

Mangala Samaraweera M.P.
B20, Stanmore Crescent
Colombo 07.

14 February 2007

HE President Mahinda Rajapaksa
President's Palace
Colombo 01.

Your Excellency,

Re. Allegations leading to the Removal of Ministerial Portfolio

Under the executive powers vested in you as the President, three Ministers, including me, were removed from our respective ministerial portfolios with immediate effect on 9 February 2007. I was informed of this fact while I was on an overseas visit to Singapore. I was not surprised by this decision as I view it as the culmination of certain events that occurred during the past few months.

After our ministerial portfolios were taken away, the Executive Committee of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was convened via telephone on your instructions. The internal discussions you had regarding the inner workings of the party were given immense publicity through the state controlled Rupavahini and ITN television networks, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Lakhanda Broadcasting Service and the Lake House Newspaper Group. These events were rebroadcast repeatedly. Additionally, the text and other details of the discussions were made available to other media outlets through your Media and Publicity Division.

As the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, I never expected that you would make public the internal discussions of the party. I strongly believe that the internal affairs of the party should be kept within the party. Conflicts should be resolved internally and not be publicized in a manner where opponents could exploit them. Furthermore, the harsh criticism you directed at us during your state visit to the Maldives was also given much publicity in the media.

I do have legal recourse to these allegations. However, I choose to use my Right to Respond, which is available to me through our constitution and through norms of civil society, to submit this letter to you.

The entire country is shocked by your incensed decision but I am not. Although I worked tirelessly to ensure your victory at the polls, in the past few months I have noticed a growing sense of mistrust and anger towards me as well as a concerted effort to marginalize me. Though I worked with great trust in you, it seemed clear to me that you bore a grudge against me for our previous political disagreements.

I have many examples of such disagreements, but choose to mention only a few at this point.

- I. It has always been a tradition of our Government for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to be a member of the Security Council and attend its meetings. Informing and justifying the decisions taken by the Security Council to the international community has always been a part of the Foreign Minister's job. Under your Presidency, I was not made a member of the Security Council, but I continuously risked my life in our fight against the LTTE. During my tenure as the Foreign Minister, The LTTE was proscribed in Canada and the European Union. Additionally, I was responsible for coordinating our struggle against terrorism with India and the United States. I was responsible for coordinating and expediting the Government's efforts to procure weapons from other countries. I performed all these duties successfully. The fact that I wasn't part of the Security Council was a source of amazement for other members of the Security Council and they have even informed your Excellency regarding this fact. Whenever they voiced their concerns about me not being present at the Security Council meetings, you informed them that I would be asked to attend future meetings. However, I was never asked to attend a Security Council meeting. Several members of the Security Council have informed me that I was not invited to any meetings due to the influence of your brother Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa.

- II. I have always understood that power is a necessary tool for a politician to perform his job. For this reason, I helped create Governments and overturn Governments. I pursued political power in order to serve the people. By using this power, I rebuilt Matara. I provided employment for many young men and women. I don't have any aspersions to build a dynasty because I am the last of the Samaraweera family. Therefore, I consider the poor, downtrodden people of this country my sons and daughters; my brothers and sisters. Nothing pleases me more than the smile on the face of an unemployed young man or woman when they obtain a job. Though we never had enough jobs to match the demand, I have provided thousands of jobs during my tenure as a minister. Likewise, all my deputy ministers, other members of parliament from our party and children of employees were all provided with jobs under guidance.

However, a few months ago, due to malicious lies spread by some of your confidants with vested interests, you stopped all hiring at the Port under a Presidential order. This decision shocked me and I saw it as a move you or those around you to destabilize me politically.

- III. Upon assuming duties as the Minister of Ports & Aviation, under your directions, I made arrangements to appoint a great number of people close to you for senior positions at various organizations under the Ministry of Ports & Aviation. Some of the people who obtained these positions of power have abused your trust by creating dissent at these organizations and conspired to work against me. I informed you on several occasions regarding such activities.

