



## EDITOR'S NOTE

**E**nduring peace, economic growth, and developments in the socio-economic sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure would always remain at the core of a developing nation's security environment. The ongoing economic growth has boosted the aspirations and expectations of the 1.1 billion plus population of this country, and securing the safety and overall welfare of our people would, thus, demand, a peaceful and stable security environment. Towards this objective, the denial and deterrence dividends provided by professional, well trained and appropriately equipped armed forces would make an enormous contribution.

The defence budget for the financial year 2008-09 at Rs. 105,600 crore has witnessed a 10 percent increase from the Rs. 96,000 crore allocation in 2007-08, by and large conforming to the average annual growth rate witnessed in the past decade. What is noticeable, however, is that for the first time after the India-China War of 1962, the defence budget as a percentage of GDP is likely to slide below 2 per cent this year. With increased allocations being made under the capital budget, the defence procurement procedures need skillful management, as these would have a direct impact on force modernisation, in addition to steering the defence offsets policy in the appropriate direction. Inability to fully utilise the funds under the capital budget has been a matter of concern for several years now. This is an area that requires more focussed attention of not only the armed forces, but the Ministry of Defence as well. In addition, due attention also needs to be paid towards establishing clear linkages between defence planning and budgeting. The existing loopholes in this vital area need to be plugged through suitably restructured mechanisms and procedures.

History tells us that intellectual assets and inputs have played a crucial role in statecraft and the profession of arms, when both were comparatively simple. Aristotle and Alexander, Chanakya and Maurya, Sun Tzu and the Chinese

emperors are all examples of repositories of knowledge who would analyse the events and actions in proximity to the decision-makers and share their assessment with them. Times have changed, but the principle that the leadership requires deep knowledge and intellectual rigour, based on an empirical understanding of facts, analyses of issues and data, remains valid. Our leaders of tomorrow would require quality education as a lifelong learning process. All these attributes would build aerospace leaders for the future and develop leaders into critical thinkers who would think and learn faster than the adversary, and through that process, dominate future operations. Managing the quality of military manpower, thus, remains a major challenge in the 21st century, when economic liberalisation and globalisation provide economically more lucrative options. The recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission for central government employees are likely to be implemented in the current financial year. This has raised many expectations, particularly amongst armed forces personnel. Whilst an improved pay-perks package would enhance the quality of life, a lot more needs to be done, starting from reviewing engagement periods, training, a second career option and, most importantly, looking into the individual commitments within our societal paradigm, for stability of tenures for children's education, ageing parents and housing facilities.

The constantly shifting trends in the nature of war and growing possibilities of out-of-country contingencies or operations in a coalition environment constantly point towards more synergy in joint operations. Evolving a joint capability requirement for India's armed forces would remain an important issue in the coming decades. Integration of force multipliers and use of information technology to achieve such integration for higher and shared situational awareness pose new challenges. Efficiency of technology driven clinical operations would depend upon the coordination and cooperation amongst the three Services, in identifying the individual Service missions and objectives and also the areas of interfacing objectives in attaining the overall aim. The global/regional strategic environment, military capacity building and force employment doctrines need to be revisited. An effective joint doctrine, a long-term joint military net assessment, interoperable C4I2 framework and joint intelligence and logistics support

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are indeed the need of the hour.

In contemporary power equations across the globe, and also because of the technological revolution in all spheres of military operations, achieving “Command of the Air” has become a very complex issue. In literal terms, it may only be possible for the US to achieve such command of the air, against forces with negligible air power resources. Although, even in those conditions, it may not come out unscathed. The world is in the midst of complex, ambiguous, asymmetric challenges and threats. To be able to successfully deal with these challenges in the current environment, our political leadership requires the widest range of military options and the highest degree of military power in all its forms. Hence, even as the relative equation of power among nations changes, there is more evidence to suggest that aerospace power has become the military instrument of choice in an uncertain world. What air power offers to the political leadership is the ability to reach far into the conflict zone from the outside and above, from the skies. This makes aerospace power an instrument of choice for the political leadership because it enables them to control the processes of escalation as well as the degree of engagement-disengagement while being able to apply coercive and punitive power. General Giulio Douhet’s concept of “Command of the Air” may have been limited to Italy, nevertheless it has travelled, as far as China, which proclaims the military doctrine of achieving command of the air in its future military conflicts.