

Evolving Facets of Aerospace Power

This conference is fitting tribute to one of the finest officers of the Indian Air Force, Wg Cdr KK Majumdar DFC & Bar. He has the achievement of being the first and only Indian pilot to have been awarded the DFC twice for his courage and daring leadership during World War II.

In the 20th century, air power matured to the extent that it started playing a decisive role in conventional conflict. The 38-day air campaign in the Gulf War, followed by only four days ground campaign was perhaps the best demonstration of air power's war winning capability. The present debate on procurement of aircraft or equipment displays a limited understanding on aerospace matters.

In our subcontinent, air power initially played a very nascent role post-independence during the Kashmir operations (1947-48) wherein the IAF, under strict rules of engagement, was permitted to carry out offensive actions, but first air-landed the 1 Sikh Regiment into the war zone. This timely action saved the Kashmir valley and thousands of innocent citizens from the brutality of the Pakistan-sponsored invaders.

In the following three wars against Pakistan, the IAF played a stellar role in defeating the enemy. In 1971, complete air superiority was achieved by the IAF over East Pakistan, permitting a free run to our ground forces (the Tangail paradrop and Meghna helilift are examples). Thus, the liberation of Bangladesh was achieved within only 14 days.

In 1999, during the Kargil War, our Effects-Based Operations (EBO) targeting of key headquarters (HQ) and logistics dumps evicted the enemy from his well-entrenched defensive positions on our side of the Line of Control (LoC). This war was fought not just on the ground but also in the media wherein embedded journalists tilted the perceptions in our favour. This was the first televised war in the Indian subcontinent. The social media meanwhile is already a tool of propaganda and widely used by terrorists and non-state actors to plan attacks and spread discontent within the forces.

In future conflicts, our adversaries will pose challenges not just in conventional but



Address by Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa at the 'Jumbo Majumdar International Conference' organised by the Centre for Air Power Studies at New Delhi

