

## Washington Post exposes US 'intelligence flaws'

BBC ONLINE

Secret US intelligence gathering has grown so much since 9/11 no-one knows its exact cost, nor how many people are involved, the Washington Post reports.

It says nearly 2,000 private companies and 1,270 government agencies are involved in counter-terror work at 10,000 locations across the country.

The report, Top Secret America, follows a two-year investigation by the paper.

Officials quoted acknowledge the system has shortcomings, but question some of the newspaper's conclusions.

### ACCORDING TO THE WASHINGTON POST

*A fifth of the US government's anti-terror organisations have been created since 9/11.*

*More than 30 complexes with 17m sq ft of space have been built for top-secret intelligence work in Washington since the attacks.*

*Various agencies publish so many reports these are often ignored by officials.*

Before the report was published, the White House told the Washington Post it knew about the problems within US intelligence gathering and was trying to fix them.

### DNI CRITICISED

The report says the growth of the security industry - with billions of dollars of contracts farmed out to various government agencies and private contractors - has resulted in an unwieldy system lacking in oversight and with high levels of redundancy and waste.

Intelligence failures that allowed the September 2001 attacks to happen have produced the regular refrain that the American

intelligence community had "failed to join up the dots", says the BBC's defence and security correspondent, Nick Childs.

US intelligence and surveillance systems have changed dramatically since those attacks, with reforms - such as the creation a Directorate of National Intelligence to oversee some 16 agencies in the intelligence community - and a massive injections of resources.

US officials insist these reforms have led to significant improvements.

But recent incidents - such as the failed Detroit airliner bombing in December and the failed Times Square attack on New York in May - have exposed continuing weaknesses, and failures still to "join up the dots", our correspondent adds.

Defence Secretary Robert Gates said the bureaucracy of US intelligence gathering had not become unmanageable, but that it was sometimes hard to get precise information.

"There has been so much growth since 9/11 that getting your arms around that - not just for the DNI [Director of National Intelligence], but for any individual, for the director of the CIA, for the secretary of defence - is a challenge," Mr Gates told the newspaper.

### CONFIRMATION HEARING

Last month, President Barack Obama nominated retired Gen James Clapper, a top Pentagon official, to replace Adm Dennis Blair as his next intelligence chief.

Adm Blair resigned as director of national intelligence (DNI), apparently because of internal administration battles.

The DNI was heavily criticised in a report by the president's Intelligence Advisory Board, which said it was overstuffed and dysfunctional.

Gen Clapper faces a Senate confirmation hearing this week at which some of the issues raised in the Washington Post are bound to be aired, says our correspondent.

Top Secret America was compiled by Pulitzer Prize-winner Dana Priest and some two-dozen reporters, and is being published in three instalments this week.

The Washington Post said its investigation was based on government documents, public records and hundreds of interviews with intelligence, military and business officials and former officials.

Most of those interviewed requested anonymity because they were not allowed to speak publicly, or because they feared retaliation at work, the newspaper said.



Nepalese sadhus (Hindu holy men) rest at Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu yesterday. According to the Nepali calendar, Shravan is considered the holiest month of the year with each Monday of the month known as Shravan Somvar when worshippers offer prayers for a happy and prosperous life.

## Indonesian Muslims facing Africa on prayers

AP, Jakarta, Indonesia

People in the world's most populous Muslim nation have been facing Africa -- not Makkah -- while praying.

Indonesia's highest Islamic body acknowledged yesterday it made a mistake when issuing an edict in March saying the holy city in Saudi Arabia was to the country's west. It has since asked followers to shift direction slightly northward during their daily prayers.

"After a thorough study with some cosmography and astronomy experts, we learned they've been facing southern Somalia and Kenya," said Ma'ruf Amin, a prominent cleric of the Indonesian Ulema Council, or MUI. "We've revised it now to the northwest."

He said Indonesians need not worry, however: The miscalculation did not affect God's ability to hear their prayers.

## Myanmar marks Martyrs' Day

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta held a small ceremony amid tight security yesterday to mark the anniversary of the 1947 assassination of nine independence heroes, including the father of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

Martyrs' Day commemorates the killing of General Aung San and eight other leaders on July 19, 1947 by political rivals while they were holding a meeting as part of their struggle to win independence from Britain.

