

# LAUNCH OF AIR POWER JOURNAL (IN RETROSPECT)

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The Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) was initially housed in a DDA flat. It had limited financial resources, but was powered by the indefatigable zeal of Air Cmde Jasjit Singh. During briefings, Air Cmde Jasjit Singh often



Group Captain **D.C. Bakshi** VSM (Retd) was the Managing Editor of Air Power Journal at the time of its launch in 2004.

expressed his keenness to start a professional journal exclusively for 'air' and 'space'. However, shortage of funds came in the way: we looked for patrons for grants, advertisements and sponsorships. Shri Mukerjee and myself, two of his 'obedient' staff members provided a helping hand, while Air Cmde Jasjit Singh continued to labour hard to fulfill his cherished dream of setting up CAPS. A dedicated professional journal was the corollary of the project which he pursued with the same vigour.

Shri J.R. Nanda, Chief Executive Officer of AVI-OIL, known for his patronage for defence cause (s) came to our rescue when he offered to insert quarterly advertisements in the journal. This would enable us to make an initial breakthrough. I was appointed the first Managing Editor of *Air Power Journal*.

During a brief function at India International Centre, on October 4, 2009, Air Cmde Jasjit Singh, at his wittiest, stated that "it was his crazy dream during the last 30 years to have a journal entirely dedicated to air power. This dream has finally seen its fruition." He further added, "It is probably the only journal of its kind in East/West of Suez".

The release of the *Journal* by Marshal of the Air Force, Arjan Singh, DFC, was of a special significance, since it was dedicated to the legendary hero of the Indian skies, Air Mshl Subroto Mukerjee.

Shri M.K. Rasgotra (former Foreign Secretary) who had chaired the session, cited the dominant role of air power in Kosovo, the two Gulf wars, and in Afghanistan. During these conflicts, air power had played a decisive role and it was proved in ample measure that no war could be won without it.

Shri Inder Malhotra, a profound scholar of politico-military affairs, gave interesting insights from a wide canvas of 30 years of media coverage. Air Chief Mshl S. Krishnaswamy, the then Chief of the Air Staff, had graced the occasion. The distinguished members of the audience who applauded the launch of the *Journal* included Lt. Gen. A.M. Vohra (Retd), Adm Hiranandani (Retd), Air Mshl Vinod Patney (Retd) and Brig Gurmeet Kanwal.

It was on this occasion that Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh, DFC, briefly touched upon the subject of "non-participation" (in an offensive

role) of the Indian Air Force (IAF) during the 1962 India-China War. He exhorted the Centre to undertake critical 'stock-taking' of such episodes for benefit in the future. Citing the centuries old *mantra* of gaining an edge against the enemy, the Marshal advised, "One should not only know one's own strengths and weaknesses but those of the enemy as well." Academic inputs by scholars and strategists through *Air Power Journal* were expected to provide sound back-ups.

Former Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Mshl O.P. Mehra, the patron of CAPS, was of the firm opinion that the R&D sector needed strengthening; he strongly recommended setting-up an Aeronautical Commission to deal with the entire gamut of the aviation sector.

On October 4, 2013, *Air Power Journal* enters the 10<sup>th</sup> year of its publication. May this enduring legacy of Air Cmde Jasjit Singh continue for years!!