

Stunning Show at Zhuhai 2018



The recently concluded biennial Zhuhai Airshow of 2018, held in southern China, has perhaps been the most impressive such event in recent times including as it did impressive performance by J-20 fifth gen fighters, awesome demonstration of the J-10B with thrust vector control (TVC) engines and also by large number of new drones, new radar systems, and much much more.

In late 2017, the J-10B prototype made its first flight with a TVC nozzle-equipped variant of the indigenous WS-10 engine. Just less than a year later, this was among the first such aerial performances, the aircraft demonstrating a spectacular selection of high alpha and post stall manoeuvres which rivaled Pugachev's cobra manoeuvre, the J-turn, and the 'falling leaf'.

The J-10B is arguably the first ever TVC-equipped, non-Russian and non-US aircraft to perform in this manner. China's willingness to display TVC technology in such confident and transparent manner is indicative not only of greater openness on behalf of the PLAAF itself, but also a

reflection of the stage that China's engine TVC development has reached, and maturity of the technology.

Whatever be the future of J-10s with TVC engines, Chinese fifth generation fighters such as the J-20 will definitely benefit from TVC technology. The enigmatic Yang Wei, also the J-20's designer, when asked if the TVC technology demonstrated on

the J-10B would have applications on the J-20, teasingly suggested that the J-20 had perhaps already integrated a TVC – engine.

Futuristic fighters, including the 'here and now' J-20 could certainly benefit from TVC technology as 'next gen' fighters could well delete additional control surfaces, become tailless as some sixth generation concepts have surfaced.



Pair of J-20s over Zhuhai