

## **Indian State Sponsored Terrorism and Illegal Interventions: A Case Study of South Asia**

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### **Abstract**

Terrorism has been posing a serious threat to the national security of countries since the dawn of the 21st century. Political instability, economic disparity and social injustice in a state cause displeasure among masses. The South Asian countries, owing to ethno-religious divisions, economic backwardness and political instability, are prone to internal conflicts and tensions. India, being the powerful neighbour, has been exploiting these fault lines of its neighbouring states to extract various benefits since its inception. India, through its Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), has long been meddling into the internal affairs of several neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives etc. through either forming or supporting various terrorist groups. This paper examines the Indian intervention into the domestic affairs of other countries through RAW's covert operations in the light of Kautilya's *The Arthashastra*. It is argued that larger countries should not be allowed to oppress the smaller states by orchestrating problems and then appearing as the only conflict resolvers to fulfil their hegemonic objectives. Finally, the paper argues that if corrective measures are not taken to curb the illicit activities of RAW, the regional peace and stability will remain endangered.

### **Keywords**

Terrorism, RAW, India, Pakistan, Ethnic Violence, Hindutva, Regional Security,

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## **Introduction**

Terrorism has long been used worldwide as a policy by several actors to achieve their political, religious or other related objectives. Generally, the state is the major relief provider to the public from this chronic illness. Unfortunately, in the recent past, state-sponsored terrorism has become a major threat to other states. Although it was already prevalent and practised in the previous decades, the necessary attention has been given to this menace after 9/11. (Kirchner, 2016) When the intelligence agencies worldwide have been playing an undeniable role in the counter-terrorism operations, agencies like Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) are playing havoc with peace and stability of the neighbouring nations through their covert terrorist activities. The RAW, since its establishment in 1968, has been meddling into the internal affairs of not only India but also multiple other countries (Naazer, 2018a). The principle of non-intervention into the domestic affairs of other countries based on a state's right to sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence is a well-settled part of International Law. An entire section of the 'Friendly Relations Declaration' lays principles concerning the duties of a state not interfere in the matters as within the domestic jurisdiction of another state, in accordance with the UN Charter. (McWhinney, 1965) The UN charter maintains that no state has the right to intervene, either directly or indirectly, in the internal or external affairs of any state. Therefore, all kinds of interference including the military intervention, or threat to intervene against a state or its political, economic and cultural elements are illegal and condemned by the UN charter. It is not allowed to any state to use or encourage the use of any kind of measures to coerce another state to secure any kind of advantage through the subordination of other's sovereign rights. Moreover, In 1965, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a 'Declaration on the Inadmissibility of the Intervention and Interference in the Domestic Affairs of States' (UNGA resolution 2131 (XX), 1965).

While under International Law and the UN Charter, a member state cannot intervene into the domestic matters of another state, India through RAW, following the offensive realist precepts of Kautilya has been

destabilizing the regional countries to become the undisputed leader of the region. Indian history of espionage and interference in the regional countries is very old. Even, during the Chandragupta Maurya's reign, a system of espionage was used to gain information about the neighbouring antagonist states. (Hali, 2009) India's history of espionage in the neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, is equally daunting in modern times. Kautilya's *The Arthashastra* dealt with the state affairs, state expansion and the way to control the neighbouring states-by coercion or direct use of force. India still believes in Kautilya's philosophy especially in its policy to deal with the immediate neighbouring countries.

RAW has always been an active and vital actor in the policymaking apparatus of India. However, its external role has been disruptive, destructive and destabilizing. Under the auspicious of Indira Gandhi's Indira Doctrine, unabated powers were given to this agency in the late 1970s to undertake systematically crafted covert criminal terrorist activities in the neighbouring countries whom India considered its principal regional protagonists. (Khan, 2008) Moreover, the chief of RAW is directly answerable to only the Prime Minister of India which enables RAW to conduct its operations freely without much resistance. The research conducted for this paper aimed at testing the hypothesis that the purpose of RAW in its external operations is to destabilize the regional states to maintain its hegemony in the region. It further analysed that whether RAW is used to target and misuse political dissent, ethnic divisions, socio-cultural fault-lines, economic backwardness and religious sectarianism in the target country to foment instability, terrorism and sabotage as its operational strategy. It is discovered through various case studies that India, by creating a conducive environment for military intervention through RAW's well-structured destructive activities, intervened into other countries' internal affairs to stage-manage the future events as per its will. Although, RAW tried to keep its hand hidden in these affairs yet its destructive role was unearthed by multiple accounts. This paper provides a detailed historical description of RAW's covert terrorist operations in its neighbouring

countries especially Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

The definitions of terrorism and international terrorism along with the conditions of state-sponsorship of terrorism are explained at the start of the paper. Having explained the history and structure of RAW, details of its covert terrorist operations in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives are discussed. The paper explores that India either oppresses the smaller states by orchestrating problems or exploit the already existing fault lines in a state and then appears as the only conflict resolver to fulfil its own hegemonic objectives. Furthermore, it is argued that India will continue its destructive role in the region to become an undisputed regional leader and maintain its hegemony. Finally, it is suggested that if corrective measures are not taken at the regional and global level to curb the illicit activities of RAW, the regional peace and stability will be endangered.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Change is the only constant thing in this world. The geo-political dynamics of the nation-states in this world are constantly changing. International relations are based on the fundamental principle of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states. In modern times, the relations between countries become adverse if these fundamental principles are not followed. However, Kautilya was the first political thinker and military strategist who advocated interference in domestic affairs of the neighbouring states. Kautilya propounded in his theory that an immediate neighbouring state is an enemy, while, a neighbour's neighbour is a friend. (Rangarajan, 1987) Moreover, Kautilya argued that moral principles are of no use in interstate relations as each nation sought power maximization for gaining influence over others. Furthermore, he propagated that a friend or alliance is good as long as it protects one's self-interest. Kautilya described in his *The Arthashastra* that alliances are very important in the acquisition of territory and expansion of the state. He advocated that a king should 'create good relations with the extended neighbours and wage a war for peace with its immediate neighbouring states' (Kangle, 1992). Hence, as per the Kautilya's approach, the

immediate neighbours of a state are to be considered its enemies and the extended neighbours should be considered as friends. Though this approach seems vague in the modern era, India still follows Kautilyan precepts to create instability in the neighbouring countries through espionage for power maximization. John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism also explains the Indian hegemonic designs and power maximization aspirations even by utilizing illegal, offensive, and destructive means (Mearsheimer, 2001).

