

EDITOR'S NOTE

Even though the evolution of air power is not very old in the historical context, there are enduring lessons that remind us of the perils of not learning from past conflicts. The utilisation of air power has grown to become an indispensable tool of comprehensive national power, however the doctrinal precepts and the context continue to have enduring relevance. Unfettered employment of air power, as witnessed in the recent and ongoing conflicts, would not necessarily lead to conflict termination and may turn out to be counter-productive. With an uneasy truce in place, the United States-Iran conflict continues to drag on, while the Russia-Ukraine conflict in its fourth year does not yet display an appetite for termination.

Air power when used in an asymmetric conflict does not necessarily yield the expected dividends. **“Employment of Air Power in the Israel-Hamas Conflict and the Asymmetric Warfare Paradigm”** explores this issue in detail. Hamas has been able to challenge the very potent and professional Israeli Air Force through its subterranean network and urban warfare, saturating Israeli air defence systems and using unmanned aerial systems. The article examines the Israeli response and reveals the strengths and limitations of air power in modern asymmetric warfare.

The use of social media has become ubiquitous in any conflict. **“Social Media in Military Conflicts: Emerging Trends and Lessons”** takes a comprehensive look at the information warfare domain against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor, the Israel-Hamas conflict and the Russia-Ukraine War. Social media, having become an important tool in the cognitive domain also functions effectively as a cog in the digital kill chain. The article explores the multi-faceted effects of this in not only influencing public opinion but also shaping narratives that may in reality be far from being true.

The aircraft carrier brought about a paradigm change in the employment of air power ever since its first use during World War II. India is one of the very few countries in the world that not only operates aircraft carriers but has also displayed the ability to design and build them as well. **“Third Aircraft Carrier: A Rethink”** examines the need of a third aircraft carrier for the Indian Navy through a cost and vulnerability analysis. It also covers alternative operationally viable and cost-effective means to ensure that India’s military capability is not found wanting in the present geopolitical construct.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in warfare continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Analysed through data, algorithms and computational power, the access to energy in ensuring this is more often than not ignored. **“Assessing the Energy Implications of Artificial Intelligence and Examining the Case for Nuclear Power”** examines the critical requirement of energy for sustaining long-term AI development and the feasibility of using nuclear energy to meet the requirement. The challenging constraints of climate change, safety, cost and policy implications have been looked at before arriving at the way forward.

“Navigating AI Hallucinations and Regulations: The Indian Challenge in Air Combat” explores the challenges of using AI technology in air warfare. There are associated risks that may lead to tactical decision errors, the absence of regulatory frameworks for military AI creates its own challenges, and development of trustworthy AI is work in progress. The global context and competitive dynamics and India’s AI integration challenge have all been examined in detail in this interesting piece.

The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the new playground for great power rivalry. States in the region have traditionally been hedging their bets between the United States and China to secure their national interest. ‘Wedging’, a strategy aimed at coalition disruption, is increasingly being used by key states in the region against the United States’ allies and partners. **“The Great Game Recast: Navigating Hedging and Wedging in the Competitive Indo-Pacific”** explores the strategies of hedging as risk mitigation and wedging

as coalition disruption in the competitive landscape of the Indo-Pacific as practised by the great powers and regional states.

In the 'Book Review' section, "**AI Snake Oil: What Artificial Intelligence Can Do, What it Can't and How to Tell the Difference**" by Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor has been analysed. The book offers a fundamental analysis of AI for the lay reader and serves as a good initial introduction to artificial intelligence and its applications.

This edition of the *Air Power Journal* once again brings a varied and cross-sectional overview of issues concerning air power, military strategy and geopolitical rivalry in the contemporary scenario. The quest for knowledge is never ending and our endeavour has been to satiate the same for our readers through this journal. It is nostalgic for me as this also happens to be the tenth and last editorial from my pen as I sign off from the Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies (CAPSS) on June 30, 2026, after an immensely satisfying journey. Your support has been vital in this endeavour and I am sure it will continue in the years ahead.

Happy Reading!



Air Vice Marshal **Anil Golani**

Director General

Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies