

China resurrects Soviet “sea monster”

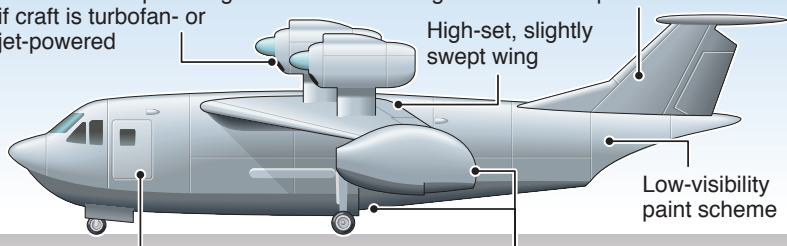
China appears to be developing a new ekranoplan, a type of aircraft inspired by Cold War-era Soviet technology that utilised “ground effect” to fly at very low altitudes over water

CHINESE EKRANOPLAN (GROUND EFFECT VEHICLE)

Approximately business jet size, may be sub-scale demonstrator

Propulsion: Four engine nacelles mounted on top of wing. Unclear if craft is turbofan- or jet-powered

Tail: Twin vertical stabilisers support large horizontal tailplane

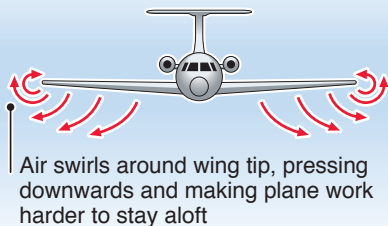


Cabin door: Large size suggests military transport role

Stepped hull and wingtip floats, similar to seaplane

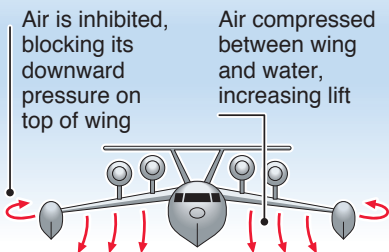
HOW GROUND EFFECT WORKS: Flying just above water can be more efficient and allow aircraft to stay below radar, while being much faster than ships

Higher altitude: No ground effect



Water surface

Close to surface: Ground effect comes into play



“Caspian Sea Monster”: Ground effect vehicles such as Lun-class ekranoplan (left) were developed by Soviet Union during Cold War but never widely adopted. Designed for high-speed transport and amphibious assault, they could reach speeds of up to 500km/h

