



The Kaoboys of R&AW: Down Memory Lane

B. Raman

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This book deals largely with those aspects of the working of the R&AW of which the author had personal knowledge while serving in the organization for 26 years.

The book traverses through India's contemporary history-importantly the 71 war; insurgency in the Northeast, Punjab and Kashmir; the Emergency; the war in Afghanistan and the intelligence imperatives and dispensation under Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, Rajiv Gandhi, VP Singh, Chandra Shekhar and Narasimha Rao. Written with the purpose that a knowledge of the role played by R&AW in those events would possibly enable a better understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, it painstakingly avoids over-statements, exaggerations and spins. The organization has been given credit where it is due. And it has been criticized where such criticism was warranted.

Known for his candor, the author provides rare insights into the functioning of R&AW. This book is objective in its commentary and assessment. A prolific writer like Raman waited for 13 years after he retired from R&AW in 1994 to come out with an insightful book.

In India, retired intelligence officers have written books on general aspects of intelligence and security. However, there has been a reluctance to write on the functioning of our intelligence agencies by its retired officers. Such reluctance was there even in other countries till the early 1960s. This has since disappeared. The public in general and the research scholars in particular have benefited from such writings. This book seeks to break the reluctance in India in public interest, so that the nation as a whole may benefit from a well-informed debate.

Kaoboys of the R&AW, first attempt by an insider, who belonged to the permanent cadre since inception of R&AW and was not merely a bird of passage, hopefully, would encourage others to share their experience and insights with the public and research scholars.



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