



Iran Unveils JDAMs?

OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic Republic of Iran prides itself on its indigenous military industries, which have allowed it to extend the lifetime of its various military platforms years after other countries retired their own. The Iranian air force, for example, continues to fly the F-14 more than a decade after the US Navy retired its inventory. The accompanying excerpted article, from a website affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), details both upgrades enabling Iran to begin flying long-impounded Sukhoi Su-22s and Iran's alleged development of a Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) guidance system.

The Su-22s to which the excerpted article refers were originally Iraqi Air Force jets which the Iraqi government flew into Iran in 1991 ahead of Operation Desert Storm. While the Iraqi government believed the Iranian government would ultimately return the planes, the Iranian government seized the Su-22s and other military and civilian aircraft which Iraqi pilots transferred, justifying its actions in the reparations Tehran demanded because of Iraq's 1980 invasion. That the IRGC's military industries managed to upgrade and get the decades-old Iraqi aircraft flying again is a testament to the ability of the Iranian government to manufacture spare parts for old aircraft, acquire parts from abroad, or to cannibalize some aircraft to repair others.

The Iranian claim to have developed JDAMs appears exaggerated. While Iran did reportedly develop GPS-guided UAVs (see: "Iran Joins Satellite-Guided Armed UAV Club," *OE Watch*, May 2016), a reverse image search of the photos (using TinEye.com) included in the *Mashregh News* article depicting the supposed JDAM determined that they are more than a decade old and not originally published in Iran. While the excerpted article itself leaves room for doubt, the falsification of photos allegedly taken at the Kish Air Show suggest, in this case, that the announced advance is more ambition than reality. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The image of the new bomb...greatly enhances the possibility of using a satellite-guided bomb.”

Source: “Ravanma-ye az yek Salah-e Jadid baraye Jangandeh Sukhoi-22-e Sepah/JDAM-e Irani bah Emkan Hadayet Mahavareha-ye Miamad (The Unveiling of a New Weapon for the IRGC's Sukhoi-22/Iranian JDAM comes with Satellite Guidance),” *Mashregh News*, 26 November 2018. <https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/914750/>

In August of this year, ten Sukhoi-22 attack aircraft were delivered to the IRGC after major repairs and upgrades to new systems. The Sukhoi-22 were uninvited guests that came to Iran, and these joined a number of other aircraft—Sukhoi-24's, MiG-29s, Mirage F-1s—that defense experts upgraded. Certainly, some of the fighters that came to our country in the early 1990s like the Sukhoi-24 and Mirage F-1 were operational and brought into service, but the SU-22s have not had the opportunity to fly for years, but in recent years, these fighters have been transferred into the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Air Force, and our domestic experts were successful with their reconstruction and optimization....

The Kish Exhibition and a New Weapon for the IRGC

But during the 2018 Kish Air Show, which was taking place from 26-29 November, published pictures suggests the presence of new bombs on the Sukhoi-22. But the appearance of the bombs, it looks like an American series, and both at the end of the bomb and at its front, are pods such as can be seen on JDAMs. Certainly, the front of the bomb resembled the Raad-301, but there isn't any report of an optics system or laser guidance. Therefore, the inertial and satellite hybrid navigation is greatly enhanced. Until today, Iran has not officially acknowledged about whether it has access to satellite-based systems, and both internal and external analyzes are based solely on speculation, but the image of the new bomb and in particular the position and the cover installed there, greatly enhances the possibility of using a satellite-guided bomb.

Of course, General [Amir Ali] Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC Air Force, in March 2016, gave an interview in which he spoke about a new generation of UAVs in which he said, “These UAVs have the ability to navigate via satellite” and UAVs now widely utilize satellite communications.... Perhaps our country has achieved or is on the verge of achieving some type of satellite navigation and control systems, in which case the defenses of the Islamic Republic will make a significant leap.



photo : Hossein Tahavari

Iran Airshow 2018 on Kish Island.

Source: Tasnim News, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/media/2018/11/27/1885498/iran-airshow-2018-underway-on-kish-island/photo/8>, CC 4.0.