

## **Anti-Ship**

Very much capable, and they prepared and trained for this kind of missions for decades. The Russian doctrine is to gather a large fleet of Long Range Bombers and have a coordinated strike at our naval Task Forces, with a large amount of Anti-Ship Missiles that saturates our defences.

## **AAR**

Capable, if the Russians want to place their weight forward, they have a great number of planes that can help to stretch their operational range.

## **Airlift / Transport**

Very Capable. They have a huge fleet of huge transport planes that can help the logistic across great distances.

## **Airborne Assault**

Despite being a separate branch with his internal organisation of the Airborne Infantry, we will consider their ability to perform airborne assault. Which is clearly positive.

They can deploy rapidly, and we may expect a move in the very first hours of any operations, if they want to take the initiative on the ground.

However this kind of mission will be unlikely in a less permissive theatre once it get heated.