



- Until 1968, the Intelligence Bureau (IB), which is responsible for India's internal intelligence, also handled external intelligence.
- But after India's miserable performance in a 1962 border war with China, the need for a separate external intelligence agency was clear.
- According to Maj. Gen. VK Singh, , "our intelligence failed to detect Chinese build up for the attack," (India's External Intelligence: Secrets of Research and Analysis Wing).
- India's Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) is the country's premier intelligence agency.
- Established to satisfy the need for increased intelligence that was identified during the 1962 Sino-Indian Border War & during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965,
- RAW was created in 1968 to handle India's external intelligence affairs.
- RAW operates under the Prime Minister's Office, & was intentionally established as a "wing" versus an "agency" in order to bypass agency reporting requirements to Parliament's Right to Information Act.
- Since its inception, RAW is credited with providing intelligence support to many significant operations on foreign soil.
- RAW is known for not working in cooperation with the Intelligence Bureau or other Indian intelligence agencies.
- This lack of cooperation & coordination has led to multiple inquiries into RAW's true analytic capabilities & their overall relevance to the protection of Indian interests.

FUNCTION

- RAW is responsible for collecting military, economic, scientific, & political intelligence through covert & overt operations.
- RAW is also charged with monitoring terrorist elements and smuggling rings that transport weapons & ammunition into India.
- RAW's main area of focus is India's neighbors, particularly China and Pakistan.
- Indian officials rely on the intelligence collected by RAW to shift national security policy, revise foreign policy & to influence international public opinion.
- Using the National Technical Facilities Organization (NTFO)
- Utilizing technical espionage to monitor political & military changes in neighboring countries.
- Providing security services for India's nuclear program
- Collecting intelligence about the capabilities, limitations, leadership, & organization of known

insurgent groups that operate in neighboring countries & project influence into India.

ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATION

- Aerial Reconnaissance Centre- The ARC is responsible for collection of high quality overhead imagery of activities & installations in neighboring countries.
- Special Frontier Force - A paramilitary force in India, the Special Frontier Force is headed by the inspector general who reports to the director general of security for RAW.
- While the force has functions independent of RAW, it is often fielded to support covert and overt RAW missions.
- National Technical Facilities Organization/National Technical Research Organization - The function of the NTRO is suspected to be technological espionage.
- There are also indicators to suggest they perform imagery & communications analysis via varying platforms.
- One of the controversies that surrounds RAW is the lack of transparency pertaining to its budget.
- The greatest controversy surrounding the organization since the time of its inception is the lack of transparency & lack of accountability to the Indian citizens.
- The most common suggested reform pertaining to RAW is the call for the institution of an Oversight committee to maintain awareness of RAW's capabilities, limitations, and financial expenditures.

EVOLUTION

- Government has added & notified the external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), to the list of eight agencies to intercept phone calls, emails and data communications.
- According to legendary Bholu Nath Mullik, the second director of IB (1950-64) – Jawaharlal Nehru guided the IB in the art of fixing intelligence priorities by regularly addressing its officers.
- He gave them a wider perspective of how intelligence, especially foreign intelligence, allowed them to gain influence in the game of power politics
- R.N. Kao was groomed by Mullik in undertaking these external intelligence tasks.
- R.N.Kao acted as director since 1968 & till 1977. Within a short time after setting it up, he was able to recruit a large number of persons with special skills, not available through normal bureaucratic channels, with great results.
- Founded mainly to focus on China & Pakistan, over the period of time, organization has expanded its

mandate & is credited with greatly increasing India's influence abroad.

- The chief of RAW is designated secretary (research) in the Cabinet Secretariat, which is part of the prime minister's office. Some officers of RAW are members of a specialized service, the Research and Analysis Service, but several officers also serve on deputation from other services such as the Indian Police Service.
- It was established as a wing rather than an agency, so it may not be bound by the Right to Information Act.
- RAW is responsible for collecting military, economic, scientific and political intelligence through covert and overt operations, although its exact constitution, way of functioning, budgetary allocation and expenditure are not revealed.
- In 2000, the Federation of American Scientists reported that RAW had 8,000-10,000 agents. It estimated RAW's budget to be \$145 million at that time.
- RAW have been empowered to act under Sub-section(1) Section 69 of the Information Technology Act 2000 read with rule of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information Rules, 2009).
- Indira Gandhi, to work the idea into an organisation, using a blueprint prepared by, Rameshwar Nath Kao.
- RAW came into being in 1968 a good 20 years after Pakistan had set up the ISI.
- Even as it was growing its milk teeth, RAW was called into service, and its role in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 — training of the Mukti Bahini and the creation of Bangladesh out of the erstwhile East Pakistan — is perhaps its most recounted accomplishment.
- There is very little authentic information about RAW's activities.
- Legend mixed with information from private & public conversations or papers
- Articles & books written by ex-RAW officials keeps the patriotic Indian kicked about the organisation that has operated from the shadows for half a century.
- RAW is certainly a mysterious organisation, and darkness provides equal cover for the good, bad and the ugly.
- RAW is a 'wing' of the Cabinet Secretariat & reports only to the Prime Minister's Office, it is not answerable to Parliament, nor is it within the ambit of Right to Information.
- Nobody knows how much money it gets, or how much it spends.
- As much as it is lauded for its successes, it also has a reputation of corruption.

