



**TALK AT BROCHURE RELEASE 17 OCT 2013**  
**CAPS/CII CONFERENCE ON ENERGISING INDIAN AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

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The brochure release event is a curtain raiser to the annual aerospace conference that CAPS, and CII, in association with the IAF, have been organizing for many years now. This will be the 8th such conference and that by itself is a measure of how well it has been received in the past. The audience here today is encouraging indeed and we look forward to another successful conference.

The theme for this year's conference is "Energizing Indian Aerospace Industry: Challenges and Opportunities". The theme clearly indicates that there are many challenges and we can take that as a given. At the same time, opportunities are the other side of the coin, if only we can grasp them. These issues, amongst others, will be discussed on 06/07 Nov 2013. All here today and more are most welcome. The outline programme is given in the brochure. The Conference will be a good opportunity for the users and the makers of equipment and weapon systems to exchange views and discuss on what the future holds.

I am sure that all present here will join me in welcoming our special guest this afternoon, Air Mshl Sukumar, the Deputy Chief of Air Staff, who has kindly agreed to release the brochure and give the keynote address. We are obliged to you for finding the time to be with us today. The DCAS is the head of the Plans branch of the IAF that deals with planning

and procurements and, hopefully, will give us a clearer picture of what is expected of Aerospace Industry and maybe his prescription to bring about greater indigenization. We look forward to your address.

Undoubtedly, all of us want the Indian Aerospace Industry to flourish. The 2013 Defence Procurement Policy unequivocally supports this contention. The moot point is what next. Will Governmental hold on the Indian Aerospace Sector be relaxed? Will the Govt show greater confidence in the private sector and give it the necessary fillip? Will our MSMEs be given the desired boost? Again, in spite of our intentions and best efforts, we will have to continue to import equipment and weapon systems to a considerable extent and for many years to come. Hence the presence of foreign Aerospace Industry here today is both welcome and necessary. The important question is how can foreign Aerospace Industry support the Indian Industry now and in the future? Is offsets the only way forward? Is a long term commitment feasible or even desirable? These are some of the issues that merit discussion.

Much has been written about the problems plaguing the Indian Aerospace Industry. Yet there are few countries in the world where the market for aerospace products is as great. It should be our hope that this market will become a captive market for Indian Industry but out of choice and not by imposition. Users will always want the best available and our industry must do its mite to meet the requirements.

Let me borrow a terminology that is gaining relevance in exploitation of air power. It is Time Critical Targeting or TCT. TCT implies the ability to make use of even narrow windows of opportunity to hit desired targets accurately and effectively. The bywords are what is required, desired effectiveness and timeliness. These bywords are equally applicable to our aerospace industry. Hence what is most required of our industry is quality of output and timeliness. Is that too much to ask? If that is the road we should take, how do we carry out an audit of our progress? These questions also demand answers.

Time bound activities spell efficiency and commitment. Our LCA project does not measure up to the requirement and nor does the finalization of the MMRCA contract. Whilst

we could argue that the LCA project has been delayed because of untried complexities, there is little excuse for the delay in the MMRCA contract finalization. The accepted needs of the IAF and other users of aerospace power must be met in earnest as these are the requirements of national security. Similar sentiments can be expressed about the PC 7 or its Indian counterpart to be. The issues are self explanatory. Little needs to be added. Our priorities have to be debated, established and then honoured by all the players.

Just a word or two on the importance of Research and Development. Technology is now the great push and impacts operational thought and plans. It is becoming a major determinant of power. Technological progress impacts all fields but, to my mind, three areas that will, inter alia, have a great impact are miniaturization, data processing and advances in communications. Let me give an example of the impact of miniaturization. Nano technology is now a household word but it is interesting to visualize its impact. Recently, I read in an American journal(APSJ) that Michael Phelps, arguably the best swimmer of all time, won his 7th Gold medal at the 2008 Olympics by a whisker—by one hundredth of a second. A really close finish indeed. In comparison, GPS works in nanotechnology. One nanosecond error translates to an error of one foot on the ground but one hundredth of a second error, what Michael Phelps won by, will translate to 1894 miles. This is just an illustration to show the likely impact of higher technology and can be, I believe, applicable in all fields. Technology is now the determinant and must be given its due importance. Allocation of resources for Research and Development is no longer a good thing but an essential requirement whose import can only grow with time.

Finally, on a note of some levity, Sydney J Harris, a Chicago journalist once said “Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better”. I ask is this the dilemma that the Indian Aerospace Industry is facing?