

US leading crackdown on LTTE. (1995, August 27). *The Sunday times.*



Amidst threats and fears of bombs, the security forces are now closely checking even road workers.

Pic by Pushpakumara Matugama

# US leading crackdown on LTTE

By our Special Corr

Washington, Aug. 26. The US Government is ready to pressurize its European allies to close down the LTTE offices in Europe, if a formal request is made to Washington, a member of the White House staff responsible for security affairs has said.

Early this year, the US Government pressurized its European allies to close down the Turkish PKK offices, after the militant PKK, firebombed Turkish missions throughout Europe. The US request was considered seriously. While many PKK offices were closed down, others were placed under strict surveillance to ensure that those offices were not used either to perpetrate violence against the Government of Turkey or its interest. This included the raising of funds to purchase weapons.

Today, there are some 34 LTTE offices internationally and five ships owned by the LTTE trafficking cargo, weapons and

narcotics from East to West and West to East. The new US decision was partly taken after the LTTE was identified as one of the major suppliers of heroin from Myanmar to Europe. Interestingly 80% of the heroin found in the US comes from Myanmar.

While Canada identifies the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, the United States has listed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in the State Department's terrorist list. However, the LTTE continues to maintain at least four offices in the US.

Since last year the LTTE cover offices in New York, New Jersey, Boston and Chicago have come under close observation. The LTTE has recently opened cells in Washington to collect money purportedly for its economic wing. Currently, there is no legislation in the US to close down offices managed by LTTE type of organisations.

Since the assassination of President Premadasa, the FBI has

become very interested in the suicide bomb kit which is now used even by some of the Middle Eastern organisations. Even though there is no direct proven link between the LTTE and the Hamas, the Hezbollah or the Jihad, the suicide killings that have been carried out from time to time in Israel have borne a remarkable resemblance to the Tiger technology.

State Department's Bureau of Research and Intelligence officials who are closely monitoring the developments in Sri Lanka reveal that one of the major obstacles they had in taking action against the LTTE in the US is that the LTTE has not yet been declared an unlawful organisation in Sri Lanka. They also revealed that the pressure by the Indian lobby to take action against the LTTE had also dwindled in recent months and there has not been substantial pressure from the Government of Sri Lanka for them to move in a specific direction.