Role of Intelligence in National Security

Why in news?

The recent [Hamas attack on Israel](#) leading to thousands of deaths has revived the age-long debate on the efficacy of intelligence as a weapon against terrorism.

What is intelligence system?

- An intelligence system in internal security is a system that _collects, analyzes, and disseminates information related to threats and risks_ to the internal security of a country or an organization.
- It involves various sources, methods, tools, and actors that work together to provide timely and accurate intelligence to support decision-making and action-taking by the authorities.

Objectives of intelligence system-

- **Prevention-** To identify and prevent potential threats before they materialize into actual incidents.
- **Detection-** To discover and monitor existing or emerging risks that pose a challenge to the internal security.
- **Response-** To provide timely and relevant information to enable appropriate actions to counter or mitigate the threats.
- **Evaluation**- To assess and review the performance and impact of the intelligence system.

What are the India's intelligence agencies?

- **Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)** - R&AW is the primary _foreign intelligence agency_ of India.
- Its function is gathering foreign intelligence, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, advising policymakers, and advancing India's foreign strategic interests.
- It is also involved in the security of _India's nuclear programme._
- **Intelligence Bureau (IB)-** It is the nodal counter-terror agency that works closely with the _State police and Central paramilitary forces._
- It also deals with issues such as communal violence, insurgency, separatism, and espionage.

- **Specialised agencies**-

Specialisation	Intelligence agencies
Technical intelligence	National Technical Research Organisation
Aviation intelligence	Aviation Research Centre

Radio intelligence	Radio Research Centre
Electronic intelligence	Electronic and Technical Services
Cyber security	National Cyber Coordination Centre

- **National Security Advisor (NSA)-** NSA is the _chief advisor to the Prime Minister_ on national security issues.
- He/She receives all intelligence reports from various agencies and presents before the Prime Minister.
- The NSA also serves as the _Prime Minister's Special Interlocutor with China_ as well as the envoy to Pakistan and Israel on security affairs.

Intelligence in International landscapes
• **US-** It follows a _top down approach_ which emphasis on theory-driven political practice. It is more militarised with growing acceptance of targeted killing as a legitimate tool. • **Israel-** It follows _bottom up approach_ which emphasis on philosophy of pragmatism. Targeted killings are not a subject of norms but are seen as an operational necessity. • **India-** It lies between US and Israel and operate within the framework offered by the political leadership, but with a high degree of autonomy.

How Indian Intelligence system works?

- **Counter insurgency**- Jawaharlal Nehru's insistence that the insurgents were 'our people' who needed to be reformed and co-opted into the mainstream democratic processes laid the foundation for India's intelligence doctrine for counter-insurgency.
- **IB-** It is designated as the nodal agency for deploying soft approaches and winning the heart and mind of the people.
- IB's greatest contribution has been its individual officers enjoying "high degree of credibility" with insurgent leaders.
- _**Kautilyan method**_ is adopted by IB in conflict resolution, i.e., persuasion, bribery, and trickery (divide-and-rule).
- **R&AW**- R&AW's psychological warfare has twin mandates
  - To establish long-lasting relationships with the Indian diaspora aimed at fostering positive bilateral relations.
  - To monitor and penetrate and manipulate sections within the diaspora that support separatist movements in India

Why India's intelligence require reforms?

- **Lack of coordination**- The lack of coordination and integration among various intelligence agencies, lead to gaps and overlaps in information sharing and analysis.
- **Structural flaws**- There has been no broad-based exercise to reform the country's intelligence apparatus and make it more pro-active with the nation's internal and external policies.
- **Failure of Indian intelligence**-
  - **Indo-China war 1962**- Total ignorance about Chinese intentions and capabilities in Tibet against India.
  - **Separatism-** The growth of Sikh-separatist sentiments in the early 80s and the volume of the arsenal stockpiled inside the Golden Temple complex before

'*Operation Blue Star.*
  - **Terrorist attacks**- Especially the Mumbai 26/11 attack and 2001 Parliament attack in India.
- **Ethical issues**- The legal dilemmas associated with the use of new technologies such as facial recognition, biometrics, drones, and lethal autonomous weapons systems.
- **Conflict**- The balance between ensuring national security and protecting civil liberties and human rights of the citizens.

> *According to Shri M. Hamid Ansari, the former Vice President of India, "good intelligence often has made the difference between victory and defeat, life and death."*

What did Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) task force recommend?

- **Reforms** - Reforms should focus on removing the deficiencies within the system, improving coordination between intelligence agencies and ensuring better accountability and oversight.
- **Legal framework-** The intelligence agencies in India must be provided a legal-framework for their existence and functioning.
- **Training**- Have open and separate direct recruitment mechanisms for different intelligence agencies by using the existing mechanism of Union Public Service Commission.
- Use deputation slots to induct experts from the military and science & technology streams.
- **Upgrade technology**- Upgrade offensive as well as defensive capabilities in cyber warfare especially in relation to signals decryption work, and cryptography capabilities.
- **Proper communication**- Introduce a system of inter-changeability between various intelligence agencies and the connected Ministries of the Government of India.
- **Improve coordination**- Appoint a *National Intelligence Coordinator/Director of National Intelligence* to bring about better inter-agency coordination.
- **Accountability**- Provide for an in camera audit of Secret Service Funds and have a separate intelligence ombudsman for IB, R &AW and National Technical Research Organisation.

References

1. [Business Line- Intelligence the whipping boy](#)
2. [IDSA- Intelligence Reform](#)
3. [Observer Research Foundation- India's intelligence culture](#)