### **Terrorism, International Terrorism and State-Sponsorship of Terrorism**

Although the term 'terrorism' is being extensively used at the national and international level, it still lacks a comprehensive and universally accepted definition. The nature of terrorism is complex and controversial. A great many criminal acts can be considered as terrorist acts depending upon the definition of terrorism. However, there are multiple distinctions between a terrorist act and other criminal acts. For example, the focus, participants and victims of terrorism are different than that of other criminal acts. Efforts are being made to define the term 'terrorism' even before the creation of the United Nations (Golder & Williams, 2004). Since 1970, almost 13 different conventions have been adopted related to terrorism under the UN (Conte, 2010). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004) has defined terrorism (UNSCR-1566, 2004) as:

all criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature.

Moreover, the crime of terrorism has been defined by the European Council of Common Position of December 27, 2001, under article 3 (1) as,

For the purpose of this Common Position, ‘terrorist act’ shall mean one of the following intentional acts, which, given its nature or its context, may seriously damage a country or an international organization, as defined as an offence under national law, where committed with the aim of:

- i. Seriously intimidating a population, or
- ii. Unduly compelling a Government or an international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, or
- iii. Seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization:
  - a. Attacks upon a person's life which may cause death;
  - b. Attacks upon the physical integrity of a person;
  - c. Kidnapping or hostage taking;
  - d. Causing extensive destruction to a Government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property, likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss;
  - e. Seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport;
  - f. Manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of weapons, explosives or of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, as well as research into, and development of, biological and chemical weapons;
  - g. Release of dangerous substances, or causing fires, explosions or floods the effect of which is to endanger human life;
  - h. Interfering with or disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource, the effect of which is to endanger human life;
  - i. Threatening to commit any of the acts listed under (a) to (h);
  - j. Directing a terrorist group;

k. Participating in the activities of a terrorist group, including by supplying information or material resources, or by funding its activities in any way, with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the group.

For the purposes of this paragraph, ‘terrorist group’ shall mean a structured group of more than two persons, established over a period of time and acting in concert to commit terrorist acts. ‘Structured group’ means a group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of a terrorist act and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure.

The US State Department has defined international terrorism as “terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.” (US State Department, 2009). Moreover, those countries which are supporting acts of terrorism are the sponsors of terrorism. How do states support and sponsor terrorism? The state terrorism or state-sponsored terrorism is referred to a “state that made its resources—financial, political, training, and intelligence—available for terrorists to create political and economic instability in another country” (Deckers, 1995). State-sponsored terrorism is one of the most dangerous forms of terrorism as it exists in multiple forms: civil, intelligence, policy decisions, and military (Cohan, 2002) A state can support terrorism by providing funds, logistics, safe havens and government services to the terrorists or terrorist organizations. (Kirchner, 2016) In financial support, a state can either allow fundraising to a terrorist organization in its territory or can directly handover millions of dollars to the organization to carry out certain illicit missions for the sponsoring state. In the category of government services, the sponsoring state can provide goods and services to the terrorist organizations including passports, intelligence gathering, political or public support and essential military training to carry out an operation. In the logistics category, all kinds of logistical support are included such as weapons, transportation etc. Finally, a state can also support terrorists by providing safe havens to the terrorists in its own country or a friendly country.

## **An Overview of RAW's History, Structure, Motives and Regional Strategy**

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Indian intelligence agency, was established in 1968. Before 1968, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) of India was responsible for its external espionage activities. However, after facing a dejected defeat in Indo-China Border War of 1962, Indian leadership decided to establish a separate external intelligence agency. Maj. Gen. Vijay Kumar Singh wrote in his book about Indian intelligence failure in the Indo-China War, "our intelligence failed to detect Chinese build-up for the attack" (Singh, 2007). Although RAW was established mainly against China and Pakistan yet in the last few decades its mandate has been exponentially increased both at home and abroad. As per the available accessible information, the organization was started with only 250 agents and \$400,000. Although RAW's staffing and budgeting are kept secret by Indian leadership, as per an estimation by the Federation of American Scientists, RAW had almost 10,000 personnel and \$ 145 million budget in 2000. Interestingly, unlike many other intelligence agencies such as CIA or MI-16, RAW directly reports to the Prime Minister Office (PMO) instead of the Ministry of Defence. As it is answerable to the Prime Minister only (who also mostly blackmailed by RAW), therefore, its dark failures and destructive activities were never taken to the Indian Parliamentary floor for accountability. Its chief is a designated secretary of the Cabinet Secretariat, PMO. Along with the trained agents of the RAW, many officers from other service departments also serve on deputation as per the need and requirement (Bajoria, 2008).

A former RAW official, Raman, wrote in his book that RAW was given two major prioritized tasks after its formation; intelligence gathering about China and Pakistan and covert (illegal) operation in East Pakistan (Raman, 2012). The illegal role of the RAW in the disintegration of Pakistan is an evident example of RAW's malign interests and destructive intentions in the region. Following the offensive realist policy, RAW wants to become the regional power by destabilizing the neighbouring countries. Over the past few decades, the scope of the RAW's activities has been increased including to limit the military aid to

Pakistan mostly by EU, USA, China etc. and monitoring the political and military developments in the regional countries. Although, conventionally, RAW is the declared external intelligence-gathering agency of India, yet, practically, it remains involved in almost all internal matter of India ranging from rigging elections, political assassinations, staging hijackings, abetting religious hatred, promoting the Hindutva objective of the RSS and advancing the personal interests of the Prime Minister (R., 1978).

In the post-independence era, the Indian leaders consider themselves the inheritors of 'the British' in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. India continued the imperial policies towards the regional countries which remained in the British colony (Gupta, Gupta & Handa, 1989). India neither allowed any neighbouring state to pursue a policy (defence or foreign) that could be against the Indian interests nor allowed any unfriendly power to enhance its influence in the region (Khosla, 1999). India considers South Asia as a single strategic unit and itself as its self-proclaimed custodian of security and stability (Abdus Sabur, 2003). To maintain its hegemonic position in South Asia and fulfil imperial interests, India signed multiple agreements with the neighbouring states such as with Bhutan in 1949, with Nepal in 1950, with Bangladesh in 1972 and Sri Lanka in 1987. Under these agreements, India maintained its indirect control over the foreign and defence policies of Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India offered such a treaty to Pakistan in 1949 and again in 1981 which the later rejected. In addition to that, when the things were not manageable through these agreements, India started intervening into the internal affairs of the neighbouring states to achieve its imperial designs. (Naazer, 2018a).

Although, South Asian countries share a lot many commonalities such as civilization, traditions and historical experiences which are important for regional integration yet it is one of the 'most dissimilar regions on the planet'. South Asian states being politically, culturally, religiously, ideologically and ethnically diverse are naturally prone to interstate conflicts and crisis. Owing to religious and ideological differences, ethnic and socio-cultural sensitivities, economic disparity and exploitation, a sense of dissatisfaction and deprivation with the

existing political systems abets the citizenry to revolt against the state (Khan, 1991). Indubitably, internal conflicts and tensions have challenged the national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of South Asian countries for several times. Being the strong and opportunistic ‘bad neighbour’, India, through RAW, either exploits and inflates the already existing internal problems of the neighbouring states or plants such as interstate problems to destabilize the other states (Gonsalves, 2006). “Bad neighbours are a big problem, much bigger than conventional thinking would lead us to believe” (Brown, 1966). RAW is used to provide its multi-dimensional support to non-state actors such as armed rebels, insurgents, militant groups and terrorist organizations in the neighbouring states to fulfil Indian imperial objectives (Naazer, 2018a).