I wish to bring to your attention one such example. Upon your recommendation, I appointed a close associate of your brother Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa as the Vice Chairman of an organization under my Ministry. This person was completely unaware of the prevailing political climate of the country and the rules governing the management of this organization. The only qualifications he had were that he was a close associate of Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and was a fellow resident of the United States. When this person began to abuse your trust and create dissent within the organization, I had to call a board meeting to resolve matters. At this meeting, in front of the Secretary to the Ministry and other board members, this person verbally abused me and behaved in a very inappropriate manner.

I have been a Cabinet Minister for many years but I had never been subject to such behavior. While behaving in an abusive manner, he let it be known that he had the support of your brother Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. When I complained to you regarding this incident, you promised to remove him from his position and avoided discussing the matter any further. I had also complained about this officer to Presidential Secretary Mr. Lalith Weeratunge who informed me several times, that steps would be taken to immediately remove this person from his position. Although, as the Minister responsible for this organization, I had complete authority to dismiss this person, since he was appointed on your recommendation, I had to tolerate his behavior and not dismiss him in order to protect your reputation and not create unnecessary problems. The man you promised to dismiss has now been appointed by you as the Chairman of this organization. This incident was a clear indication of your regard, or the lack thereof, for me.

There is a similar situation at the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. A senior officer appointed by you has been abusing your trust and created many problems that have destabilized the entire organization. I believe that you have used these officers to sabotage my Ministry and to destabilize me.

- IV. During my tenure as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I managed to accomplish a great deal. Due to our successful efforts to isolate the LTTE internationally, I became a prime target of the LTTE. I have been continuously informed of this fact by the national intelligence agencies. As you well know, a large number of LTTE terrorists who were gathering intelligence to make attempts on my life have been arrested. When even your coordinating secretaries have been provided with heavy security, it is indeed disheartening to see that you have shown no concern or interest regarding my security. In order to strengthen my security, I had to finally resort to asking for help from your brother Mr. Basil Rajapaksa and your coordinating secretary Mr. Sajin Vass Gunawardene. Even

at such a late stage, they made arrangements to provide me with a bulletproof vehicle and increase my security. I wish to thank them for their assistance.

These are but a mere few examples. Under such circumstances wouldn't it be natural for me to think that you have been trying to marginalize me ever since assuming high office?

Be that as it may, I was flabbergasted when you informed the executive committee of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party that you may consider reappointing me to my ministry if I correct whatever wrongs I have done. I believe it is my duty not only to inform members of the SLFP but to the people of Sri Lanka that you have misled them with unjust allegations against me. Therefore, I intend to answer every major allegation you have made against me.

01. Having Worked Against the Palestinian Cause?

You have accused me that the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations was absent and did not vote when 158 countries voted with Palestine. This was a special resolution brought to the UN by the Palestinian Authority against Israel for its abuses of the Palestinian people. United States and several other countries were campaigning against this resolution. As the Foreign Minister, it was a great challenge for me to decide how we should use our vote.

On the one hand, I am fully aware that we should not abandon the cause of the Palestinian people who have maintained close ties with Sri Lanka since Mrs. Bandaranaike's reign. I too identify closely with the Arab cause. As a matter of fact, most of my private travels have been to Arab countries. On the other hand, Sri Lanka can not afford to antagonize America, an ally who has helped us in our struggle against terrorism, not only in words but also in deed.

Having held length discussions with Foreign Ministry officials, we reached a decision. Sri Lanka is the President of the Israel Practice Committee (IPC), which investigates abuses committed by Israel against the Palestinians. I was of the opinion that it would be more productive for Sri Lanka to protect its integrity and impartiality in the IPC. Therefore, on the vote held on 17 November 2006, Sri Lanka, as Chairman of the IPC, was not present at the vote. It should be noted that at the Third Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 15 November, Sri Lanka voted in favor of Palestine.

On 29 November 2007, the Foreign Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Dr. Mahmud Al Zaher, sent me a letter expressing the Palestinian Government's gratitude for the way Sri Lanka conducted itself at the vote. (I have attached a copy of the letter for Your

Excellency's perusal). Furthermore, two days after the vote, US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns telephoned me. The decision taken by us regarding the vote went a long way in building trust and strengthening US-Sri Lanka ties. Few days afterwards, at the Co-Chairs Meeting in Washington DC, Nicholas Burns expressed America's fullest support to the Government of Sri Lanka in defeating the menace of LTTE terrorism. After the meeting he also held a press conference that was very encouraging to the Government and the people of Sri Lanka.

