

October 24, 2006

## Sri Lankan Rebels (1 Letter)

To the Editor:

Re “Monitoring a Little-Noticed War” (editorial, Oct. 18):

We agree with your view on the need to “choke off funding” from overseas Tamils to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organization and the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America are well documented as L.T.T.E. fund-raising fronts.

Sri Lanka faces a terrorist problem, not a religious conflict. In 1997, the United States designated L.T.T.E. as a foreign terrorist organization and recently arrested 18 L.T.T.E. agents trying to buy weapons.

You refer to a “Buddhist-led government” and a “Hindu separatist group.” The government is democratically elected and consists of Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian cabinet ministers.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa established an all-party conference to evolve consensus for a negotiated settlement.

The government is equally concerned about human rights and has invited an international group of eminent persons as observers, including from the United States.

International shame will not deter terrorists, but international pressure will. It is vital to persuade the L.T.T.E. to engage in meaningful negotiations and not walk away, as it has done on five occasions since 1985.

Bernard Goonetilleke  
Ambassador of Sri Lanka  
Washington, Oct. 18, 2006

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