### **The Covert Terrorist Operations of RAW in the Neighbouring States**

This section elucidates the involvement of RAW in the neighbouring states. RAW’s covert terrorist activities in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives are unearthed in the following section.

#### **Pakistan**

Pakistan is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country. Owing to the dearth of visionary leadership since the demise of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, multiple wars and continuous foreign involvement into its internal affairs, neither its institutions were strengthened nor people empowered. Perception of political marginalization, economic depravity and cultural alienation was abetted among the people of East Pakistan by the leadership of that unit to hide their failures. RAW has also played a significant role to abet such feelings among masses (Kumar Sen, 2000). Such perceptions were also developed in various units of West Pakistan. Pakistan’s ruling elite failed to address the problems of masses. Ultimately, nationalist and separatist leaders started to exploit the fault lines in their benefit. The same happened in East Pakistan and Baluchistan. In both cases, RAW supported the insurgents-cum-terrorists to carry out terrorist activities in

Pakistan. RAW has been engaged in disinformation campaigns, espionage and sabotage against Pakistan (Kumar Sen, 2000). In its disruptive activities, RAW not only enjoy the backing of successive Indian governments but also receive a handsome amount of pay and perks. John Pike, the author of a report published by the Federation of American Scientists, unveils the Indian clandestine disruptive warfare against Pakistan. RAW, along with the Indian army and other intelligence agencies, had played a destructive role in the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971 (Islam, 1989). RAW not only provided secret information to the Indian army and policymakers but also trained and armed Mukti Bahini. Indubitably, there is a very strong secret relationship between RAW and KHAD, the Afghan intelligence agency, since 1968. In the 1980s, the trilateral relationship among RAW, KHAD and Soviet evolved and strengthened against Pakistan (Bajoria, 2008). In the 1980s, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America along with other states, were fighting a proxy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. India alleged that Pakistan is covertly supporting the separatist movements in India especially the Khalistan Movement. On these allegations, RAW started terrorist operations inside Pakistan under Counter Intelligence Team-X and Counter-Intelligence Team-J. Siddiqi also maintains the same stance that these two groups were responsible for terrorist operations inside Pakistan in the 1980s (Bajoria, 2008). Swami also says, “low-grade but steady campaign of bombings in major Pakistani cities, notably Karachi and Lahore” was carried by RAW.

RAW has also materially supported the Seraiki Movement in Punjab by providing financial support and organizing International Seraiki Conference in New Delhi in November 1993 (Kumar Sen, 2000). According to a report by the FAS, almost 35, 000 RAW agents have entered Pakistan through different channels between 1983-93 (Bajoria, 2008). As per the reports, ‘as many as 40 terrorist training camps at Rajasthan, East Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India are run by the RAW’s Special Service Bureau. RAW, throughout the Afghan War, planned and executed terrorist activities inside Pakistan to deter Pakistan from supporting Afghan Mujahedeen (Sen, 2000).

The roots of cross-border terrorism in South Asia can be traced back to 1960s at the time of the establishment of Mukti Bahini by India. Mukti Bahini was a terrorist militia of Eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh) which was responsible for communal violence in East Pakistan. The current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has publicly acknowledged the role of India in the establishment of Mukti Bahini during his visit to Bangladesh in 2015. Modi said that the disintegration of Pakistan was a desire of every Indian and that is why the Indian forces not only trained and armed Mukti Bahini but also fought along with them for the division of Pakistan (The News, 2015b). The then Foreign Office spokesperson of Pakistan, Qādī M. Khalilullah says, “Indian politicians not only indulge in actions that are in violation of the United Nations' Charter but also take pride in recalling their interference in the internal affairs of other states” (Khaleej Times, 2015). The fact that India recruited, trained and armed the guerrillas for Mukti Bahini is also evident from the declassified documents of the National Archives of the United States of America which contains the details of communication between the US State Department and its ambassadors in Pakistan and India (Zain, 2016). According to a communication between the US ambassador and the US State Department on May 26, 1971, “For some time now India has been systematically interfering in internal affairs of Pakistan with a clear aim of jeopardizing Pakistan’s territorial integrity” (Zain, 2016). It is claimed in another telegraph of October 7, 1971, by the US ambassador to the State Department that Indian forces had injected almost 60,000-armed guerrilla Mukti Bahini fighters into Eastern Pakistan. Additionally, the US envoy in New Delhi, while informing the US Secretary of State on December 16, 1971, about Pakistan’s surrender declared Gen. Aurora as “Indian General commanding joint Indian Army / Mukti Bahini operations.”

According to the summary of a meeting between the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Treasury Department, Howard Mendelsohn, along with GRPO officers and Treasury analysts and the senior officials from the UAE's State Security Department (SSD) and Dubai's General Department of State Security (GDSS) to discuss suspected Taliban-related financial activity in the UAE on December 15-16, 2009, India, through its spy agency RAW,

was backing (providing funds and weapons) the terrorist organization Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Pashtun separatists to promote terrorism and chaos in Pakistan. The summary of the meeting was released by WikiLeaks on January 07, 2010 (WikiLeaks, 2010).

Furthermore, the US Special Representative James Dobbins, in an interview with BBC in Washington, acknowledged that Pakistan's concerns vis-à-vis Indian destructive role in Afghanistan were not groundless (Upadhyay, 2013; Dawn, 2013). He accepted that some hostile militants (terrorists) were infiltrating across the border into Pakistan through Afghanistan. Indian consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar were aimed at sabotaging Pakistan. Indian consulates in Kandahar, was, 'actually a control room of all the terrorist activities organised by the separatist Baluchistan Liberation Army' (Izzadeen, 2009). The Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a hostile terrorist group in Pakistan, have been involved in multiple terrorist attacks including the brutal killing of 148 children in Army Public School attack in Peshawar, bomb blasts on mosques, target killings of Pakistan's security personnel. Unfortunately, the majority of these attacks were planned and funded by Mullah Fazlullah, who enjoyed the patronage of India's RAW (Pakistan Today, 2017). Indubitably, RAW has been sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan through TTP. Several Western scholars are of the same view that India has been sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan. Christine Fair of Rand Corporation has said that Indian consulates such as those situated in Mazar-e-Shareef, Jalalabad and Qandahar in Afghanistan 'were not issuing visas as the main activity.' She says that a few officials working in these consulates revealed privately to her that they were 'pumping money into Baluchistan' (Feyyaz, 2009). Pant (2012) maintains that India's embassy in Kabul was spreading anti-Pakistan propaganda in different cities of Afghanistan such as Jalalabad, Kandhar and Herat. Moreover, it was sponsoring activities to cause unrest. Chuck Hagel, who remained US Secretary of Defence from 2013 to 2015, stated in 2011 that India had sponsored terrorism and financed problems in Pakistan through Afghanistan as a second front for many years (Rozen 2009; Times of India, 2013) cites a former US intelligence official, who served in the past in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, as saying:

The Indians are up to their necks in supporting the Taliban against the Pakistani government in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The same anti-Pakistan forces in Afghanistan are shooting at American soldiers. .. India should close its diplomatic establishments in Afghanistan and get .. out of there.

