Probe US, UK troops before charging us with war crimes: Sri Lanka

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Colombo (PTI): Amid calls for war crimes probe against its military for its conduct during the campaign to eliminate the LTTE, Sri Lanka on Saturday said US and British troops will have to be hauled before tribunals first if any charges are brought against its armed forces.

The remarks came a day after President Mahinda Rajapaksa accused unnamed foreign elements of trying to stop the military offensive "by threatening to haul us before war crimes tribunals" and declared that he was even ready "to go to the gallows" for defeating the Tamil rebels. "Sri Lankan forces did much much better than all the forces everywhere in the world when it comes to civilian casualties. We took all precautions to prevent civilian casualties from the beginning to the end (of the war)," Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa told NDTV on Saturday. Mr. Rajapaksa, who is also the President's brother, said "if one talks of taking our military to a war crimes tribunal, before that you have to take US troops, UK troops, all those troops and all those leaders into war crimes (tribunals)." The UN or human rights organisations should "first do those investigations and (then) talk about investigation here," he said. Calls have been growing for probe into possible war crimes by both government troops and Tamil Tigers during the war, with a number of European nations reportedly trying to bring a resolution to this effect at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council next week. Courtesy: hindu.com