Yangon Mayor Aung Thein Lin, the families of the late independence leaders and some political parties attended the ceremony at the Martyrs' Mausoleum in the former capital.

## HC asks

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a token hunger strike at the Jatiya Press Club demanding that the government find out Alam immediately. Senior BNP leaders, civil society personalities, among others, expressed their solidarity with the protest.

Against this backdrop, IGP Nur Mohammad held a meeting with Home Minister Sahara Khatun at her ministry office and later said that they were investigating to trace the missing ward councillor.

While talking to reporters at the home ministry, he said that they were investigating whether two factors--upcoming city corporation elections and business affairs-- were behind his missing.

BNP leaders including its chairperson Khaleda Zia alleged that plain-clothes members of Rab picked Alam from city's Farmgate area, two days ahead of the BNP's countrywide hartal. But the law enforcers denied the allegation.

Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, son of Alam, also president of Ramna thana unit BNP, filed the writ petition with the HC on July 4 to direct the government to produce Alam in a lower court.

The petitioner stated in the petition that Chowdhury Alam went missing from the capital's Indira Road area but the law enforcers have not taken any initiative to find out his whereabouts.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed, also member of the BNP standing committee, appeared for the petitioner.

Pro-BNP ward councillors organised the token hunger strike from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the National Press Club demanding immediate release of Alam.

Eminent citizen and Sujan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandaker Mahub Hossain, former DU vice chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, former DU teacher association president Prof Sadrul Amin, BNP leaders Moudud Ahmed, MK Anwar, Nazrul Islam Khan, Goyeshwer Chandra Roy, among others, spoke, with ward councillor Kazi Abul Bashar in the chair at the protest meet.

Ward councillors of Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Khulna were present during the protest.

Expressing solidarity with the protest, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad termed the hunger strike logical and said it is the responsibility of the state to ensure security of life and property of all.

"It would be unpardonable if there is any negligence of the government in finding out missing Chowdhury Alam," he said and urged all to be united against extra judicial killings.

## Mumbai: The Indian writer's New York

BBC ONLINE

Why is India's financial and entertainment capital, Mumbai (Bombay) the favourite muse of Indian authors writing in English? The BBC's Soutik Biswas finds out.

Indian writer Manu Joseph's debut novel *Shravan* opens on Mumbai's crowded seafront promenade.

It is filled to the gills with walkers - pale young boys, solitary women, calm old men, arthritic women - and furtive lovers sitting on the parapet.

His protagonist, a Dalit -- untouchable -- clerk, loves the city's "humid crowds, the great perpetual squeeze, the silent vengeance of the poor".

For him, the stifling constriction of Mumbai is a great relief. "On the streets, in the trains, in the paltry gardens and beaches, everybody is poor. And that was fair."

Joseph's mordant satire - the Daily Telegraph calls him one of the top new novelists of 2010 - could have been placed anywhere in India, but the writer chose Mumbai - or Bombay, as he and most of his peers prefer to call the city.

### CHAOTIC

Bangalore may be a kinetic technology hub teeming with expatriates and bright young Indians, Calcutta a decaying dow-ner

ger brimming with a million stories, and Delhi the capital where power meets noir.

But cosmopolitan, energetic and chaotic Mumbai, where the rich live cheek-by-jowl with the poor, is the city where the story-tellers from Rushdie to Kiran Nagarkar to Joseph are turning for inspiration and fodder.

"Oflate, Mumbai seems to have definitely taken over [in the number of stories being told]. It's like the city is teeming with stories just waiting to be picked up. Or maybe it's do with the number of immigrant writers who've made it their home and as new immigrants, are constantly taking stock of their new environment," says VK Karthika, chief editor of Harper Collins, which published *Serious Men* in India.

Joseph, who grew up in Chennai and came to Mumbai to work as a journalist, says one reason is that it is a great setting for novels is that it has "all sorts of people from all kinds of places".

"Every character which lives anywhere in India has a clone in Bombay. The city can absorb everything, and as long as your characters are real it does not make them look awkward," says Joseph.

In Kalpish Ratna's 2010 novel *Quarantine Papers*, a story of love and death in Mumbai, the city is gasping for

breath - and is still on the move.