A gang of militants deputed by the TTP-namely Khurram Ishtiaq, Ghulam Mustafa and Shamim, were arrested by the security forces of Pakistan. They disclosed that RAW has funded Rs. 680 million through Afghan secret agency RAAM for suicide attacks (The News, 2008). In short, RAW has been promoting cross-border terrorism through Afghanistan in Baluchistan and tribal areas of Pakistan such as FATA (Kharal, 2012).

RAW has also collaborated with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS) to support TTP and other militant groups such as Baluch insurgents against Pakistan (Naazer, 2018a). Latif Mehsud, the senior TTP commander who was captured by US forces and handed over to Pakistan, confirmed the connection between RAW, NDS and TTP. Moreover, he confirmed that RAW has been fomenting terrorism in Pakistan (Tribune, 2013). Ehsan Ullah Ehsan, the former spokesperson of TTP, has also confirmed the collaboration of RAW, NDS and TTP to sponsor terrorist activities in Pakistan (Pakistan Today, 2017). Multiple Western analysts including Cohen, Fair and Rozen are also of the view that India has been involved in destructive, subversive activities in Pakistan (Cohen, 2009; WikiLeaks, 2012). Mr Sartaj Aziz, the advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2016, also claimed that the Indian RAW has been funding terrorism in Pakistan for decades (The Nation, 2016). In 2015, a letter from the Sindh Home Ministry exposed that RAW had provided PKR 20 million for sponsoring terrorism in Karachi (Pakistan Today, 2015).

In the recent past, Pakistan has accused India of supporting terrorism in Pakistan through RAW to sabotage the game changer China Pakistan Economic Corridor of worth \$46 billion by deteriorating law and order, especially in Baluchistan. Pakistan's apprehensions and allegations came true when the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan arrested an in-service Indian spy Kulbushan Yadav in March 2016, who

himself acknowledged in his confessional video (available online) that he was tasked by the RAW to ensure the failure of the CPEC project. He says in his confessional video shared by Pakistan Army's media wing,

I am still a serving officer in the Indian Navy and will be due for retirement in 2022. By 2002, I commenced intelligence operations. In 2003, I established a small business in Chabahar in Iran. As I was able to achieve undetected existence and visits to Karachi in 2003 and 2004 and having done some basic assignments within India for RAW, I was picked up by RAW in 2013. Ever since I have been directing various activities in Baluchistan and Karachi at the behest of RAW and deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi, I was the man for Mr Ani Kumar Gupta who is the joint secretary of RAW and his contacts in Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan Student Organization (Dawn, 2016).

India is not only opposing the CPEC by its covert sabotage activities but various Indian officials including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of India has openly criticized the project. They even asked the Chinese government to stop the project. The Director-General of the Intelligence Bureau of Pakistan, Aftab Sultan, informed the Senate Standing Committee in 2016 that, "Out of the 865 terrorists arrested during the last three years, a significant number had connections with India's RAW and the Afghan NDS" (Khan, 2016).

Baluchistan, the south-western province of Pakistan, has always been pivot to the interest for regional as well as global players due to its unique geo-strategic location and vast reserves of natural resources. Having proximity to the Sea Lines of Communication in the Persian Gulf, the border with Iran and Afghanistan, 470 miles of coastline at the Arabian sea and development of a deep-sea port at Gwadar, Baluchistan is one of the most important provinces of Pakistan. It consists of tribes and being run autocratically. The plan of President General Pervaiz Musharraf to develop the deep seaport at Gwadar and a corridor linking South Asia with Central Asia was taken with a grain of salt by some stakeholders. The plan of Baluchistan's socio-economic development with Chinese financial help to bring financial independence to people thereby keeping the trouble makers out was not acceptable for some

factions. Resultantly, a low-intensity insurgency broke out in Baluchistan which is still present there to some extent (Siddiqi, 2010).

India, along with its other allies, toyed the idea of an independent Baluchistan during the era of the Afghan War in the 1980s (Siddiqi, 2010). India, after successfully separating East Pakistan through a foreign supported insurgency, tried the same model in Baluchistan. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) - an active insurgent-cum-terrorist group of Pakistan – was created in 1973. The Soviet arms were provided to the insurgents. India, being concerned at strategic benefits of Gwadar in the Indian Ocean, started supporting the Baluch insurgency. Some Leaders of the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) have acknowledged that India and Afghanistan have been supporting the BLA for the Baluch nationalist cause (Siddiqi, 2010). Even, the former RAW agent, B. Raman, wrote, “the struggle for an independent Baluchistan is part of the unfinished agenda of the Partition” (Raman, 2005). India established 26 consulates on the Baluchistan’s border with Afghanistan and Iran for training and funding of the insurgents (Pant, 2012). It is a fact that local Baluchi people are not involved in this insurgency. Although the insurgency has badly failed due to several reasons, the foreign involvement in the internal affairs of Pakistan against the Charter of the United Nations cannot be denied. Undoubtedly, the network of RAW against the territorial integrity of Pakistan is not groundless (Siddiqi, 2010). Kulbushan Yadev has already confessed the involvement of RAW in the Baluch insurgency.

In short, Pakistan has faced severe challenges of militancy and terrorism, especially in its tribal areas. It has lost more than 80,000 civilians and 5500 military personnel in the war against terror (Body Count, 2015). Till 2017, Pakistan has suffered more than USD 123 billion loss primarily due to Indian sponsored terrorism (Khan, 2017). Owing to Indian involvement into the tribal areas of Pakistan, more than 200,000 Pakistani troops are deployed in its tribal areas to counter the Indian threat (Butt, 2016). Pakistan has several times raised this issue with India, Afghanistan and many other global forums. Pakistan has categorically asked the Afghan government to dismantle the RAW’s training camps in Afghanistan (The News, 2015a). In 2015, Pakistan

provided the evidence of Indian interference in FATA, Karachi and Baluchistan to the then Secretary-General of UN, Ban Ki-moon (Haider, 2015).

