



Indian Consulate networks targeting Sikhs in Vancouver continued 'unabated' when Ottawa gutted CSIS probe in 2017: top secret record

NSICOP report says CSIS's threat reduction targeting Indian diplomat networks in Vancouver was halted and Global Affairs didn't raise case because of PMJT's upcoming trip to India

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2023-09-19 · PAID

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On Monday, Sept. 18, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused India of links to the killing of Vancouver-based Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023

CSIS planned a major intervention in 2017 to shut down rapidly growing Indian intelligence networks in Vancouver that were monitoring and targeting the Sikh community, according to a confidential Canadian foreign interference review.

But Ottawa blocked CSIS's operation due to "political sensitivity" and fears it would impact Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's upcoming trip to India, the top secret June 2019 report says. And so, the Indian diplomat in Vancouver targeted by CSIS continued to run his networks "unabated."

These allegations — from NSICOP's "Canadian Eyes Only" 2019 draft report — shed new light on the bombshell dropped in Parliament yesterday by Trudeau, who accused India's government of links to the targeted murder in June of a prominent Vancouver Sikh community leader, who was designated as a terrorist by New Delhi.

India's government fiercely denies the allegations, and its officials have counter-charged that Trudeau's government is interfering in India by coddling Sikh diaspora elements that include separatist militants, to benefit the Liberal Party's electoral chances.

The Bureau's [exclusive analysis](#) of the NSICOP document — which suggests Trudeau's administration has frequently failed to act on CSIS warnings regarding Chinese and Indian diplomats interfering in diaspora communities and Canadian elections — raises serious questions about whether Canada's growing crisis of hostile state activity is exacerbated by Ottawa's foot-dragging on recommended national security reforms, such as a foreign agent registry.

The 2019 NSICOP report, provided to Trudeau by his bipartisan intelligence review body, details three case studies of interference from China, Russia and India, and scrutinizes Ottawa's lax responses.

The Chinese case deals with warnings to [Trudeau's administration](#) since 2015 on President Xi Jinping's so-called "Fox Hunt" clandestine repatriation operations and interference targeting diaspora citizens.

Similarly, NSICOP says that around 2016, CSIS discovered "an increase in the volume" of Indian intelligence activity in Canada, targeting the Indo-Canadian diaspora and government institutions.

CSIS alleged two specific Indian diplomats were responsible: an intelligence liaison named Parag Jain posted in Ottawa, and "Amar Jit Singh, the Consul at the Indian Consulate in Vancouver, who was also carrying out undeclared intelligence activities."

Singh's alleged clandestine activities in Vancouver included "recruiting sources and agents to infiltrate, monitor and co-opt Sikh diaspora communities," as well as "interfering and influencing voting in favour of those that were assessed as pro-India candidates."

Singh and Jain were also allegedly "facilitating visas for Indo-Canadian politicians and their friends," while manipulating "India's 'black list' of people banned from travelling to India."

Singh, the Indian diplomat in Vancouver, also allegedly used a community proxy to donate "cash to a federal party candidate," according to CSIS.

And so, after receiving a "windfall" of intelligence on Indian networks in September 2016, CSIS planned to use new "threat reduction" powers implemented by the Harper Government in early 2015, to target and "roll up" India's clandestine cells in Canada.

"The goal of the Threat Reduction Measure was to disrupt the network and reduce the volume and scope of activities carried out by Indian intelligence in Canada," the NSICOP report says. "CSIS expected that Mr. Jain and Mr. Singh's networks would be disrupted, and that they would no longer be able to recruit new individuals."

However, the report explains, before launching threat reduction operations, CSIS must consult with other departments including Global Affairs Canada and Public Safety Canada. And these departments often discounted CSIS warnings, while Global Affairs tended to value trade and political deals with [China and India](#), over national security measures.

Regarding CSIS's plan to take down India's clandestine networks, NSICOP says at a May 2017 meeting, [the CSIS director](#) met with Trudeau's then national security advisor, Daniel Jean, and the deputy minister for Public Safety, and the Global Affairs director of counter-terrorism, crime and intelligence.

In the meeting, Jean raised questions about whether Trudeau administration plans to change the CSIS Act, would impact CSIS's use of threat reduction operations, the NSICOP report says.

And so, the report says: "In a later briefing note to the Prime Minister on the Threat Reduction Measure, the national security and intelligence advisor stated, 'In view of the significant political sensitivity, the Privy Council Office advised CSIS to be mindful of this context and take a limited approach to briefings and interviews.'"

This briefing note for Trudeau, from Jean, added that "CSIS had developed a more ambitious [plan to disrupt Indian intelligence networks] but scaled down its intervention on advice from Privy Council Office and Public Safety."

