

**Russia's Warplanes: Russian-made  
Military Aircraft and Helicopters Today, Volume 1**

Piotr Butowski  
(Harpia Publishing - £41.99)  
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**Flashpoint China: Chinese Air Power and Regional Security**

Andreas Rupprecht  
(Harpia Publishing - £18.99)  
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The direction and scope of military developments in Russia and China is an area of much contemporary interest: both countries are in the midst of major military modernisation efforts and pursuing increasingly assertive foreign policies. This is evident in, for example, both Moscow and Beijing's efforts to enhance their respective airpower capabilities, including developing fifth generation combat aircraft and carrier airpower. Piotr Butowski's *Russia's Warplanes: Russian-made Military Aircraft and Helicopters Today, Volume 1* and Andreas Rupprecht's *Flashpoint China: Chinese Air Power and Regional Security* are timely books, providing valuable insights into their respective subjects.

*Russia's Warplanes: Russian-made Military Aircraft and Helicopters Today, Volume 1*, provides a detailed overview of the tactical combat aircraft, attack and transport helicopters, reconnaissance and surveillance, and special mission aircraft currently in-service with, or under development for the Russian armed forces. This includes well-known types such as the Sukhoi Su-27 *Flanker* and its derivatives, the MiG-29 *Fulcrum*, Mil Mi-8 *Hip* and Mil Mi-24 *Hind*, plus the developmental fifth-generation Sukhoi T-50: the book also includes less well-known types such as the Beriev A-60 airborne laser system, the Ilyushin Il-22 *Coot-B*, and the range of military balloons in Russian service. Moreover, a number of developmental (in cases, more aspirational) projects including unmanned air systems, replacement helicopters, and fifth-generation combat aircraft, are included: notably, Russia is pursuing *two* carrier-borne fixed-wing airborne early-warning and control aircraft projects. The author, Piotr Butowski, is a respected aviation journalist specialising particularly in Soviet and Russian aerospace subjects; *Russia's Warplanes* demonstrates the authors' knowledge of his subject. The book's four chapters are divided into sub-sections corresponding to the aircraft and helicopters covered: the author details the manufacturer, role, technical data (dimensions, performance, weights, avionics, etc.), armament, history, variants, production and operators of each type. Less well-defined projects, for example, those at the conceptual stage or where information is not available, are detailed to the extent possible. Butowski also provides an appendix covering aircraft design, scientific and production facilities in Russia.

In contrast, *Flashpoint China: Chinese Air Power and Regional Security* provides a strategic assessment of the nexus of the regional security environment around China, and China's evolving airpower. It is also a much shorter book: 77 pages (including the bibliography) compared to the 252 pages of *Russia's Warplanes*. The author, Andreas Rupprecht, is an aviation journalist and has written several books

on Chinese airpower, including *Modern Chinese Warplanes: Combat Aircraft and Units of the Chinese Air Force and Naval Aviation*. *Flashpoint China* is divided into five chapters, including the Introduction that sets the context for the subsequent analysis and includes a discussion of Chinese self-perception and the modernisation, structural and strategy changes underway in the Chinese armed forces. The book then examines the five theatre military commands that form the basis for the organisation of the People's Liberation Army Air Force: the Northern and Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western. Each chapter addresses relations with the neighbouring states in each theatre command, and discusses Chinese intentions and capabilities in that region. An order of battle for Chinese air forces assigned to the particular theatre command is included at the end of each chapter. In the chapter on the South China Sea however, Rupperecht refers to the Third UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 2009 providing the basis for the codification of the South China Sea: this is the only notable error in the book.

Both books demonstrate high production standards and include excellent photographs; *Flashpoint China* also includes maps relevant to each chapter, whilst *Russia's Warplanes* includes diagrams indicating the sensor fits of the some aircraft and helicopters discussed in the text. The quality of the text in both books is also good, with very few typos or errors. *Russia's Warplanes* and *Flashpoint China* will hold appeal for a broad audience: the former provides an excellent source of reference for those academically or professionally interested in Russian air systems, and the latter provides a timely discussion of Chinese airpower from a regional security perspective and includes a detailed bibliography. Both books are also accessible to the lay reader. *Russia's Warplanes: Russian-made Military Aircraft and Helicopters Today, Volume 1* (a second volume covering strategic bombers, maritime patrol, transport and air-to-air refuelling aircraft was published at the end of October 2016) and *Flashpoint China: Chinese Air Power and Regional Security* are well-written and produced books covering important subjects and would make recommended additions to any bookshelf.