## **Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is also a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country in the region. The Sinhalese, a Buddhist community, form 75 per cent of the population while the Tamil community, the Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus and Indian Tamil Hindus, form 15.4 per cent of the country's population. The British colonizers brought the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka as labourer back in the late 19th century (Richards, 2014). Moreover, almost 9.2 per cent of the country's population consists of the Muslim community. The ethno-religious differences, rising territorial nationalism and discriminatory faulty policies of the British rulers gave birth to conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese. Moreover, in the post-independence era, various state policies (non-recognition of Indian Tamils as Sri Lankan citizens, promotion of Sinhalese language and culture etc.) of Sri Lanka escalated the conflict that ultimately led to a bloody civil war. India exploited the internal instability of the country to fulfil its malign interests and supported the separatist militant groups. The Tamils, initially, demanded an autonomous Tamil province under the federal system, the abolishment of nationality laws that did not recognize the Indian Tamils as Sri Lankan citizens and acceptance of the two language policy. However, later on, they demanded an Independent Sovereign Tamil State. Multiple political fronts and militant groups were formed by the Tamils to press forward their demands. India, which has already drawn the red line on Sri Lanka back in 1971, when Pakistani planes used Colombo as a transit for East Pakistan due to ban on Pakistan for Indian airspace, supported the creation of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) and Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka (Waduge, 2016). LTTE was formed on May 05, 1976, by a handful of Tamils under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran, demanding an independent Tamil homeland called Tamil Eelam, which includes 1/3 of land territory and 2/3 of sea coast of the total territory of Sri Lanka. (Richards, 2014). Indian, through its intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), trained unemployed Tamil youth clandestinely in India in the

1970s, provided military equipment, financial, political and diplomatic support (Gunaratna, 1990; Naazer, 2018a). According to Dixit, “intelligence agencies (RAW) said... these are boys [LTTE Terrorists] who were trained by us from 1977” (Dixit, 1998). India supported several Tamil militant organizations to achieve its strategic aims and hegemony over the whole region by destabilizing its neighbours. The Government of India had agreed to pay LTTE Rs.50 lakhs per month which was paid in July 1987 (Chattopadhyaya, 1994). The LTTE and other Tamil militant groups developed strong relationships with political parties in South India, such as Pure Tamil Movement (led by Perunchithiranar), Dravidar Kazhagam (led by K. Veeramani), Kamaraj Congress (led by Nedumaran) during the late 1970s (The Sunday Times, 1997). A meeting between Indian Prime minister Indira Gandhi and LTTE leaders was arranged by the Tamil Nadu parliamentarians in June 1983 to seek Indian support for Tamils in Sri Lanka. Indian foreign office called Sri Lankan high Commissioner Bernard Tilakaratna a protest recorded to inform that Indian interests are not being secured in Sri Lanka. It was the first open involvement of India in Sri Lankan internal affairs.

The Indian intelligence agency, RAW, trained guerrillas of LTTE and equipped them with deadly weapons against Sri Lankan forces. The Indian state of Tamil Nadu was used as the safe haven for Tamil militants. Former Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Mr JN Dixit mentioned in his book, “Assignment Colombo” that, “The first step that Mrs Gandhi took was to support Sri Lankan Tamil parties and Tamil militant groups from 1980 onwards.” According to the Jain Commission Report following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi,

6 camps were reported being conducted by the LTTE in the districts of Anna (1 camp), Thanjavur West (1 camp), Thanjavur East (1 camp), Salem (1 camp), Madurai (1 camp) and Ramnad (1 camp) of Tamil Nadu. The total strength of trainees in these camps was reported to be 495 cadres including 90 female Tigers. The camp at Sirumalai (Anna district) was the only camp where all the 90 female Tigers were getting training along with 40 male Tigers. The largest LTTE camp was located at Kumbarapatti in Salem district. The training comprised Arms

Training, swimming, boat driving and physical training. The camps were equipped with transport facilities such as Jeeps, vans, motorcycles etc. Similarly, five camps were organized by Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) was reported to be conducting 7 training camps, The Peoples Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam (PLOT) was conducting training in 18 camps inside India by RAW. In short, the total number of trainees of various Sri Lankan Tamil militant organizations in their training camps being conducted in Tamil Nadu was 3179 males and 184 females, totally 3363 cadres (Jain Commission Report; Chawla, 1996).

Until 1991, India assisted Tamil militants in terms of safe accommodation, military assistance inclusive of training, weaponry and intelligence. LTTE Tamil guerrillas trained by RAW and MOSSAD killed 13 soldiers of Sri Lankan forces in the last week of July 1983 along with providing intelligence to RAW about the camps of Sri Lankan forces (Gunaratna, 1990). As a result, communal violence against Tamils erupted, intensifying Indian support calling it as Black July. If LTTE militants were initially trained, funded and armed by India, it means the killing of the 13 soldiers that is said to have resulted in the riots may have been under the orders of the Indian intelligence. RAW was the lifeline between Tamils militants and the Indian Central Government (Waduge, 2015). Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) are some of the other Tamil militant terrorist groups which were strengthened by RAW during the same period. Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, used RAW to train these Tamil terrorist groups. She already disintegrated Pakistan in 1971 by direct military intervention and forcefully annexed Sikkim in 1974. She even had a 'secret plan' to militarily invade Sri Lanka which was not executed because of her assassination in 1984 (Bennett, 2013).

Mr J.R. Jayewardene informed Rajiv Gandhi in a letter in 1985, which were even never replied by Indian authorities, that Sri Lanka has proofs of Indian assistance by RAW to the Tamil militants training,

providing weapons and intelligence. The Sri Lankan President even then tried to achieve a situation of peace and stability for the people and asked India for support. The words of Jayewardene were as follows:

I ask of you very little. Let us forget the issue of training camps, the existence of Sri Lanka terrorists in South Asia; their plotting and planning. I ask you to help me to prevent them [from] coming here with arms. ... If we can agree on a common scheme to do this, by some form of mutual or combined surveillance, it will enable me to withdraw the Armed Services from combat; to suspend the operation of the Terrorism Act and to help the North and East of Sri Lanka to return to normalcy. ... Cross border terrorism threatens the very fabric of this democracy. ... Do please understand our position, which is now yours too, and help (Gunaratna, 1994).

Some analysts have a view that in 1987 India was at the Zenith of military power. India planned three operations (military exercises) to achieve its malign hegemonic designs. The largest, unique military exercise, Operation Brass-tacks for Pakistan to challenge Pakistan's physical existence, Operation Chequerboard for China and military exercise named "Operation Teri Shakti" in Nicobar Island to occupy and colonize Sri Lanka (Bandyopadhyaya, 2003; Badhwar, 1998). Indian DGMO formed a cell for Sri Lanka in Indian Military Headquarters.

