

# Failure to treat tip seriously had dire consequences, writer says

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"A sleek worded demarche was also [dispatched] to the Canadian authorities," he says.

However, Canadian officials, who were not identified in the book, did not react to the warning as India anticipated.

"It appeared to us that the security experts in Canada were still not motivated enough by their political masters to swoop down on the Sikh militants," he states.

"The Canadian human rights lobby and a section of the media were still doubtful about the nature and extent of Sikh terrorism in India."

Ajaib Singh Bagri and Ripudaman Singh Malik were acquitted last week of all charges in the Air-India trial, after spending 4½ years in jail. The court found no evidence to show the two men were involved in the plot.

The failure to treat the tip seriously had devastating consequences, he says. "Their fanciful deliberations on human rights violations against the Indian Sikhs received a severe jolt when Canada based Sikh militants carried out the dastardly act of sabotage," he says.

At the time, the Indian government was under a cloud for killing thousands of Sikhs during a battle with militants at the Golden Temple, Sikh's holiest shrine, and during anti-Sikh riots after the assassination of former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

Mr. Dhar attributed Canada's concern about the violation of human rights in the Punjab to propaganda from Pakistan and a few unnamed Islamic nations.

"They poured in more money to oil their propaganda machine and they had found ready allies amongst the 'hurt and bruised' Canadian humanitarians and the misled Sikh population," he writes.

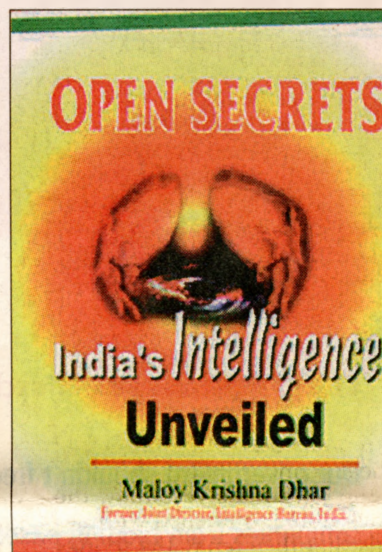
In a shocking revelation, he also says that Mr. Parmar, the alleged mastermind of the Air-India disaster, had been under the patronage of Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, in 1981. Mr. Parmar was killed by police in India in 1992.

Mr. Dhar was transferred to Canada in October of 1983 as a counsellor in India's high commission in Ottawa.

One of his primary responsibilities during his four-year term was clandestine intelligence gathering, a practice that violates normal dip-



**Maloy Krishna Dhar served for three decades in India's Intelligence Bureau. His book, *Open Secrets, India's Intelligence Unveiled*, is reported to be the first open confession of an intelligence operative in India.**



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lomatic protocol.

Mr. Dhar writes that, after the Air-India bomb blasts, Indian diplomats in Canada had armed security in their cars and the RCMP outside their door.

Mr. Dhar assumed his phone was tapped and his movements under surveillance. "But my undercover activities, strictly outside the charter of my assignment, continued uninterrupted," he says.

Mr. Dhar does not elaborate on his undercover activities in Canada. However, his oblique references give credence to allegations at that time that Indian diplomats were active within the Sikh communities.

*Open Secrets* exposes several incidents of questionable activities by the intelligence bureau mostly in India. Mr. Dhar, who retired as second in command of the intelligence agency, specialized in counterintelligence measures against Pakistan.

He had a reputation as a rogue intelligence officer, but he says he was carrying out orders from his political bosses. He says he wrote the book in an effort to have the intelligence agency made accountable to the legislature, rather than politicians.

Frontline, a national magazine in India, reported the book is the first open confession of an intelligence operative in India, comparable to Ralph McGehee's *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* and in the style of Philip Agee's *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*.

Both the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service have previously denied allegations that they ignored warnings about bombs being placed on flights on June 23, 1985.

CSIS advised the government that the security risk was high, but the agency did not have information about terrorists targeting a specific flight.

Neither the RCMP nor CSIS responded yesterday to a request for an interview.

After the bomb blasts, Mr. Dhar assisted Canadian and Indian police "within the limits imposed on me by my status in Canada," he said, referring to the normal restraints on foreign diplomats.

India's high commission in Ottawa had "good intelligence" about the involvement of Sikh militants in the bombings. But he could not share all the information with Canadian authorities without violating diplomatic protocol.

Under instruction of India's high commissioner in Ottawa, he told the RCMP only about information that he had collected legitimately or from the Indian government, he writes.

However, Canadian authorities approached him again in June of 2000, months before arresting Mr. Bagri and Mr. Malik. They brought him to Canada for his "expert advice."

"It was my last tribute to the departed souls of 329 victims of [Air-India] Flight 182 passengers," he says.