

# COMBINED ARMS



## Brigadier (retd) Gurmeet Kanwal feels that “Attack Helicopters should be Integral to the Army”

‘The Army has not fully grasped the value and appropriate employment of air power primarily because the Air Force itself has been ambivalent in its doctrines’.

*Jaswant Singh, former Defence, External Affairs and Finance Minister*

‘Air power dominates the battlefield and must be employed concentrated to achieve maximum synergy... In the inter-Services context, this eminently profound article of faith has been allowed to acquire an extended meaning of single-service ownership of all air assets’.

*General Shankar Roy chowdhury, former COAS*

### Acquisition of Attack Helicopters

In September 2015, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved the acquisition of 22 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and 15 CH-47 Chinook heavy lift helicopters from the United States (US) for approximately US\$ 2.5 billion. The contract signed at that time gave India

an option to buy 11 Apaches and four Chinooks in addition. It was reported in end-August 2017 that India had exercised the option and decided to acquire six additional Apaches.

While the first lot of 22 Apaches will go to the Indian Air Force (IAF) to replace its ageing Mi-35 attack helicopter fleet, the

six additional Apaches will go to the Army Aviation Corps. This move is in accordance with the UPA government’s decision to accept the army’s long-standing demand that attack helicopters should be integral to it. AK Antony, then Defence Minister, had directed that the next set of Apaches should be given to the army. The army is reported