On 26th May 1987 Sri Lankan Government forces took control of most of the LTTE dominated areas by launching their first major military offensive against terrorist militants of LTTE, "Operation Liberation." President Jayewardene stated on the inauguration of Bank of Ceylon that this operation will continue till the elimination of one group either they will win or us. Rajiv Gandhi warned Jayewardene by J.N. Dixit to stop this operation but in vain. India violated Sri Lankan air space on 4th June 1987 and dropped food to Jaffna in the name of humanitarian aids (Weisman, 1987; Destradi, 2010). Violation of Sri Lankan air space was a crime, giving Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Delhi 30 minutes notice before dropping 25 tons of food in Jaffna on 4 June 1987 at 4 PM. It was the first case of violating airspace after the 1971 Indo-Pak war. The flight was escorted by 5 Mirage 2000s armed with 2 matra magic AAMs and 3 drop tanks. 35 national/international journalists were on these 5 planes.

The Sri Lankan Ambassador was told that any opposition by Sri Lanka 'would be met with force'. Indubitably, this constitutes an Act of Aggression against a sovereign country (Waduge, 2015). Sri Lanka condemned this act and termed it as a 'naked violation' of its independence and an 'assault' on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, at that juncture, the Indian intervention prevented the complete elimination of LTTE terrorists at a primitive stage. By considering the pressure and threats from India, Jayewardene and his cabinet decided to stop the operation in Jaffna. Ultimately, an Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord was signed at Colombo on 29th July 1987 (Rao, 1988; Wickrematunge, 2013). It was also taken as a violation against Sri Lanka as India forced Sri Lanka to sign accord which was drafted by India to suit Indian interests, not Tamil Nadu's or Tamils. India violated the Accord by creating TNA (Tamil National Army) recurring local Tamils who were armed by IPKF and tasked to support Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal who became the merged N & E Province's 1st Chief Minister. The Accord ended up with Sri Lanka having no choice but to amend the country's constitution and introduce the 13th amendment, introduce a provincial council system, merging two provinces. Moreover, the agreement provided various ground rules for Sri Lanka to follow in its foreign policy (Gooneratne, 2007). Here, India oppresses the smaller state by orchestrating problems and then appears as the only conflict resolvers. It deployed its 80,000 troops as Indian Peace Keeping Force to disarm the Tamil terrorists. However, owing to strong resentment by the Sinhalese and Tamils, India had to withdraw its troops in the 1990s (DeRouen Jr. & Heo, 2007).

LTTE, which was created by India, assassinated the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 (Bagaria, 2019). Even though India pulled back her support to LTTE after the death of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, India was sufficiently cautious not to allow some other states to mediate into Sri Lankan affairs. It gave the idea that India was thoroughly missing on Norway's inclusion of Sri Lankan peace handle-Ceasefire Agreement (CFA). Be that as it may, later it was uncovered by Indian IB chief, M.R. Narayan Swamy that India upheld Norway's help as Norway situated far away and had no regional interests on Sri Lanka. Assistant Foreign Minister of Norway once said,

I may reasonably say that the Norwegian contribution in structuring the CFA ... was, indeed, crucial. However, we could not have achieved any success without the active role played by India at every step of the negotiations. Nothing could be attempted without Indian support at every step, including the CFA (Swamy, 2008).

Indian involvement in Sri Lankan terrorism in the 1980s was a failure in Indian foreign policy. As Mr. JN Dixit once said, "India wanted only to destabilize Sri Lankan government, but not to see a separate Tamil homeland in North and East of Sri Lanka." Terrorism has sustained in Sri Lanka for more than 33 years because of foreign involvement. It is just because of foreign support that an organization formed by a handful of youths became one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations, which was able to acquire aircraft and submarine building technology. In 1993, it assassinated Ranasinghe Premadasa, the Sri Lankan President, in a May Day parade. Lalith Athulathmudali, the opposition leader of the country, was also killed by this terrorist organization (Gargan, 1993). In 1991, it assassinated the Indian Prime Minister-Rajiv Gandhi. This organization was also involved in a failed military coup against the President of Maldives in 1988. In short, over 100,000 people died, 300,000 people were internally displaced along with several high-level assassinations in Sri Lanka (Daily Times, 2011).

## **Bangladesh**

As discussed earlier, Indian spy agencies were directly involved in the internal affairs of East Pakistan since the 1960s. The famous Agartala case, unearthed in 1967, came on the surface after the visit to Agartala of Sheikh Mujib in 1965. Indubitably, one of the major purposes of the creation of RAW was to carry out covert operations in East Pakistan. Mukti Bahini was set up by RAW by using the Bengali refugees. The destructive role of RAW and Mukti Bahini in the disintegration of Pakistan is an open secret now (Raina, 1981).

Moreover, RAW continued its involvement into the internal affairs of Bangladesh after its creation in 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was unable to foresee the Indian objectives in the disintegration of Pakistan. He completely failed to anticipate the Indian game in her support to the

creation of Bangladesh. Since after its creation, Bangladesh and Mujib realized the malign designs of India. RAW wanted Bangladesh to remain subservient to India. However, the sovereign functioning of Bangladesh was not liked by the Indians. When Mujib ordered Indian Army and Indian Civil Administrators (who came after the fall of Dhaka for support) to leave the country, RAW's apprehensions grew. Mujib also started to develop relations with all Muslim countries which was again unbearable for India. The inclusion of RAW's agents in the cabinet and Awami League was arranged.

Moreover, a well-organized wave of psychological warfare was also carried out by RAW inside Bangladesh. Tactics like the creation of polarization amongst the armed forces, promotion of political and religious segregation, media control etc. were manoeuvred by RAW to keep Bangladesh under socio-economic pressure (Abedin, 1995). To alienate the people from government, hatred amongst people against the sitting government was abetted (Abu Rushd, 2005). Political rivals of Mujib were plotted and supported by RAW.

To destabilize the country, RAW sponsored political violence in the state through supporting general strikes, sit-ins, bombings and secret assassinations. RAW also supported the creation of Gono Bahini (People's Army). It was an armed terrorist group consisting of the RAW-backed political rivals of Mujib. This group played havoc with the peace and order of newly created Bangladesh. Thousands of people were killed in different incidents. The general secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, Syed Ashraful Islam, says that Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Gono Bahini had created the political atmosphere that ultimately led towards the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. When Mujibur Rahman's government forcefully dismantled the Gono Bahini, RAW organized another terrorist-cum-insurgent group, Shanti Bahini (Peace Force) to disintegrate Bangladesh (Nepram, 2002).

Soon after the creation of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to promote Bengali nationalism throughout the country which was resented by a few minority groups especially the hill people who live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in south eastern Bangladesh (Saha, 1999). Resultantly, the largest ethnic group of Chittagong Hill Tracts, the

Chakmas, formed a political group, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) led by Manabendra Narayan Larma in 1972, and then its military wing Shanti Bahini (Peace Force) in 1973 (Husain, 1997; Mohsin, 2006).

