

Tamil Tiger fronts raise war funds, RCMP report says

Money goes toward 'most sophisticated, deadly' insurgency

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National Post

Saturday, November 09, 2002

A secret RCMP intelligence report shows police are concerned about a network of "front organizations" across Canada that allegedly funnel vast amounts of money to the Tamil Tigers terrorist group in Sri Lanka.

The report, entitled "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its Front Organizations in Canada," names the Toronto group FACT as having been "for the last eight years, unreservedly singled out" by the United States as a terrorist front. The Oct. 2 report appears to have been prepared in anticipation that the Tigers might soon be banned under Canada's new counter-terrorism law, C-36. The Canadian government has already frozen the LTTE's finances.

"The LTTE is carrying out one of the most sophisticated and deadly insurgencies in the world," says the report by the RCMP Criminal Intelligence Directorate. Although classified secret, it was released to the National Post.

"The international fundraising campaign of the LTTE is generated from diaspora contributions, funds siphoned off donations given to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and charities; people smuggling, and revenue from international trade, enterprise and investments and other criminal activity."

The report shows that, despite a ceasefire between the Tigers and the Sri Lankan government that has held for eight months with only minor violations, the RCMP remains concerned about the LTTE's Canadian operation.

Three previous peace efforts have fallen apart and the Tigers have emerged each time with a "more ferocious" campaign of violence, it warns. A Sri Lankan court recently sentenced the LTTE leader to 200 years imprisonment for terrorism.

Canadian officials involved in tracking terror financing say that, while the focus of investigators has been Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, the Tigers have a much larger cross-Canada money-making empire.

The Liberal Cabinet is expected to expand its list of banned terror groups later this month. The Opposition has demanded in the House of Commons that the government add the LTTE to the list, along with several dozen other well-known terrorist groups such as Hezbollah that have active underground networks that threaten Canadian security.

"The LTTE has been declared a terrorist organization by the United States and Great Britain. Other countries such as India, the Philippines and Malaysia have banned the LTTE," the report adds.

The Tamil Tigers and their supporters, mainly in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Ottawa, have for years used crime, non-profit groups and fundraising rallies to raise money to finance the purchase of weapons and ammunition.

Police, intelligence, immigration and justice officials have identified the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (FACT) and World Tamil Movement (WTM) as the main Tamil Tiger fronts in Canada.



CREDIT: Gemunu Amarasinghe, The Associated Press

A young female fighter with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam looks through assault rifles during a pageant last month in rebel-held territory in Sri Lanka. The Tigers, who raise funds in Canada, may be designated a terrorist organization in a new law.

Toronto Police have arrested several men over the past two months they claim are affiliated with the WTM. The arrests, for threatening and assault, were in relation to what police described as a dispute over control of a Hindu temple.

An officer at the Toronto Police 41 Division in Scarborough, Ont., confirmed the victims have alleged the arrested men were affiliated with the WTM.

"What the WTM is trying to do is they want to take over the control of the temple," said a former temple official who claims he was threatened for opposing the move. "They said the LTTE leadership in Sri Lanka has asked them to take over temples here."

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service says Canada is one of the LTTE's major sources of money. The group raises more than \$2-million a year here through criminal activities and a handful of front organizations such as the WTM, CSIS says.

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