It is a victory when we can win the goodwill and trust of both parties in such a complex international dispute. As the President, you should be proud of the performance of your Foreign Minister in achieving such a result. You should be praising the Foreign Ministry since this was an international victory. We should be proud that a developing country like Sri Lanka, while facing a myriad of challenges, possesses such a pragmatic and effective foreign policy.

It is very disappointing that one of the primary reasons you gave for my ouster from the Cabinet did not have any negative effect on the Government of Palestine.

02. Boycotting Emergency Rule Vote

You have also alleged that my boycott of the Emergency Rule vote as yet another reason for my dismissal. On the date when the debate on the emergency law was being held, you had convened a meeting at Temple Trees at 2.30PM to discuss the launch of the 1,000 Houses Project initiated under the Ministry of Finance and Planning. This meeting was called under a letter sent by you on 06 February 2007.

When I was the Minister of Urban development, we launched a project to develop Beira Lake and to provide housing for low income earners. Upon reassuming duties at the Ministry of Ports & Aviation, we launched a project to develop the Beira Lake under the sponsorship of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. Along with the Beira Development Project, steps were taken to develop plots of land adjacent to the lake that was owned by the Ports Authority. Therefore, I was most keen to attend this meeting. In order to attend this meeting, I left parliament in the afternoon of that date. You had also written a letter to Ports Development Minister Sripathi Sooriyarachchi that he too attend this meeting. When I arrived at your meeting, Minister Sooriyarachchi informed me that the meeting was going to be delayed. Therefore, we both remained at the Ministry of Ports until we received notice that you were ready to start the meeting. However, at around 3.30PM, we were informed that you would not be attending the meeting. At this point I went back to Parliament but due to traffic congestion, I was unable to reach Parliament in time.

The Chief Government Administrative Officer Mr. Wanniarachchi had forwarded a list of those who had not voted to the Presidential Secretariat. As you are well aware, this list indicated that in addition to the three Ministers who were dismissed, there were 23 other Ministers and Members of Parliament who did not participate in the emergency rule debate. The entire country is unaware of this fact. On that date, there were 122 votes in

favor of emergency law while 17 members of the TNA voted against it. Once you deduct the remaining 5 MPs of the TNA and the Speaker of the House, there were 80 MPs, including a large number of Ministers, who did not vote. Therefore, accusing me of boycotting the emergency debate does not hold water. How can you justify the dismissal of only 3 Ministers? I need not remind you that I have been a responsible Member of Parliament for 17 years as well as a Cabinet Minister for 11 years. If you look at my voting record at all previous emergency debates, you would see that I have always voted with the Government on every occasion, if I were present in the country.

03. Conspiring to Overthrow the Government Due to Loss of Position and Privileges.

You have alleged and furnished information to the Executive Committee of the Party that I conspired to overthrow the Government due to loss of position and privileges. I have offered my Ministerial Portfolios in order to protect the Government. Thus, nobody in the SLFP will ever believe such charges against me. When the People's Alliance was in danger of collapsing in 2001, we formed a coalition Government with the JVP. Because we had to limit the cabinet to 20 Ministers at that time, I gave back my portfolio in order to protect the Government. Similarly, during a dangerous period when even your candidacy for President was at risk, I relinquished my portfolio as Minister of Media, in order to run your election campaign. The fact that I do not engage in politics for positions of power and prestige or personal gain is something that every member of the SLFP is aware of.

Despite working tirelessly and successfully as your campaign manager during the last Presidential election, I never requested you to be appointed as the Prime Minister. Though I had the necessary qualifications, I never asked you for any position and you had praised me for it in the past, a fact which I still remember. I have never worked against the Government for the sake of position or privileges. While within the Government, I have never criticized the Government in public. I have never leaked cabinet secrets or confidential documents to the media to embarrass the Government. I have not created divisive groups within the Government of the party and not do I intend to do so. This is not my political philosophy. Therefore, accusing me of conspiring to overthrow the Government is something no intelligent person would ever seriously consider.