The political group, PCJSS, demanded that Bangladesh should bring an end to the settlement of Muslim Bengalis in CHT. Moreover, the Chakmas and other native groups of the area should be given preferential treatment and autonomy encompassing wide political and economic powers. However, these demands were rejected by Dhaka (Hazarika, 1989). Ultimately, Shanti Bahini, the insurgent-cum-terrorist group, started attacks on Bangladesh's Army, carried out kidnapping and extortion, killed innocent people, committed massacres and burned down villages thereby leaving thousands of Bengalis homeless. (Chandan, 2014; Singh 2003). India not only supported the creation of this group but also trained the insurgents in Chakrata, India (Hazarika, 1989; Hazarika, 2000). India also provided safe heavens to the members of Shanti Bahini (Prakash, 2008). The PCJSS leader, Larma, who escaped to India, was sheltered and supported by RAW (Mohsin, 2006). More than 50,000 Chakma insurgents-cum-terrorists were trained by RAW in India who carried out multiple terrorist attacks against the Bengali people and state (Abedin, 2003). In 1989, the New York Times also unearthed the Indian covert operation of supporting the Shanti Bahini in Bangladesh (Hazarika, 1989). More than 25,000 people were killed and above 60,000 people were displaced in these crises which were widely supported by Indian intelligence agencies (Saha, 1999). India sustained its support to Shanti Bahini throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, propaganda against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's BAKSAL as anti-democracy staged which ultimately led towards political instability in the state. Playing on the double side, RAW also used Rakhi Bahini-an elite para-military force formed under the pressure of India by Sheikh Mujib- to stage violence and terrorism in the state. Its main objective was to eliminate nationalists who were having a soft corner for Pakistan. Moreover, this force was also involved in political killings, massacres and major human rights violations. Academicians and journalists such as Ghulam Murshid and Anthony Mascarenhas have

compared it with Gestapo—the notorious secret police of Nazi Germany. This Rakhi Bahini force was also brought up and trained by RAW. Module Hassan and Brigadier General M. Shakhawat Hossain have confirmed in their books (originally written in Bengali) ‘War Context: Conversation’ and ‘Bangladesh: A Bloody Chapter in 1975-81’ respectively.

Mujibur Rahman badly failed to restrict and counter the influence of RAW which, along with other aforementioned reasons, ultimately led to sharp erosion of his popularity. He, along with his family members, was assassinated on August 15, 1975, in a military coup. Khondakar Moshtaq Ahmed, a pro-Islamist and nationalist, took over the power in the coup. However, soon, in another military coup, masterminded by RAW through Khaled Mosharraf, Moshtaq was ousted. After him, Zia-ur-Rahman became the President of Bangladesh. His nationalist policies along with pro-Muslim foreign policy were against the Indian hegemonic imperialistic designs. Additionally, his obstinate stand on the Talpatti Island was taken as a major threat to Indian interests by the Indian establishment. Resultantly, RAW became an enemy of him. A series of unsuccessful military coups were staged to oust him by RAW. Finally, RAW killed him in 1981. During all these tensions, RAW even considered to militarily intervene Bangladesh to install her puppet government but refrained owing to the fear of international condemnation (Government of India, 1975; Khasru, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2013).

A senior Indian parliamentarian and close associate of Mr. Moraji Desai, Mr. Subramaniam Swamy, unearthed the role of RAW in the assassination of President Zia-ur-Rahman in his interview given to the magazine “Weekly Sunday” on September 18, 1988, in Calcutta. Mr Swamy maintained that RAW, with the approval of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, plotted the assassination of President Zia-ur-Rahman. According to Mr Swamy, Mr Rameswar Nath Kao, the Chief of RAW and Mr Shankar Nair, a senior official of RAW, chalked out a plot to kill the President Zia-ur-Rahman. Although the plan was already in an advanced stage with Gandhi’s approval, the newly elected Prime Minister Mr Moraji Desai ordered to call off all activities of RAW in

Bangladesh including this high-level assassination. But RAW had already gone too far. Due to strong resistance by Mr Desai, RAW abandoned the plan. However, Zia was assassinated when Indira Gandhi came into power. (Abedin, 1995) Indira Gandhi denied her involvement in the assassination which means that now RAW staged the assassination without giving the plan in the notice of the Prime Minister (Bhaumik, 2017).

Later on, when Justice Abdul Sattar became the President, he continued the policies of Gen. Zia-ur-Rahman. Resultantly, soon he was also removed by power in a RAW backed military coup by the then COAS Lieutenant General Hussain Mohammad Ershad in 1982. Ershad was close to RAW since 1974 when he attended an army course in India. He was supported by RAW throughout his career. He even informed Mrs Indira Gandhi about his military coup through a special envoy (Abu Rushd, 2005). Last but not least, RAW has been meddling into the internal affairs of Bangladesh since its creation to create socio-economic instability, violence and chaos in the state which is against the basic tenets of International Law and the Charter of United Nations. Through the use of these proxies and terrorists, RAW wanted to influence the policies of Dhaka.

### **Sikkim**

The Kingdom of Sikkim was the most docile prey for RAW's illicit activities. Despite the 1950s agreement between the tiny Sikkim and India which gave Sikkim the so-called nominal independence, India kept on meddling into the internal affairs of Sikkim through RAW. RAW, following its policy of creating political uncertainty and polarization in the neighbouring states, encouraged various groups to oppose the King Chogyal. When Mr Chogyal, the King of Sikkim, married an American woman, RAW used the anti-CIA card to foster socio-political chaos in the country which ultimately forced the Sikkim National Assembly to request India for the merger of Sikkim into Indian Union. Resultantly, after an engineered referendum by India, Sikkim was annexed in 1975. Chogyal Tenzig Wangehuck, the King of Sikkim, was deposed and closely observed by the agents of RAW till his death in 1992.

