

Solving the transport fleet fiasco of IAF



IAF C-17 Globemaster III seen taking off

The Cabinet Committee on Security led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 September 2021 cleared the proposal for procuring 56 Airbus C-295MW transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force. The long pending deal worth approximately USD 3 billion will replace the ageing IAF fleet of Avro HS-748 transport aircraft. In a major 'Make in India' step, the procurement will see 16 aircraft being delivered in flyaway condition from Spain within 48 months of signing of the contract while the remaining 40 aircraft will be manufactured in India by the Tata Consortium within 10 years of signing the contract. This will partially solve India's problem with its transport fleet.

The Indian Air Force is currently world's fourth largest. It operates various transport platforms as well. Along with the HS-748, it operates the Dornier-228, An-32, C-130J, Il-76 and C-17 as well. The transport fleet has a perfect blend of light, medium and heavy platforms to meet various requirements. But as India's strength grows, the need for far larger fleet and versatile systems grows as well. The best example in recent times



HS-748 Avro will gradually be replaced by the C-295

to understand the importance of transport aircraft can be explored from recent Kabul crisis as aftermath of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. As thousands of Afghans and foreign workers rushed to the Hamid Karzai International Airport to flee the Taliban, countries around the world sent their

transport aircraft for quick evacuation. A US Air Force C-17A callsign 871 is reported to have evacuated 823 people in one go! Though it must be noted, for the evacuation special arrangements were done for utilisation of maximum interior space, still the sheer capability of the platform can't be denied.