04. Indirectly Helping the LTTE

The LTTE was banned in Canada and the European Union, which has 25 member countries, during my tenure as the Foreign Minister. Furthermore, you are well aware of the problems that sprang up when we were taking steps to get the LTTE banned in Australia.

When I was the Foreign Minister, I urgently requested you and Secretary of Defense Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa that until individual countries within the European Union legislates laws banning the LTTE, we should take steps to avoid human rights violations, abductions, harassing the media, attacking places of worship, hospitals and schools even

when we take defensive military action against the LTTE. As a true patriot, I was focused on creating a conducive environment to get the LTTE banned in 25 countries. Therefore it is indeed very disappointing when you attempt to portray me as an LTTE sympathizer.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I was a prime target of the LTTE. I was cautioned by the state intelligence agencies to be aware of the risks I face because of my successful campaign against the LTTE. Your inappropriate attempts to portray me as an LTTE sympathizer is nothing but a blatant attempt to justify the decision to dismiss me from my Ministerial post.

I. Delays in Building Hambantota Port

It was your intention to appoint a person from the Southern Province as the Minister of Ports so that the Hambantota port could be developed quickly which in turn would bring rapid development to the Southern Province. This was one of my primary goals as well. The delays in building the Hambantota port may not have pleased you but on several occasions I have privately informed you on the underlying reasons.

When the Prime Minister of China visited Sri Lanka on the invitation of former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunge, Sri Lanka Ports Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a Chinese company to build an oil bunkering facility. However, once you became the President, you instructed that Hambantota should be developed into a more comprehensive port. We called for business proposals for this purpose.

In February 2006, a Chinese company had submitted a business proposal to the Ministry. While we were busy analyzing this report, your brother, Mr. Basil Rajapaksa submitted to me another proposal submitted by a different Chinese company. In addition, another close relative of yours also submitted a similar proposal. You are well aware of the problems this created and it took quite a long time to resolve this dispute. Finally, as per your instructions, I made arrangements to award the construction of the Hambantota port to a joint venture between the two Chinese companies.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority and the Chinese joint venture company signed an MOU to prepare a comprehensive feasibility study. When you travel to China at the end of this month to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, all arrangements have been made by the Ministry of Ports for you to sign the contract with the Chinese joint venture company.

I do not know whether the problems that your relatives and associates faced in winning the Hambantota port development project was also a factor in my dismissal.

II. Mihin Air Deal

Your Coordinating Secretary Mr. Sajin Vass Gunawardene was very keen to launch Mihin Air budget airline on Independence day, 4 February 2007. He is the Managing Director of this airline. Though his request was reasonable, I advised you that it would be politically harmful to your reputation if you were to circumvent administrative and financial rules and regulations in an attempt to speed up the approval process. Once I explained my reasons, you too agreed with me. In order to expedite the process, you sent a Cabinet paper for my signature a few hours before it was due to be tabled. In order to avoid a confrontational situation with you, I signed the cabinet Paper against my conscience. Rushing through the approval of a project that requires comprehensive analysis and a feasibility study and the use of funds from the Employers Provident Fund to start such a business are two things that I did not condone. Furthermore, many Ministers complained to me about the fact that no copies of this particular cabinet paper was made available to the Ministers. Though Mr. Sajin Vass Gunawardene was annoyed at me and other Ministry officials for the delays in getting the project approved, I had explained to you the true picture of such a project. Additionally, at one cabinet meeting, you indirectly accused me of ordering the tearing down of Mihin Air advertising billboards. However, subsequent investigations indicated that no such acts of vandalism had taken place. Even now Mr. Sajin Vass Gunawardene is actively engaged in efforts to launch Mihin Air. As I was a hindrance to his attempts to circumvent the law in order to get approval for Mihin Air, I believe that too was a factor in my dismissal. In the recent cabinet reshuffle, the fact that Mihin Air was taken away from the Ministry of Aviation and brought under your control under the Gazette notification of 29.01.2007 is confirmation of my suspicions.

