

## **Conceptualising an Air Diplomacy Framework for Air Strategy of Small Air Forces to Strengthen Foreign Policy Aspirations: Sri Lankan Perspective and Way Forward**

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The term air diplomacy first came into limelight in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century amidst the advent of air power. The air diplomacy is the employment of air power elements in support of the foreign policy. The study explored how an air diplomacy framework could be incorporated into the air strategy with object to strengthen country's foreign policy aspirations; further, it is benefitted to bolster the tangible and non-tangible capabilities of the SLAF. The contemporary world has seen regional/global air forces have been attempting to leverage air power in quest of protecting national interests and human capital beyond its seashores. Although, it is observed that Sri Lanka has not been exploiting the air diplomacy to the fullest extent, in quest of attaining foreign policy aspirations irrespective of the governments in power. Hence, it is imperative to bridge this gap and employ the air diplomacy in order to attain desired ends while supporting the regional stability/cooperation. Researchers have derived the conceptual framework based on the review of theoretical studies. The exploratory study accustomed with inductive approach and interpretivism research philosophy while conducted as a qualitative study. Eventually, researchers have developed an air diplomacy framework which could, schematically be imbedded into SLAF's air strategy, whilst aiming to support country's foreign policy aspirations, subsequent to recognised current government's foreign policy imperatives, where the air diplomacy could be employed. The two spheres of SLAF's engagements within the air diplomacy spectrum explored as kinetic and non-kinetic engagements.

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