

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*AIR POWER* journal completes seven years of publication with this issue. And by the time this issue gets to you, the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) would have completed ten years since it was established as an independent think-tank and later brought under a registered Trust. We have come a long way from the early modest and humble beginnings; but we are even more conscious that there is a longer distance to cover and greater heights to climb in the self-assigned task of undertaking professional military education in the future. Our work in the past and our expectations for the future would not have been possible but for the seminal support we have received, and hope to receive in the future, from the Ministry of Defence, the armed forces in general and the Indian Air Force in particular.

A decade has also gone by with the war in Afghanistan showing little sign of coming to an end. It is true that Osama bin Laden was located by US Special Forces and killed by the SEALs in the middle of Pakistan's cantonment of Abbotabad, a stone's throw away from the Pakistan Army Academy, where he was living in peace, directing radical *jihad* across the world; but the shooting down of a US helicopter carrying members of the SEAL operation of May 2, 2011, that shot and killed Osama, symbolises the complexities and the nature of the radical *jihadi* violence that afflicts AF-PAK. Afghanistan continues to be a troubled country, with perpetual violence, for the past nearly two generations. The wars, like the one in Iraq, also displayed the enormous capabilities of modern air power and

proved to be the instrument of choice in what has come to be known as 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare.

But we need to be careful in drawing the correct lessons. The US and its allies don't have to bother about an adversary that comes anywhere near their military and aerospace capabilities. Their lessons, therefore, even for future wars, are being drawn by their experiences of the past three decades, from the 1991 Gulf War for the liberation of Kuwait, to Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, etc. But, in our security environment, where a two-front military modernisation is furiously under way and the strategic nexus between the two is deepening in spite of the People's Republic of China (PRC) facing *jihadi* ethno-centric violence in Xinjiang, exported from its all-weather friend Pakistan, we need to be careful and objective in drawing our lessons and isolating those we should not accept based on their implications for our security and strategic environment.