III. Written Notification of Internal Issues

Your Excellency,

I have proved my loyalty to the Sri Lanka Freedom Party not only through words but also through deeds. Every SLFP supporter is well aware that I have worked tirelessly to build SLFP Governments and bring down UNP Governments. Therefore, it is our primary duty and obligation to protect the SLFP and our Government. On numerous occasions, I have tried to discuss with you about attempts to bring down or destabilize the Government. Though you are a sensitive politician with decades of political experience, you never had time to discuss these matters with me. On many occasions, your actions were the complete opposite to what you said. On many occasions, when we come to meet you to discuss matters of importance, after a couple of minutes of conversation, you would state that you would make a decision after talking to your brothers Mr. Basil Rajapaksa and Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, and walk away. I take this as an indication that you were not interested in discussing matters with me. During the last Presidential election, having worked closely with Mr. Basil Rajapaksa, it was my impression that he was a very astute political dealmaker yet the fact that you gave him the authority to

make decisions on behalf of the party and the Government was a great source of consternation to many party members. You are our political leader but Minister and members of Parliament from our own party are obstructed from speaking to you regarding their problems. Since you were not interested in hearing our concerns, I began to send you letters expressing my concerns. However, my intention in writing these letters was not to insult you but to inform you. Even during President Kumaranatunge's era, I had written to her regarding matters of importance.

In order to obtain the support of the international community against the LTTE, I wrote to you that the Government should take steps to clear its name against charges of human rights abuses. I even brought to your attention the fact that Sri Lanka is showing signs of being isolated internationally and advised you on how to formulate the foreign policy of Sri Lanka in one of my recent letters.

IV. Problems Regarding Astrologers

I am well aware that you are a great believer in astrology, talismans and the occult. It seems that several others, who know of this as well, have been insinuating that I am a grave threat to you as I too have a strong horoscope. I am completely unaware of what my horoscope states and do not have any faith in it. I wonder if the lies spread by these conspirators to gain your trust have also been instrumental in me being dismissed last week.

V. Phobia of Chandrika

I am fully aware that you have been acting in an agitated manner from the time the former President arrived in Sri Lanka. We should give her credit because we were able to come in to power after 17 years. President Kumaranatunge was the leader who united a party split by bitter infighting and brought it back to power after 17 years in the political wilderness.

On numerous occasions I have informed you that the close friendship I have with her is not detrimental to you. Today she is not involved in politics. Therefore, there is no political danger to you from her.

However, there are certain parties with vested interests who are trying to create problems for me by highlighting my friendship with her. I will never forget the strength she gave me politically and perhaps her friendship with me might be another reason for my dismissal.

VI. Maubima Newspapers:

Many people claim that there is some sort of a connection between Maubima newspaper and me. Apart from the fact that Maubima publisher was the head of Colombo airport, which is under my Ministry, and my Coordinating Secretary

works as an editor at Maubima and my sister worked at Maubima's sister paper, the Weekend Standard, I don't have any connection to Maubima. Even prior to this, several interested parties have attempted to create a connection between Maubima and me in order to discredit me in your eyes. This is a completely baseless allegation.

I wish to remind you a few things about Standard Newspapers (Pvt.) Limited, the company that publishes Maubima because I would be remiss in my duty if I didn't. As your Campaign Manager at the last Presidential election, I had to face great many obstacles. We saw there was an urgent need for a newspaper that would appeal to the English speaking middle class of Sri Lanka. I asked my friend Tiran Alles, the Chairman of the Colombo Airport Authority and Aviation Services to start an English newspaper. He accepted this challenge without any benefit to him and managed to publish four editions before the Presidential election.

Nobody should forget the fact that he printed 50,000 copies of the newspaper and distributed it free of charge was a significant factor in ensuring your victory at the polls. My sister was the Coordinator of this newspaper and she resigned from the company after the election.

After the Presidential election, the company launched Maubima as an independent newspaper without any partiality or bias toward anybody. Even though I don't agree with many articles that are published in the paper, I admire their efforts in being truly independent. Though some actions of the Government has been criticized in the newspaper, I do not have the power to ask him to stop publishing what the editors see fit. In any case, I do not believe that journalists should be influenced in any manner.

The sole purpose of those who tell you that I have close connections to Maubima is to drive a wedge between us and to create fear in your heart about me being a threat to you.

I do not know if this too is a reason for me to be dismissed. But I completely denounce this witch hunt against a newspaper by calling it a terrorist newspaper.