As a result of other departments telling CSIS to stand down, NSICOP says that CSIS "met with a smaller number of individuals from Mr. Jain's network, but did not, as originally planned, engage elected officials or journalists."

Perhaps more shockingly — in light of CSIS's original plans to disrupt the growing Indian intelligence networks targeting Sikh communities in Vancouver — after these meetings in Ottawa, CSIS did nothing to target the Vancouver diplomat, "Mr. Singh or his network."

In addition, in CSIS's original threat reduction plan, Global Affairs Canada "had committed to inform senior Indian diplomats in Canada of Mr. Singh's activities," NSICOP says.

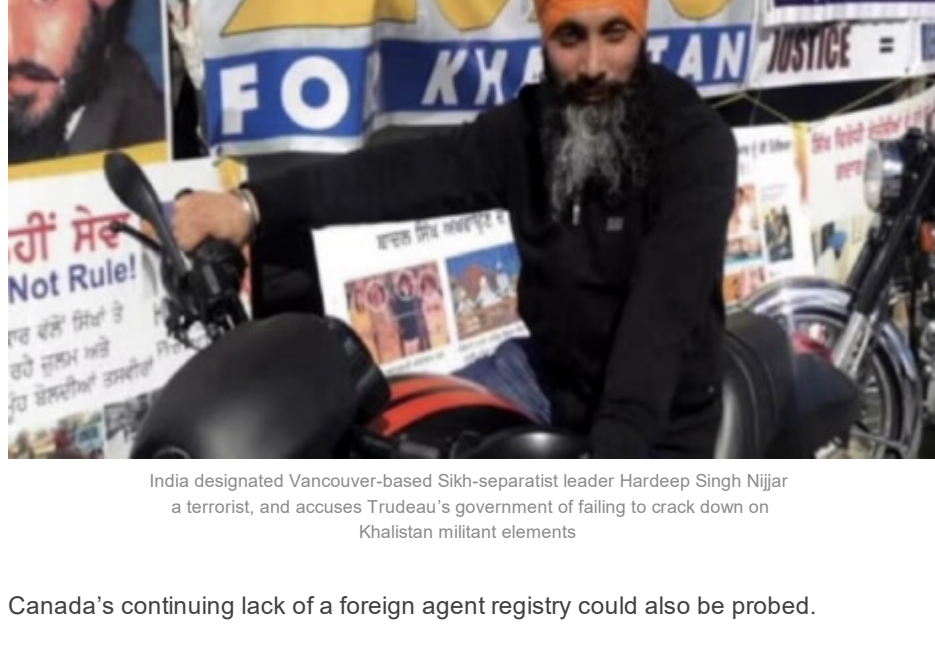
But later, for political reasons, Global Affairs was mute on CSIS's concerns in Vancouver.

"For its part, Global Affairs did not raise Mr. Singh's activities to senior Indian diplomats," the NSICOP document says, "because it had concerns that preparations for the Prime Minister's trip to India were reaching a critical point and may be negatively affected by such an intervention."

In the aftermath, the alleged Indian intelligence networks interfering in Vancouver's diaspora were untouched.

Citing an October 2017 internal CSIS briefing note, NSICOP's report says "CSIS noted that Mr. Singh 'continues his [foreign interference] activities unabated.'"

Considering Trudeau's statement on Monday, that Canadian intelligence has evidence linking India to the targeted shooting in June 2023 of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar outside a Vancouver-area temple — circumstances surrounding CSIS's halted national security intervention in Vancouver six years earlier, may become a question for examination in Canada's pending inquiry into foreign interference.



India designated Vancouver-based Sikh-separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar a terrorist, and accuses Trudeau's government of failing to crack down on Khalistan militant elements

Canada's continuing lack of a foreign agent registry could also be probed.

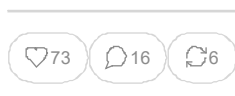
Last week, [in rare testimony](#) for a U.S. Congress body, MP Michael Chong detailed Chinese intelligence's threats against his family, saying many other Canadians have suffered their transnational repression in silence, but the U.S. has effectively used its foreign agent registry to defend its citizens against Chinese threats on American soil.

Editor's note: It is unclear in NSICOP's June 2019 report which CSIS director met with Trudeau's national security advisor in May 2017, regarding the CSIS Threat Reduction Measure plan. Current director David Vigneault took over from an interim CSIS director, in June 2017. [Vigneault was the Privy Council Office's assistant secretary to the Cabinet for security and intelligence, from 2012 to 2017.](#)

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