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Mumbai Attacks – Failure of Intelligence

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Cabinet secretariat has failed; failed miserably. So have the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Joint Intelligence Committee, the Directorate of Air Intelligence, the Directorate of Navy Intelligence, the Joint Cipher Bureau, the Directorate of Signals Intelligence and the Defense Image Processing and Analysis Center. All of India's intelligence agencies have failed, and the most critical element in their collective failure is their overwhelming focus on militant groups based out of Pakistan. So intense has been this focus that India's homegrown militant entities have spread like wild fire all through India's 2,973,190 sq km of land mass. According to South Asia Terrorism Portal, "at least 231 of the India's 608 districts are currently afflicted, at differing intensities, by various insurgent and terrorist movements."

Over the past 5 decades, India has been up against three distinct types of militancy: Left-wing extremist, separatist and religious. Left-wing extremist groups that have engaged in terrorist activity include People's Guerilla Army, People's War Group, Moist Communist Center, Communist Party of India-Maoist and Communist Party of India Janashakti. In Assam, there are at least 35 known separatist groups. In Manipur, there's the People's Liberation Army. In Meghalava, there's the People's Liberation Front of Meghalava. Nagaland has at least three known insurgent entities; Punjab has 12, Tripura has 30 and Mizoram has 2. Then there's Arunachal Dragon Force in Arunachal Pradesh.

In 2006, a total of 2,765 Indians died in terrorism-related violence (that same year, 1,471 Pakistanis died in terrorism-related violence). Of the 2,765 Indians who lost their lives, 41 percent were killed in Jammu and Kashmir, 27 percent of all victims died because of Left-wing extremism, 23 percent because of insurgencies and 10 percent from militant groups based on religion.

Bush was warned that al Qaeda was planning but Bush didn't pay much heed. Sukarnoputri was warned but she didn't pay much heed. Manmohan Singh has also been ignoring warnings. America suffered and so did Indonesia and now India. In the first 11 months of 2008, casualties of terrorist violence in Pakistan already number 6,158. We are all falling victims to entities in our midst who are adamant on imposing their own world view on to the rest of us—and that too through violence.

Who's behind Mumbai attacks? Is it India's left-wing extremists, separatists or India's homegrown jihadi militants? Many a fingers are pointing at India's homegrown jihadi militants but we may never find out for sure. The Mumbai attacks, however, is a wake-up call for the global intelligence community for them to rise up to the challenge and focus their collective energies in the right direction. B. Raman, one of India's leading analysts, is of the opinion that a whole lot of India's militancy is "self radicalization, self motivation and self execution."