Dear President Rajapaksa,

According to newspaper reports, if we rectify our errors, we will be taken back into the fold of the party and offered our previous cabinet Portfolios. However,

What have we done wrong?

- ❖ was the fact that I sent you a secret letter stating the fact that some of your relatives and associates are interfering in

Ministers' work an offense so great to be dismissed from cabinet?

- ❖ is it wrong to make you aware that the hard earned victories of our brave soldiers are cheapened by abductions and disappearances?
- ❖ is it wrong to propose a system to ensure human rights and media freedoms are protected?
- ❖ is it wrong to propose ideas that would protect the party and strengthen the Government?
- ❖ therefore, if you can mention what wrongs we have committed, it would greatly help us and the people of Sri Lanka.

Whatever the case, the conspirators' next objective will be to remove us from the party. We suspect as such due to the fact they tried to deliver a mortal blow to us by asking us to correct the mistakes that were done. The harassment that began immediately after my Ministerial portfolio was removed under your order was massive. An order was given to remove my security a few hours after I was dismissed. Presidential Security Division raided my home to take the bulletproof vehicle that was provided for my protection. Upon my return to Sri Lanka, the security forces that were present at the airport behaved as if they were preparing for a major terrorist attack. Nobody except close family members was allowed to come to my home to visit me. Even Members of Parliament who came to visit me were turned away. Even the doctors who came to treat my ailing mother were not allowed to enter my home. Some of my officers' homes were raided and they were threatened. Even the security personnel from the Ports Authority who were in my home were removed. Even the telephone at the security gate and the gardening implements and lawnmower were removed under orders from the Vice Chairman of the Ports Authority. Even the office that served as your election publicity office was raided by armed personnel. Today I have to face a level of harassment that I didn't have to face when the UNP came into power. When I asked a senior security officer why such action was being taken, he informed me that it was done under orders you're your brother, Secretary of Defense Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. I am fully aware that the situation will deteriorate further once this letter reaches your hands. I wouldn't be too surprised if I were to be abducted.

Such threats and harassment will never intimidate me. These actions will only strengthen me politically. As a person who led several campaigns since 1994 to ensure victory for the Sri Lanka freedom Party and for our party members, I will never abandon the party. When the UNP caused the downfall of our Government, I was there to ensure that we came back into power. In the future too, I will be committed to protecting the party and ensure victory.

Today the forces that were against Mahinda Chinthana have taken over the Government. As the man who was the Campaign Manager during your presidential election, I will continue to battle with the forces that supported you to ensure that the promises made during the last election will be fulfilled.

It was reported in the media that in the speech you made to the executive committee accusing us of various misdeeds, you left the door open for us to come back. If such an invitation is extended by you personally, I will not reject it. However, I would like to point your attention to certain conditions that should be fulfilled by you in order for us to reach a successful conclusion. If these issues are not resolved, I do not believe that we would be able to come to any compromise. Therefore, in light of the political issues I had highlighted in the recent past and the present crisis, I have prepared 10 points of discussion that I would like to present to you.

01. A Clearly Defined Action Plan to Address the Grievances of Those Who Ensured Your Victory.

After a group of dissident UNP Members of Parliament joined the Government, there is a growing perception in SLFP supporters and among various political parties and factions who worked towards your victory that their political lives are at risk. Those who opposed you during the Presidential election have now obtained positions of power and party members and supporters have been abandoned. Especially as the leader of the party, you should listen to the issues and address the grievances of loyal party workers. A mechanism to find solutions for these issues must be found and a specific day or a few hours a week should be reserved exclusively for party activists.

02. Limit the Cabinet to 35 Members.

Our cabinet that has become the laughing stock of the world should be reduced to a manageable level of a maximum of 35 Ministers. (Please note that I am not expecting any position in this new cabinet).

2-1 An environment Where Ministers are Able to Freely Perform Their Duties.

In the recent past, some of your relatives and close associates who also have assumed your executive powers have been interfering in the workings of several ministries that have caused immense problems amongst the Ministers. Most serious of these allegations have been leveled at your brother, Mr. Basil Rajapaksa. This is seriously affecting the stability of the Government. Therefore, a suitable

mechanism must be established to free the cabinet from the clutches of your family. An environment should be created where the cabinet, under your leadership and guidance, should be free to engage in development work.

