

Light fighters remain an important part of the armed forces of many countries. These aircraft are actively involved in combat operations due to their maneuverability, affordable cost and ease of service. The expert of the heading about the military technologies of the Ferra.ru website Pavel Voronov told which fighters are now leading and why the once legendary MiGs have not fallen on their list.

Light fighters are not only about small weight or compact sizes. Their main advantage is a high maneuverability due to a light glider and a powerful engine. Such machines have a smaller load on the wing and high tendency, which allows them to perform complex maneuvers. However, with the development of technology, the emphasis has shifted to electronics: radars, long-range missiles and fire control systems have become key. Despite this, light fighters remain in demand due to their efficiency and ease of operation.

Russian aircraft, such as the MiG-29 and MiG-35, were considered advanced at one time, but today their design is outdated. The MiG-29 was a star of the 80s and 90s, setting records for maneuverability, but the absence of modern radars with an active phased antenna array (AFAR) and a weak combat load limit its capabilities. The MiG-35, a modernized version, also did not live up to expectations, losing tenders and not gaining widespread. The new Russian project Su-75 Checkmate promises to become one of the best in the class, but it is still under development and has not entered service.

**The first line of the rating is currently headed by the American F-35A.** This fifth-generation fighter is released by advanced electronics, powerful radars with Afar and high secrecy, which gives it an advantage in battle. The combat radius of 1080 km and a wide arsenal of high-precision missiles make it universal. However, the high cost of operation and the complexity of service remain serious shortcomings, especially for early models that quickly become obsolete.



Photography of the US Air Force from the sergeant master. Donald R. Allen

**In second place-F-16, pride of the US Air Force.** This aircraft became the standard of a light fighter due to reliability, good combat load (7800 kg) and high traction reinforcement (1.03). Numerous modifications allow the F-16 to remain relevant, although the combat radius without additional tanks is limited to 600 km, and the cost of new versions (about \$ 70 million) makes it less competitive compared to more modern analogues.



David Rachikovitz

**The third position is occupied by the Swedish JAS-39 Gripen.** This fighter is an example of the balance of characteristics. He is inexpensive in operation (\$ 4,700 per hour of flight), unpretentious to take -off stripes and is equipped with modern avionics. However, its traction reinforcement (0.97) is lower than that of competitors, and the lack of combat experience limits the assessment of its effectiveness. Gripen is ideal for countries with a limited budget and neutral policy.



Ministry of Defense - Lithuania

**The fourth place goes to the Chinese J-10.** Developed on the basis of the Israeli project, it uses the airbrushing scheme "Duck" and an engine copied from the Soviet Al-31FN. J-10C claims to be a 4 ++ generation thanks to the radar with AFAR and the combat load of 7600 kg. However, electronics still lags behind Western analogues, and the combat radius (800 km) remains average. China relies on the development of the fifth generation, so the J-10 is a temporary solution for updating the air park.



Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation

**The Indian Hal Tejas closes the five.** This aircraft was created to replace the outdated MiG-21, but became a long-term construction: more than 30 years passed from the idea in 1983 to adoption in 2015. TEJAS LEGOK (6560 kg) and is equipped with an Afar radar, but its combat radius (500 km) and traction (0.73-1,07) are left to be desired. Dependence on foreign components also limits its independence.



The Ministry of Defense of India

Light fighters continue to play a key role in modern Air Force. They are inferior to heavy cars in range and combat load, but win in maneuverability and economy.

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