The protagonist is walking in a neighbourhood. "There was no horizon. There was no sky. The only co-ordinates where those buildings, spilling over onto the pavements which swarmed with urgencies - children in various stages of defecation, bhanga (sweepers) piling wet mounds of garbage, barefooted Jains, scrubbed and masked, hurrying for some obscure surgical rite."

"Everything, or everybody, was on the move in every direction... There was no place to stop, no place to dawdle, you either moved on or got mowed down."

Salman Rushdie, whose sensational *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh* have many moments in Mumbai, once said: "When writers fall in love with cities, they often don't fall in love with cities, in general. They often fall in love with the city at a particular point in time."

So the Mumbai of 1950s in which Rushdie grew up finds a strong resonance in his novels.

In *Midnight's Children* he talks of the city as a "dumb-bell shaped island... which grew at breakneck speed, acquiring a cathedral and an equestrian statue of the Mahratta warrior-king Shivaji which (we used to think) came to life at night and galloped awesomely through the city streets..."

## Maoist leader's death 'serious blow' to peace

Swami Agnivesh says

ANI, Lucknow

Swami Agnivesh, who made efforts to be a peace negotiator between the government and Maoists, said here yesterday the killing of Maoist politburo member Cherukuri Rajkumar, alias Azad was a "serious blow" to peace initiatives between the government and the Maoists.

He said that Azad's death has created an environment of distrust among Maoists, and it is the duty of the government to create a healthy atmosphere for the discussion again.

"Maoists say that the encounter was a fake one, whereas the government says that it was not fabricated. In this kind of situation, it is usually seen that an inquiry is set up under the check of the court and therefore, I have requested Home Minister P Chidambaram to do the same," said Agnivesh.

Agnivesh wants a judicial inquiry to be held by the government over the death of Azad.

"I would request Home Minister that if he has even one percent of suspicion over the encounter, or if anybody else other than he has a doubt, then he must go for an inquiry into the case. Or else it would be a big disgrace on the face of an elected body of governance in a democratic government" he added.

Agnivesh said Chidambaram had called him on May 11, and had handed over a confidential letter asking him to mediate between the federal government and the Maoists.

Azad was killed in the Jogapur forest area of Andhra Pradesh's Adilabad District, while attempting to cross into neighbouring Maharashtra.

He was a member of the central committee of the outlawed Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) and carried a reward of 1.2 million rupees on his head.

There are reports that Azad was assigned the task of revising the Maoist movement in India.



Handout photo shows The Martyrdom of St Lawrence painting in Rome yesterday. The Vatican newspaper reported on Saturday that a new Caravaggio painting might have been found in Rome. The painting belonging to the Catholic priestly order of the Jesuit has not yet been identified as a work of Caravaggio as further analyses are required.

## Sudan rebels to ink 'child soldier' deal

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Justice and Equality Movement (Jem), a Sudanese rebel group, has agreed to sign a landmark deal with the United Nations on the protection of children caught up in the Darfur conflict.

The conflict in Sudan's troubled western region has resulted in death and destruction, with groups like the Jem battling government troops over alleged discrimination by the government in Khartoum.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which brokered the agreement, yesterday said in a statement, "As part of the agreement, the Jem commit to taking all steps necessary to ensure the protection of children in Darfur."

"Unicef will have unimpeded access to all Jem locations to verify compliance with the agreement and the Jem will promise to designate a senior official as the focal point overseeing the agreement's implementation."

Nils Spain, the Unicef country director for Sudan, will attend the signing ceremony in Geneva on Wednesday, while the Jem delegation will be led by Suleiman Jamous, the group's humanitarian co-ordinator, and Ahmed Hussein, Jem's spokesman.

Kastberg hailed the move as a "valuable precedent which we hope all parties to the Darfur conflict will follow".

Among key issues surrounding children in Darfur is the use of child soldiers, with all parties of the conflict having been accused of recruiting minors for combat.

'NO CHILD SOLDIERS' Unicef estimated late in 2008 that there were around 6,000 child soldiers in Darfur alone, with the youngest just 11 years of age, while most were aged between 15 and 17.

Anyone under 18 is considered a child under international and Sudanese law. However, in many tribal cultures, they are viewed as adults after puberty.

Dennis McNamara, the mediator of the deal, noted that under the agreement, if UN officials were to "find children in military areas, or in conflict areas, they will arrange for them to be removed".