2-2 Reassign subjects that clearly belong to each Ministry

As President you oversee 05 Ministries: the Presidential Secretariat, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Nation Building. According to the 2007 budget, the combined budget of these 05 Ministries is Rs.76,658,400 million. The entire expenditure for the country is Rs.131,942,000 million. You control 60% of the country's budget while 106 other Ministers are responsible for 40% of the budget.

Not only has this caused much dissent amongst Ministers but has made Sri Lanka the only country in the world where a single individual controls 60% of the country's budget.

Especially the Ministry of Nation Building has taken over Samrudhi, Rural Economic Development, Fisheries Housing, Regional Development, Rural Livelihoods and Estate Infrastructure Development that were previously functioning as separate Ministries. Additionally, 22 other important ministries such as Road Development Unit, Jathika Saviya, Water and Power Supply Unit, Gamaneguma, Southern Development Authority, 10,000 Tanks and Udarata Development Authority too have been taken over.

Most Ministers state that the unofficial Minister for Nation Rebuilding is Mr. Basil Rajapaksa. Already he travels to every district and chairs meetings keeping even senior Ministers aside. Mr. Basil Rajapaksa leads Jathika Saviya and Village Awakening programs. This has caused a great deal of dissent amongst many Ministers.

Furthermore, 27 important institutes such as Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, PERC, Land Reform Commission, Military Procurement Company, Mihin Air, Land Reclamation and Development Corporation and Essential Services Commissioner General have also been brought under your control without even being gazetted.

Similarly, important institutions that were under the control of other Ministries such as Import & Export Control Department, HDFC Bank and SME Bank have also been taken under your control..

As such, you may keep the Ministries you can handle, according to your wishes, and return the other Ministries to the relevant line Ministers. By returning the Ministries and ensuring these institutions are run well and efficiently, you will be able to provide the service to the people who don't have any recourse.

03. Re-Establishment of Samrudhi Ministry.

After the recent Cabinet reshuffle, Samrudhi Ministry has been made part of the Ministry of Nation Building and thus devalued.

Samrudhi Ministry which was started in 1994 under the People's Alliance Government, is now internationally recognized as the most successful political institute to alleviate poverty. During the last election, the UNP announced that they would abolish the Samrudhi Ministry. Due to this reason, even the Samrudhi recipients who were annoyed at us supported you unconditionally to ensure your victory. Therefore, Samrudhi Ministry should be re-established under your control or under another appropriate Ministry.

04. Protecting Human Rights and Guaranteeing Media Freedom

I first entered Parliament in 1989. When I saw the massive human rights violations that took place during this reign of terror, I joined up with you to build the Mother's Front and reestablish human rights in Sri Lanka. I think you remember very well our struggles from almost twenty years ago and as a man who tirelessly fought for human rights, you can not allow a repeat of that terrible period in our history. It is not secret that disappearances, abductions, kidnappings and killings keep happening on a daily basis in Sri Lanka.

We have absolutely no arguments against defeating the LTTE completely. But the human rights violations that occur within the country have now become a hindrance to defeating terrorism. By becoming known as a Government that violates human rights, we are allowing LTTE to build a case against us for the international community. Responding to terrorism with even more terrorism is not the act of a responsible Government. Therefore, take a clear decisive path to prevent human rights violations.

As the Minister of Defense, one of your most important duties is to stop the harassment of the media under the pretext of preventing terrorism. When the media tries to expose corruption that happens under the guise of war, the Government should not suppress and harass the media. There is an international perception that this Government condones media harassment. This is a disturbing trend. Therefore,

clear decisive moves must be made to eliminate media harassment. There should be no room to brand democratic forces and dissenting voices as LTTE sympathizers.

05. Develop Friendly relations with India and the International Community.

Many countries with whom we had very close relations with are now distancing themselves from Sri Lanka. Even the historic friendship we had with India must be further strengthened. Our friendship with the United States, the leader in the global struggle against terrorism and the European Union, who banned the LTTE a few months ago, must become even tighter. It would be critical to find out why all European countries boycotted the Aid Forum held in Galle recently.

