U.S. regrets loss of innocent life in Sri Lankan military attack in Vakarai

[TamilNet, Friday, 10 November 2006, 12:05 GMT]

The U.S. Department of State in a media note issued on Thursday said the U.S "strongly regrets" the loss of innocent life caused by the shelling by the Sri Lankan military in Vakarai region Wednesday. The U.S. urged both the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to honor their commitment to abide by the cease fire, end all hostilities immediately, and return to negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. "We are also disturbed that the Head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission and his delegation came under fire in Pooneryn in the north of Sri Lanka the same day," the statement said.

The Sri Lankan Government, in an effort to tune down hostile reactions of the International Community Thursday charged that the LTTE had launched artillery shelling from the locations that were attacked by the Sri Lankan military, stating that civilians were used as "human shields".

However, the U.S. statement said: "we exhort the Sri Lankan Government to adopt corrective measures to prevent civilian casualties that also take into account instances where civilians may be used as 'human shields' in the future."

Full text of the Press Release issued by the Embassy of the United States of America Friday in Colombo follows:

COLOMBO, November 10, 2006 – The Office of the Spokesman of the U.S. Department of State issued the following Media Note on November 9, 2006:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman

For Immediate Release
November 9, 2006
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Media Note

Military Attack in Eastern Sri Lanka

The United States strongly regrets the loss of innocent life caused by the shelling by the Sri Lankan military of a camp for internally displaced persons in the Vakarai region in eastern Sri Lanka on November 8. We exhort the Sri Lankan Government to adopt corrective measures to prevent civilian casualties that also take into account instances where civilians may be used as “human shields” in the future. We call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to conduct an immediate, independent investigation into the November 8 incidents and bring the responsible parties to justice. We are also disturbed that the Head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission and his delegation came under fire in Pooneryn in the north of Sri Lanka the same day.

The United States urges both the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to honor their commitment to abide by the cease fire, end all hostilities immediately, and return to negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. We fully support the ongoing Norwegian peace facilitation efforts designed to bring both sides back to serious negotiations.