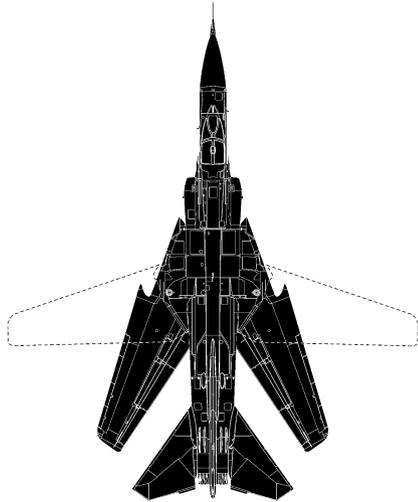


MiG-23 Flogger



The variable-wing MiG-23 was the most important Soviet fighter type for some 20 years. The Mikoyan-Gurevich design served as an interceptor with a ground attack capability, a fighter-bomber, and a trainer. The MiG-27 Flogger, basically the same design, was the dedicated ground attack version.

Design work began in the early 1960s. The single-engine MiG-23, with its swing-wing configuration, clearly borrowed from the US F-111 and F-4. Designed to replace the delta-wing MiG-21, the Flogger (its NATO designation) is deemed to be a Soviet third generation fighter. Its high-mounted wings have a dog tooth design and can be varied in sweep from 16 to 45 to 72 degrees. The wings have leading and trailing edge slats, with upper surface spoilers used in place of ailerons. The lines of the fuselage vary from model to model but are essentially conical except where engine

air intakes are located. The complex landing gear is designed to operate from rough fields. Over time, the MiG-23 incorporated successive new generations of radar and missiles.

The first Soviet MiG-23s entered operational service in 1971, while the last were not retired until 1998. The export Flogger engaged in many air battles, scoring some victories and suffering some significant losses. They were found in the inventories of Soviet allies around the world. Variants engaged in combat in Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Angola, and Syria. Most recently, the Libyan regime of Muammar Qaddafi has used them to attack rebel forces.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Soviet Air Force MiG-23UB—*Bort 01*—as it appeared in the mid-1990s when it was assigned to the 929th Flight Test Center, Vladimirovka AB, USSR.



In Brief

Designed, built by Mikoyan-Gurevich in the USSR ★ first flight April 10, 1967 ★ crew of one (two in trainer) ★ number built some 5,000 ★ **Specific to MiG-23MF:** one Tumansky R-29 turbojet engine ★ armament one 23 mm cannon, variety of missiles such as R-3R, R-3S, AA-7, AA-8, AA-11 ★ load several 1,100-lb bombs ★ max speed 1,550 mph ★ cruise speed 550 mph ★ max range 1,600 mi ★ weight (loaded) 44,315 lb ★ span 46 ft 9 in (forward), 26 ft 9 in (swept) ★ length 55 ft 2 in ★ height 14 ft 4 in.

Famous Fliers

Notables: G. E. Bulanov, A. V. Fedotov, N. N. Ivanov, A. I. Kapustin, G. M. Kurkai, V. B. Maksimenkov, V. E. Menitsky, V. F. Novikov, P. M. Ostapyenko, N. I. Petukhov, V. S. Prantsky-avitchus, E. M. Shastun, A. F. Sidorenko, O. G. Smirnov, E. N. Tchelstov. **USAF (YF-113):** Robert Bond, John Manclark, Herbert Carlisle. **Other:** El al-Masry, Syrian Air Force.

Interesting Facts

Used by USAF (YF-113) for test purposes ★ suffered heavy losses to Israeli Air Force in 1982 Bekaa Valley War; to USAF in 1991 Gulf War ★ crashed into a house in Belgium in 1989, killing one man ★ developed in parallel with a STOL variant ★ equipped with periscope in rear cockpit (trainer) for taxi, takeoff, approach, landing ★ designed to use beyond visual range missiles ★ built in more than 30 variants ★ used by 38 air arms ★ nicknamed “Rakshak” (Defender) in India Air Force and “Cheburashka” (a Russian cartoon character) by some Soviet pilots ★ flew in 1989 Gulf of Sidra fight with US Navy Tomcats, with two MiG-23s lost.



A frontal view of a MiG-23 with fully swept wings.