Soon after you assumed the Presidency, the international community had faith in your unique style as well as restraint and patience shown in the face of adversity. Unfortunately, events that followed subsequently have corroded their trust in us. This is due to the fact you have taken decisions that were diametrically opposite to what you had promised world leaders. Consider these facts and reformulate your foreign policy to benefit the country.

06. Work Towards Finding a Political Solution to the Ethnic Conflict

In order to truly defeat the LTTE, a political campaign must be launched simultaneously with the ongoing military action. If we are to free innocent Tamil people from the grip of the LTTE, it is essential to offer a political solution that addresses the genuine grievances of the Tamil people. Make a clear statement that a political solution to end the armed conflict will be offered within two months.

07. Create an Environment for the Business Community where they can conduct Business in a peaceful climate

There were many reports about Tamil businessmen who were kidnapped for ransom. There are allegations that after they pay huge amounts of money as ransom, they are being asked to leave the country. I wish to point your attention this issue.

It is important that you pay attention to the allegation by the business community that it is impossible to run any business in Sri Lanka without paying bribes and kickbacks to politicians and high officials. Obstacles like this can cause immense problems in the country and cause the economy of the country to collapse. It is therefore imperative that the business community be allowed to run their businesses

without hindrance from politicians. Such an environment will also attract investment into Sri Lanka both from overseas and within the country.

08. Renew the SLFP-UNP MOU so that the Government Can Win the Support of the JVP.

The JVP, who ensured your victory by forging an alliance and forming a coalition Government, has now distanced themselves from the Government. There are many reasons for this. At a time when forces that were against you have joined you to maintain the Government, the forces that supported you are distancing themselves from you. This is not a good sign. Create a strategy to win back the support of the JVP.

Take steps to renew the MOU for two years that was signed between the SLFP and the UNP that had the blessings of all religious leaders and intellectuals of the country.

09. Create a Strategy to Reduce the Cost of Living and Stop Corruption and Wastage.

The people of Sri Lanka are facing serious difficulties due to the ever increasing cost of living. Inflation is at 22%. It is important to control the wastage and corruption that happens in most institutions that do not have any controls or systems in place to control corruption. Such measures will somewhat reduce the cost of living. Make arrangements to offer the relief measures outlined in Mahinda Chinthana.

10. Stop Bribery, Corruption and wastage.

10-1 Chairman of COPE, Mr. Wijedasa Rajapaksa, in his report accused important politicians and high officials of cheating the country out of more than Rs. 125 billion. Take steps to bring the culprits to justice expeditiously. While their cases are pending, suspend their positions.

10-2 Make whatever necessary amendments and immediately activate the anti-corruption and anti-wastage proposals forwarded by UNDP.

I did not bring these proposals forward because I desire to obtain a ministerial portfolio or any other benefits. My honest intention is to protect the party, the Government and you. Should you be willing to implement these 10 proposals, I am willing to discuss

matters with you at any time and continue on our journey together to ensure victory and prosperity for Sri Lanka. I respectfully request an honest answer from you regarding my proposals.

Finally, I place my life and the lives of my Parliamentary colleagues, Anura Bandaranaike and Sripathi Sooriyarachchi in your hands as the Minister of Defense. Although I have been removed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the threat by the LTTE terrorists does not end. The ban imposed on them by the European Union, which has dire consequences for the LTTE, has earned me their enmity. As you are well aware, whether in power or out, the LTTE will always target those who they see as enemies.

Furthermore, after this letter becomes public, I will be the target of underworld gangs, kidnapers and criminals. Under such circumstances, a few hours after having been relinquished of my portfolios, you have reduced my security. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that you are entirely responsible for my life and for my protection. I would like to state that it is your duty to ensure that we do not meet with the same fate that befell Ministers Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali.

Your Excellency,

Since you gave so much media coverage to baseless allegations made against me when I was stripped of my portfolio, please be advised that I too will forward copies of this letter to the media so that the people of Sri Lanka shall be informed of what transpired.

May the Noble Triple Gem Bless You.

Mangala Samaraweera
Member of Parliament for Matara District