

Findings of US State Department in report on world's major terrorists

Tigers tapping global network for terrorism

From Aziz Haniffa in Washington

The US Department of State's annual terrorism report, has said the LTTE uses "overt and illegal methods to raise funds, acquire weapons, and publicise its cause of establishing an independent Tamil state".

The report, titled "Patterns of Global Terrorism 1993", released here on Monday, said "the LTTE's overt organisations support Tamil separatism by lobbying foreign governments and the United Nations".

The administration's report, which was submitted to Congress to assist it in its foreign aid deliberations, said the known front organisations of the LTTE were the World Tamil Association (WTA); World Tamil Movement (WTM); and the Federation of Associa-

tions of Canadian Tamils (FACT).

The report also said the LTTE "uses its international contacts to procure weapons, communications, and bomb-making equipment".

"The LTTE exploits large Tamil communities in North America, Europe and Asia to obtain funds and supplies for its fighters in Sri Lanka", the report added.

The US Administration report, prepared by the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counter-terrorism, also noted that "information obtained since the mid-1980s indicates that some Tamil communities in Europe are also involved in narcotics smuggling "Tamils historically have served as drug couriers moving narcotics into Europe", the report added.

The LTTE, which had the dubious honour of being featured prominently in the report's background information section of major terrorist groups, was described in the report as "the most powerful

Tamil group in Sri Lanka", which had begun its "armed conflict with the Sri Lankan government in 1983 and relies on a guerrilla strategy that includes the use of terrorist tactics".

According to the report, the Tigers "have integrated a battlefield insurgent strategy with a terrorist program that targets not only key personnel in the countryside, but also senior Sri Lankan political and military leaders in Colombo".

It said political assassinations by the LTTE "have become commonplace and culminated in May 1993 with the fatal bombing of President Ranasinghe Premadasa".

The State Department report held the LTTE responsible for other political assassinations of key figures, such as moderate Tamil leader A. Amirthalingham (in 1990), Cabinet minister Ranjan Wijeratne (in 1990), former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (in 1991), Army General Denzil Kob-

Contd. on page 12

Contd from p1

bekaduwa (in 1992), Navy Chief Vice-Admiral Clancy Fernando (in 1992), and opposition party leader Lalith Athulathmudali last year - described in the report as "a ruthless opponent of the LTTE".

The report put the LTTE's strength at approximately 10,000 armed combatants in Sri Lanka, "about three to six thousand from a trained cadre of fighters".

"The LTTE also has a significant overseas support structure for fund raising, weapons procurement, and propaganda activities", the report reiterated.

With regard to the LTTE's location and area of operation, the State Department report said "the Tigers control most of the northern and eastern coastal areas of Sri Lanka, but have conducted operations throughout the island".

It said LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, from his headquarters in the Jaffna peninsula, "has established an extensive network of checkpoints and informants to keep track of any 'outsiders' who enter the group's area of control".

The report said the LTTE's modus operandi was to "attack vulnerable government facilities, then withdraw before reinforcements arrive".

