

An overt exposure of India's covert design on Lanka. (1993, February 14). *The Observer*.

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Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka – the role of India's Intelligence Agencies by Rohan Gunaratna. Published by the South Asian Network on Conflict Research (SANCOR). 518 pages.

Reviewed by Ariya Abeysinghe

Indian intervention in Sri Lanka by Rohan Gunaratna is the first book which exposes the inside story of India's covert designs vis-a-vis Sri Lanka. The author has produced a topical and a thought provoking book which exposes the dubious and the diabolical character of Indian intelligence agencies: He documents the saga of events, from 1982 to 1992, with special emphasis on the role of India's external intelligence agency, namely the Research and Analysis Wing (Raw) of the Indian Cabinet Secretariat, and the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Ministry and the Q Branch of the Tamil Nadu State Police.

"Games of Intelligence" by the British Tory Parliamentarian Rupert Alton writing under the pseudonym of Nigel West and "By Way of Deception" by Victor Ostrovsky formerly of MOSSAD. His latest work is superior in quality and style to that of "War and Peace in Sri Lanka" and "Sri Lanka; A Lost Revolution? (The inside story of the JVP)", two bestsellers which continues to help policy and decision makers of today of the roots, structures, functions and the goals of Sinhala and Tamil militants.

Insight

Rohan Gunaratna documents the top secret correspondence between the President of Sri

Lanka and the Prime Minister of India, the RAW communications link between Colombo and New Delhi, the meetings the RAW chief had with President Jayewardene, the inside story of the forced airdrop, the Jayewardene-Gandhi-LTTE secret negotiations, and the RAW-IPKF rift over the LTTE war. Gunaratna's assessments of Indian foreign secretaries and Indian envoys should be commended. His insights into the role of the IPKF culminating in the formation of the TNA; New Delhi's proxy army, which forced President Premadasa to arm the LTTE and the breaking down of the Government of Sri Lanka-LTTE talks are remarkable. Gunaratna mentions of a RAW Station Chief in Colombo, and includes a few of his assessments particularly of the hill country Tamils in the book but fails to mention him by name. The book has already generated much debate and discussion, and will enable Sri Lankans all level to be cautious of those behind India's cloak and dagger operations.



The late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi meeting with Panrutti Ramachandran, Tamil Nadu political leader, Anton Balasingham, LTTE theoretician and Velupillai Prabhakaran, LTTE leader in July 1987 in New Delhi.

After Asoka Raina's slim book on *Inside the RAW* in 1981, Gunaratna is the first to write an outstanding account of RAW exposing its operatives and operations in the subcontinent. RAW, nicknamed Asia's MOSSAD, is comparable to the CIA or the KGB, where they transformed events; stuffed ballot boxes, printed foreign currency, toppled rulers, assassinated opponents, etc. Gunaratna chronicles the secretive nexus between RAW and the Tamil rebels. Analysing how India transformed Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict into a cyanide war, the author exposes how Indira Gandhi (1983-1984) and subsequently Rajiv Gandhi (1985-1987) destabilised Sri Lanka by recruiting, training, arming and financing Tamil militants. He also exposes the Indian hand in internationalizing Sri Lanka's domestic ethnic issue.

Rohan Gunaratna is a writer of comparative history and politics. *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka* confirms his reputation as an investigative writer of the highest order. Interviews in this book includes the key players from Tamil militant leaders and JVP leaders including Prabhakaran, to India's legendary spymaster R. N. Kao who founded RAW and several other

policy/decision makers and strategic planners seem to still revel in this doctrine.

Gunaratna's work will be useful material for students of international, strategic and security studies. Scholars on Indo-Lanka relations should try to bridge the gap from history, at least from Nehru. Undoubtedly, the book will generate much controversy and heated debate.

Despite a few flaws – the absence of an index and a few typos – the book is well written and well researched and is of lasting value. In the final analysis Gunaratna's contribution towards the understanding politics and history of Sri Lanka and India. The book is illustrated with rare photographs including LTTE cadres training in India, Prabhakaran's wife Madhivadhiini, Tamil militants training in Lebanon, Uma Maheswaran with the Mauritius Prime Minister, etc. The author needs to be commended for his fearless effort.

The reviewer, Ariya Abeysinghe, is an economist, and was awarded the S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike prize in *International Relations* in 1989. He is the author of a number of books. His recent study on

Bridging the gap

The general impression that emerges from studies on Indo-Lanka relations particularly