**Maldives**

The Indian trained Tamil militants not only challenged the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka but also threatened the security of the other regional states. On November 30, 1988, RAW staged an attack on Male- the capital of Maldives (Mazari, 1999). Under a well-planned drama, 300-400 Indian trained Tamil terrorists equipped with automatic weapons, attacked the capital of Maldives to overthrow the government of President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom (Hagerty, 1991). High-level government officials, civil servants and police officials were taken as hostages. The attackers were shooting indiscriminately. The then President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, managed to flee to a safe place. He then requested the regional and global powers such as Britain, the USA, Pakistan and India for help to deal with the circumstances. India, under Rajiv Gandhi, promptly reacted to the request. Almost 1600 Indian combatant troops landed in the Maldives and started the operation (Operation Cactus) to maintain law and order in Male (Los Angeles Times, 1988). Interestingly, within hours of landing, attackers were eradicated from streets and all hideouts. A few of them surrendered to the Indian forces, many were captured by the Indian Naval Forces when they were trying to escape in the Maldivian Ship. Soon, the Indian government announced the success of the operation. As per the Indian Defence Minister, the overall morale of the Indian Forces gone up due to this successful mission. The international especially the western media described the whole episode as a display of military muscle by India. As the Tamil mercenaries-cum-terrorists were sailed into the Maldives from Manar and Kankasanturai of Sri Lanka, areas which were controlled by the Indian Peace Keeping Mission (IPKF), RAW's hidden hand in this episode was beyond any doubt (Khan, 2008). Moreover, many international political analysts opine that this attempt was a part of Indian power-hungry designs. India staged this drama to show its power muscle and assert its regional dominance (Gill, 1992).

**Nepal**

Similarly, India has been intervening into the internal politics of Nepal (the landlocked country) through contriving political polarization, plotting conflicts and promoting violence since the partition of

subcontinent. Several successive legitimate governments in Nepal were destabilized and suitable regimes were propped up by RAW to fulfil the Indian interests in Nepal (Naazer, 2018b). Several armed insurrections were also staged and sponsored by RAW which, later on, were controlled by the military assistance of India itself. Whenever the King or the Nepalese government tried to follow an independent sovereign national policy against the dictates of India, RAW supplied arms to the dissidents and non-state actors to create instability, chaos and terror in the state.

Indubitably, the socio-economic disparities, injustices and marginalization of a segment of society pave the way towards revolutionary ideologies. When communists took over China in the 1950s, socialist tendencies also grew stronger in Nepal. In response to the Indian interventions in the internal affairs of Nepal, a strong nationalist movement started in Nepal which resulted in Maoist insurgency (Chintan, 2003). The Maoists were widely influenced by the idea of Peoples' War (Muni, 2010). Initially, they strongly opposed the Indian influence and intervention into the internal affairs of Nepal. They even opposed several Indo-Nepalese treaties and gave an ultimatum to the government to accept their 40 demands. They demanded to nullify the unjust treaties with India such as Tanakpur Water Project Agreement (1991) and the Integrated Development of Mahakali River Treaty (1996). However, when Nepal rejected their demands, they started terrorist activities throughout the state in 1996 that lasted for almost a decade. More than 13,000 people were killed in different terrorist activities. (UNHCR, 2012).

Interestingly, the Maoists, who started their operations and peoples' war based on anti-Indian sentiments and Nepali nationalism, soon become soft towards India. India used the Maoists to increase its influence and interests in Nepal (Mishra, 2004). RAW armed the rebel Maoists and provided safe hideouts to them in India against the Nepalese governments (Jha, 2014a; Jha, 2014b). The Maoists leaders frequently held their meetings in India while the wounded Maoist terrorists received medical treatment in Indian hospitals (Upreti, 2010). Some Maoist leaders even used to move freely in India under the protection of Indian Security Forces (Mishra, 2004). Although Nepal's government raised

their concerns several times at the highest level no action was taken by their Indian counterparts. Resultantly, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, who was brought by RAW in power earlier in 2001, was forced to take an independent path. Ultimately, King not only became unreliable for India but also detrimental to its interests. Hence, through cultivating an alliance of the Maoists and other political parties, India abolished the institution of monarchy in 2005 (Upreti, 2010). Though India recognised the Maoists as a terrorist group earlier, it now facilitated a 12-point agreement between the Maoists and other political parties against the institution of the monarchy (Bhattarai, 2001; India Today, 2010). On the one hand, India supported the Maoists to create insecurity in the country, while on the other, assisted the Nepalese government to ensure their dependence on India. Experts are of the opinion that India used the Maoists against Nepal as a bargaining tool to fulfil its malign interests (Mishra, 2004). India successfully concluded several controversial agreements with Nepal by using the bargaining tool of the Maoists (Shah, 2004). Moreover, Indian neo-imperialism is an open reality in Nepal as Indian money lenders, financiers and business mafia are controlling much of Nepal's economy (Pant, 2005; Sharma, 2011).

## **Bhutan**

Bhutan, the landlocked country, has also been a victim of India's imperialism since decades. RAW, through the members of Bhutan's royal family and bureaucracy, has control over its policies. Following the same Kautilyan strategy, RAW aggravated an ethnic crisis in Bhutan by its agents (people of Nepalese origin) to create political instability thereby achieving its malign interests (Khan, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

Since the dawn of the 21st century, Terrorism has been posing a serious threat to global peace and security. Various researches have shown that conflictual areas are more prone to terrorism than others. Moreover, to attain their malign interests, several powerful countries are exploiting the socio-religious fault-lines of other countries to create instability and chaos. The South Asian countries are naturally prone to conflicts and intrastate tensions because of religious, cultural and ethnic

diversity. The competing interests of various minority groups, a feeling of political marginalization, economic deprivation, social segregation and foreign exploitation trigger political unrest, violence, insurgencies and terrorism in the South Asian countries. Rather than supporting its neighbouring countries in internal tensions, India, through RAW, has fostered instabilities, nurtured insurgencies and sponsored terrorism especially in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives etc. Indubitably, India has played the role of an opportunistic state by either exploiting and inflaming or sponsoring the internal instability, turmoil and disorder. This paper unearthed the strategy of RAW to enforce her neighbouring countries to follow Indian dictations in their respective national policies. Firstly, India, through systematically orchestrated covert operations, creates a law and order situation in the target country by manipulating the socio-cultural fault lines, ethnic divisions, political dissent etc. Then, after creating chaos and instability thereby achieving the logical reason for military intervention, India militarily intervenes in the respective country to control their domestic affairs. However, later on, keeping in view the high cost of direct military intervention, India used various terrorist groups in the neighbouring countries as a tool of its foreign policy. As this article has shown, Indian RAW, through various coercive means, not only created but also financed, trained and armed the terrorist groups such as Shanti Bahini in Bangladesh, LTTE along with several other terrorist groups in Sri Lanka, TTP and various Baluch outfits in Pakistan and the Maoist insurgents-cum-terrorists in Nepal. Moreover, India also tries either to control the economy of the target country or sabotage its economic development through destabilizing the country. It is categorically explained in this paper that RAW had utilized this strategy in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

It is high time for the regional countries to be united and take actions against Indian aggression. The platform of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can play the necessary role in this regard. Finally, it is suggested that the institutions responsible for global peace and order should not allow the countries to oppress and bully other states by orchestrating problems and then appearing as the only conflict resolvers with the malign interests to either prolong the

problem or stage more restlessness and chaos for achieving their hegemonic objectives. Moreover, if corrective measures are not taken to curb the illicit activities of RAW, regional peace and stability will never be achieved.

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