

Putin Presents "Golden Deal" for Su-57 as India Rejects F-35 Offer



In a significant geopolitical development, India has reportedly declined a proposal from the United States to purchase F-35 fighter jets, instead prioritizing its "Make in India" defense initiative and strengthening its long-standing partnership with Russia. This decision, which followed the announcement of new tariffs on Indian goods by the Trump administration, has opened the door for Russia to present a compelling offer for its advanced Su-57 "Felon" stealth fighter.

According to Bloomberg reports, Indian officials conveyed their lack of interest in the F-35, emphasizing a preference for defense deals that include co-development and co-production within India. This stance aligns with New Delhi's strategy to reduce its reliance on foreign military equipment and build a robust indigenous defense manufacturing base. The US pitch for the F-35, a platform known for its cutting-edge stealth and data integration, was viewed as a costly, off-the-shelf purchase with limited scope for technology transfer.

Seizing the opportunity, Russia's state arms exporter, Rosoboronexport, has offered what it calls a "golden deal" for its Su-57E, the export variant of the Su-57. The Russian proposal reportedly includes full technology transfer and a joint production agreement, with assembly planned at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) facility in Nashik, which already produces Russia's Su-30MKI fighters. This would allow for a localization rate of up to 60% and the integration of Indian systems like the Astra air-to-air missile.

The Su-57, a twin-engine stealth fighter, is known for its super maneuverability and high-speed capabilities, with a top speed of Mach 2 and a greater range than the F-35. The Russian offer also includes a potential deal for the Su-35M multi-role fighter, which shares significant commonality with India's existing Su-30MKI fleet, offering a quicker solution to the Indian Air Force's urgent need to bolster its squadron strength. While the final decision remains pending, the Russian proposal appears to have strategically addressed India's core requirements for technology transfer and local production, positioning the Su-57 as a strong contender.