PREFACE

During the twentieth century, increasingly costly and destructive wars have been a frequent instrument of settling disputes between nations. "War is an act of mass violence," says Clausewitz, "intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will"; and elsewhere, he emphasizes the continuity of violence with other political methods. "'War', he writes,' is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse, with a mixture of other means'.

Quincy Wright, in his seminal work, A Study of War finds that some writers on modern strategy still believe that they can draw lessons from the campaigns of Hannibal, Caesar, Fredrick, and Napoleoan, but others believe that there has been a change in basic strategic principles. The primary aim, according to them, is no longer to disarm the enemy by destroying or capturing his fortifications and armed forces, but to evade them and to strike directly at the government, economic nerve centres, and morale of the enemy. Clausewitz also has mentioned the importance of hitting at the "'centre of gravity'" of the opponent to put him off balance and achieve a quick victory.
The advent of air power and the evolution of war in the 'third dimension', has made it possible to strike directly and effectively at the government and the political, economic, and military nerve centres of the opponent, causing unacceptable damage at the 'centre of gravity'; modern air power, equipped with new technology weapons, and aircraft and satellite based battle support systems, has engendered a new kind of warfare in which it has become the predominant instrument of force projection. This fundamental transformation in the very nature of warfare due to new technology air power requires a comprehensive study and analysis to discover its impact on doctrine and strategy of war fighting and the organisational infrastructure of the armed forces and the higher management of defence.

Impact of new technology, according to Quincy Wright, is maximum on weapons, less on organisation and operations, and uncertain on policy and strategy. The experience, however, of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Lebanese conflict of 1982, and the Gulf War of 1991, and the lessons drawn from them, appear to demand a re-evaluation of doctrine, strategies, and organisation for assuring a cost-effective employment of new technology air power. The present study is an attempt in that direction.
The study, however, does not deal with the practical aspects of air war fighting, but tries to evolve a conceptual framework, based on the lessons of recent wars in which air power played a predominant role. Therefore, it attempts to integrate the creative stream of thought on air warfare from its early beginnings during the Great War of 1914-1918, through the period between the two world wars, the Second World War, and the wars since 1946.

The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War which was the first conflict in the modern history of warfare when intensive use was made of new technology weapons like guided missiles, precision-guided munitions, electronic warfare systems, and satellite-based communications and surveillance, has been chosen for in-depth study and analysis of the impact of new technology on the use of air power. The Lebanese conflict of 1982 has been briefly analysed for the integrated employment of new technology air power combat and combat support systems in the air war over Bekaa Valley between Israel and Syria.

During the period of study, which was to be limited to the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973, the Gulf War of 1991 between Iraq and the Multi-National Forces (MNF) led by the United States, very dramatically, and more effectively than
ever before, demonstrated the impact of modern air power on the outcome of the war: total victory with minimum losses. Therefore, the analysis of the lessons of the Gulf War of 1991 is included in the last chapter which also contains some thoughts on the relevance of a new technology air force to meet threats to India's security.

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