

## **12 IAF aircrafts reach US to take part in 'Red Flag' exercise**

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**Washington:** After flying through Bahrain, Egypt, France, Portugal and Canada, 12 Indian Air Force aircraft, including the Russian origin Su30 MKI, reached the United States to take part in the prestigious Red Flag air exercise.

The planes, which arrived in Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska, will take part in the exercise starting on April 28 and will undertake war games along with NATO forces.

Four each of Sukhoi and deep penetration Jaguars, two C17 transport planes and two mid-air refuellers IL 78 travelled through Bahrain, Egypt, France, Portugal and Canada before finally reaching Alaska.

The air exercise, which will last till May 13, is seen as a complex and advanced network centric operation -- the toughest test for flying machines and men.

This is the second time that India is participating in such an exercise after 2008.

Due to high costs, the Indian Air Force had decided to take part in the exercise once every five years. It was scheduled to take part in the 2013 edition but the exercise was cancelled by the US following budget cuts.

According to an estimate, it will cost India over Rs. 100 crore. It will also see over 150 Indian Air Force personnel in action. "Crawl, walk and run" is the term used for the format of deployment for systematically increasing pace and scope of the exercise and combat maneuvers during 'Red Flag'.

The Red Flag would be the most complex aerial war game involving forces from India and the US that will also see Aerial Early Warning aircraft from NATO forces in action. Once again, India has refrained from taking its Aerial early warning aircraft for the overseas exercise.

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