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CONFRONTING FALSE DICHOTOMIES - PART 2:

## The brazen stance of LTTE many fronts - next target

(c) LTTE Front Organizations and proscriptions/prosecutions/convictions within EU

Notwithstanding this progressiveness the EU counter-terrorism action has shown, it nevertheless has left room for terrorist entities such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), that was listed through European Council decision 2006/379/EC of May 29, 2006, to circumvent the legal provisions of its proscription, making a mockery of the EU listing.

### TRO



Anti-LTTE demonstration in the Hague, Netherlands.

It does so through its numerous front organizations such as the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) with branches in 9 European States, the umbrella organization Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC/Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden; WTCC/US; WTCC/Switzerland; CTF/France, and World Tamil Movement WTM/Canada), the British Tamil Association (BTA), British Tamil

Forum (BTF), Tamil Youth Organization (TYO), International Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (ITRO) and White Pigeon operating in the UK and the Tamil Women's Association.

The LTTE also has syndicates involved in credit card skimming in petrol sheds, telephone card businesses and community shops, which have continued to raise funds.

Furthermore, 'Tamil Cholai' schools that indoctrinate Tamil children, TV/Radio stations (mainly 'Tamil Oli' radio and, GTV), numerous internet sites and newspapers that engage in strategic communication and development of a 'narrative' to spread ethnic and racial hatred and glorify terrorism and martyrdom, which in recent weeks even led to self-immolation by Tamil youth in several European capitals. Such activities should sound familiar, given your understanding of the manner in which Al Qaida and other terrorist networks operate.

Of the many LTTE front organizations I have referred to, and documented in detail in my presentation at the EU-US 'Seminar on the LTTE' organized by the Europol on December 9-10, 2008 in recent years the most attention has been focused on the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), which purportedly claimed to be engaged in rehabilitation work in the previously LTTE dominated areas in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

The early creation of front organizations such as the TRO in 1985, has been described in 1997 by Charles Somasundaram, who worked as a volunteer at

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'Eelam House', (the LTTE's headquarters in London until the organization was banned in 2001), as an instance of how brilliant LTTE leader Prabhakaran was.

There is clear evidence that the activities of all operational/administrative functions of such LTTE front organizations directly come under the supervision of W. Manivannam Castro, who is the Head of the LTTE's 'International Secretariat'.

#### **LTTE network**

It is important to know that all such LTTE front organizations form an integral part of the LTTE network/overseas infrastructure, and act for or on behalf of or at the behest of the LTTE.

In recent months, the LTTE has named Selvarasa Pathmanathan, as the Head of a newly established Department of International Relations, to play a keyrole alongside the international Secretariat, in seeking to galvanise support for the LTTE abroad.

This appointment mocks the entire international community, for Pathmanathan is none other than the long time key arms procurer of the LTTE, on whom INTERPOL has issued a red corner notice in connection with the Rajiv Gandhi assassination in 1991.

It is important to note that the earliest action against a LTTE front organization was taken in the U.K., when in October 2000 (even before the LTTE was eventually proscribed in the UK in February 2001, or 9/11), an investigation was launched into the activities of the TRO/UK on suspicion that it was abusing its charity status.

The TRO was subsequently removed from the Register of Charities by the UK Charity Commission on August 10, 2005. A report published in August 2007 by the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom, titled 'The Home Office and HM Treasury's Review of safeguards to protect the charitable sector (England and Wales) from terrorist abuse and the Charity Commission's response to the consultation' has made reference on the closure of the TRO in the UK in the following terms:

"We also intervened effectively to secure the assets of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) where our investigation revealed that the trustees had little, if any, control over money that was sent to Sri Lanka for relief work.

#### **Activities**

Further investigation concluded that the charity's representatives had liaised with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (a proscribed organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000) to make decisions about where funds should be applied".

The TRO, the leading case study of abuse in this report, also provides instructive reading for anyone serious about tackling this menace.

Although the TRO was de-listed from the charitable organizations list in the UK in 2005, it is regrettable that the LTTE continues to collect funds within the UK, through White Pigeon, another front organization of the LTTE.

(It is noteworthy that White Pigeon was jointly designated as an alias of TRO by the US in November 2007.) Numerous other LTTE front organizations also continue to operate in the UK to carry forward the activities done by the TRO for the LTTE. These include; ITRO, BTA, BTF. Hence, while Europe as a whole has seen considerable action by the LTTE front organizations, no country had experienced it as much as the UK.

In recent years three main areas of LTTE front organization activity has resulted in investigations, prosecutions and convictions;

1. Laundering of money through the widespread abuse of their status by the TRO, though long suspected, became legally established only in the immediate

aftermath of the December 2004 Tsunami disaster.

In Sri Lanka, the discrepancy in the funds raised in foreign countries and that transferred to the TRO/Sri Lanka, and evidence that these monies were laundered, resulted in the Sri Lanka Government freezing the assets of TRO in August 2007.

The organization was later proscribed in November 2007 and its assets confiscated in July 2008. It is noteworthy that Lawrence Thilakar the former leader of the LTTE International Secretariat in Paris and LTTE Central Committee member, serves as the TRO's Planning Director under his pseudonym Lawrence Christie.

Several other countries have taken similar action: -

In the US, abuse of its status led to the proscription of the TRO under US Executive Order 13224 in Nov 2007, and on February 11, 2009 the 'Tamil Foundation' whose office bearers were the same as that of the TRO and which operated from the same address was also proscribed by the US Treasury Department.

- Most recently in Denmark on January 28, 2009, through - Case No.266/2008, the Danish Supreme Court upheld a ruling by two lower courts, that the freezing of the assets of TRO/Denmark, amounting to 45,000 Kroner was in order.

The Supreme Court determined that the organization had reasonable grounds to be suspected of violation of the Penal Code for providing financial support to terrorist organizations. This is a clear instance of judicial action taken by a Competent Authority of an EU member state, against a LTTE front organization - the TRO.

2. Extortion, has also been engaged in by the LTTE front organizations, mainly those operating under the TCC umbrella.

- in Canada the June 2008 proscription of the WTM was significantly based on confirmed acts of extortion.

- in France 21 persons including Nadaraja Mathintharan @ Parithi, Official representative of the LTTE in France and in charge Coordination Committee of Tamils in France (CCTF) and Sellackandu Ravikulan, de-facto In charge of ORT/TRO in France were arrested in April 2007 following raids on their offices, and are due to stand trial shortly for extortion.

- Italy's key LTTE suspect, Tharmalongam Jeevakamath, alias Kumar of Jeeva, regarded the No. 2 of the Tamil mafia in Europe arrested in Paris on February 6, was also wanted for money extortion and financing of terrorist activities. Additionally, 31 activists connected to the LTTE fronts have also been arrested in Italy.

Money collected for the LTTE through front organizations in Europe is often hand carried into Switzerland, from where they are transferred to destinations such as Singapore on the pretext of being for jewelry purchasing, but are in fact laundered for disbursement for arms procurement.

Through this method and its 'hawala' style transactions, the LTTE avoids being detected within the FATF stipulations, including the know your customer requirements operationalized by the private sector to detect suspicious transactions.

**To be continued**

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