- Its recruitment process is through Civil Services exams which, as a former RAW chief Vikram Sood said, is not good enough for a milieu of big data, artificial intelligence & blockchain.
- In contrast, other intelligence agencies such as the US's CIA or the UK's SIS (MI6) recruit via their website and are able to cast their net wider.
- RAW doesn't even have a website.
- In 1980, the US brought in the Intelligence Oversight Act to subject CIA's activities to the scrutiny of the Senate.
- The Secret Intelligence Service is accountable to the House of Commons.
- The other questions that beg answers include: Is the present system of making IPS officers RAW chiefs appropriate? Why should RAW chiefs have short tenures of two years?
- It is tasked with securing Indian interests across the world, has desperate shortages of specialists in languages and the sciences-deficits that are running as high as 40% in critical departments.
- R&AW-devastated by internal feuds, staff shortages and technology deficits.
- R&AW, estimated to have some 5,000 personnel, faces a similar shortage. The organisation is short of some 130 management-level staff, particularly cutting-edge under-secretaries & deputy secretaries.
- R&AW is also short of personnel with specialist language and area knowledge, particularly Arabic, Chinese and minor Pakistani languages.
- R&AW's technological capabilities have also fallen behind, leaving it blind to the digital world.
- Its economic analysis desk is headed by a police officer on deputation from a north-eastern state with no training in the discipline; its scientific division, again, by a police officer with no postgraduate qualification in science.
- R&AW is now approximately a third short of its sanctioned strength of cryptanalysts, who are charged with breaking enemy codes & ciphers.
- The R&AW's internal cadre, the Research & Analysis Service, froze recruitment from the 2004-2005 batch to the 2009-2010 batch, and in other years, cut hiring to a trickle.
- A debate about whether needs would be best met through Union Public Service Commission-run examinations or campus recruitment rages on.

POLICY INFLUENCE & WEAKNESSES

- Experts disagree on the amount of influence RAW asserts on India's foreign policy.
- Sumit Ganguly, a professor of political science at Indiana University, says the agency has no influence on foreign policy.
- RAW had a secret liaison relationship with the Mossad, Israel's external intelligence agency.

- The main purpose was to benefit from Israel's knowledge of West Asia & North Africa, and to learn from its counterterrorism techniques.
- The Strategic Policy Group, which had been non-functional since long time, is being revived.
- It will have the chiefs of the armed forces, R&AW and IB, to make recommendations to the National Security Council.
- Its head will no longer be the cabinet secretary as had been the practice, but the NSA, who also heads the newly set up Defence Planning Committee & the refurbished National Security Advisory Board.
- The Delhi High Court has reiterated that unless the nature of information sought relates to human rights or corruption related issues, information, is not liable to be disclosed.
- RAW is an organisation which is specifically mentioned in the Section Schedule to the RTI (Right to Information) Act. It is an exempt organisation
- The CIC had reasoned that RAW is covered by Section 24 of RTI Act as an exempt organisation, and no case of human rights or corruption was made out in the present case to attract the exception.
- Section 24 of the RTI Act provides that the Act does not apply to the security and intelligence organisations specified in the Second Schedule of the Act. RAW is one of the organisations specified in the Second Schedule.
- However, the first proviso to Section 24 provides an exception to the exemption provided in Section 24 if the information sought pertains to allegations of corruption & human rights violations.
- The Delhi High Court has upheld the constitutional validity of a provision in law that gives power to the Centre to voluntarily retire Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) officers whose identity is exposed or compromised.
- It also upheld the invocation of Rule 135 of the RAW (Recruitment Cadre and Services) Rules by the Centre to voluntarily retire a former woman RAW official.
- Inter-Services-Intelligence [ISI, of Pakistan] decides policy, while the Research & Analysis Wing is a service provider to the policy makers.
- Covert operations is the business of the RAW, but it will not be at variance with the overt policy of the government.
- Experts say RAW's powers and its role in India's foreign policy have varied under different prime ministers
- RAW claims that it contributed to several foreign policy successes:
 - the creation of Bangladesh in 1971;
 - India's growing influence in Afghanistan;
 - the northeast state of Sikkim's accession to India in 1975;
 - the security of India's nuclear program;
 - the success of African liberation movements during the Cold War.
- Recent reports of by The Guardian & The Washington Post, have criticised the agency for espionage in friendly countries & offensive counterterrorism measures, which the Western intelligence agencies have historically practised.
- In addition, there have been allegations of the agency targeting dissidents abroad.
- Following standard practice, the R&AW has refrained from responding to these allegations & misinformation.
- Given the sensitive nature of foreign intelligence operations, refraining from public commentary during times of crises is understandable
- However, the agency's unregulated relationship with secrecy has arguably provided fertile grounds for such negative propaganda to flourish.
- Therefore, the current media trials must provoke a discussion regarding the limits of secrecy and instituting a public relations (PR) mechanism.
- The principal agenda of western media is to blame the R&AW as Govt's tool for targeting and harassing dissidents in the global diaspora.
- In so doing, the agency is clubbed with the likes of Saudi, Iranian, Chinese, and Russian intelligence services, which have a track record of targeting enemies of the regimes in foreign lands.
- The oath of secrecy, under 'official Secrets Act' prohibits any intelligence-media relationship from emerging.
- In 2012, the National Security Advisor (NSA), advised that "the intelligence agencies should start deliberating on a public interface mechanism"
- The British intelligence services have a social media presence, which serves the purpose of informing the public about national security priorities and policies, eliminating conspiracy theories, and building a reputation favourable to the intelligence services.
- In the recent times, the British military intelligence has been active on 'X' sharing information about the Russia-Ukraine War.
- In 1975, the CIA's domestic espionage operations were exposed, leading to a loss of public reputation.
- To remedy this, the CIA created an Office of Public Affairs in 1977.
- In the past, a website named South Asia Analysis Group provided a wealth of information on Indian intelligence and Indian intelligence perspectives on global security developments - But failed to retain.