

An Unwavering Stability Propelling A United Objective



One of the most talked about political parties at the Budget was the People’s Liberation Front (PLF) or the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Not only did the JVP’s stand managed to create a controversy among supporters and the opposition, but it also destroyed the dream castles of many. Viranga Hewage and Anushika Gunawardana from Business Today met up with JVP Parliamentarian and Propoganda secretary, Wimal Weerawansa.

Photography by Varuna Liyanage

During politically decisive times, the JVP has tried to make an impact on the government by acting as a decisive factor. For instance, we may refer to the recent budget hearings. Yet, this need to act decisively has not always been successful.
I do not understand the reasons why you would say it has been unsuccessful. We

are all aware how the other political planets had to rotate around the JVP at the recently concluded budget hearings. The government was watching to see what kind of a decision would be made by the JVP. The United National Party (UNP) started to base its decisions on those of the JVP. All this led to a decisive situation, which we believe was correctly utilised by the JVP, as evidenced by the conclusion of the budget. We are of the opinion that we had utilised this decision-making power in a way that led to a strong warning and impact on the government, sparing the country from political decadency and destabilisation, and in a way that did not support the conspiracy-driven expectations of the UNP.

The Manel Mal Movement, supported by your party, told the public to work in favour of the President for this budget.
No, that was not as the Manel Mal Movement. Certain professionals involved in it merely expressed their opinions, independently. What they said was not about favouring the President; it was about making a decision that would not impact the war, being fought by the armed forces. They had a reasonable fear that the military processes would suffer a breakdown or a set back, if the government was to fall. The final decision we have made does not go against their expectations.

If Anyone Had Even An Iota Of Brains, They Could Have Decided What The JVP Was Going To Do On December 14, In View Of The Sign We Gave On December 6. On November 19, We Voted Against The Entire Budget, Because Of The Government’s Lack Of Good Governance, Enormous Wastage, And Corrupted Journey.

Yet, at present, have not the exchange of members between political parties and the politically-driven disagreements led to the type of political decadency and destabilisation that you are referring to?

Has not this situation turned into an opportunity for them?

In any case, there is no long-term stability in our country’s politics. What is there now, what came up during the budget, and what will resurface at another opportunity, is this long-term instability that has been growing for a while without the right remedy. At each opportunity, what happens is that, that particular moment is weathered with a Paracetamol tablet. There is a type of instability that has been rearing its head viciously, for a long time, at various opportunities. Then too, this instability has not been treated with a long-term remedy. For this instability not to be a permanent one, it is essential that a correct solution be found to the economic crisis of the present. Similarly, solutions are needed to deal with the

challenges posed by separatist terrorism. The political instability of the present times is tied to all these factors. The process of parliamentarians drifting from one side to the other that you referred to does not take place in vain. During the last budget, those who joined the government, did so with the expectation of ministerial and other positions. Those who joined the UNP, did so with the expectation of ministerial positions in a new government, and because of money received from Western embassies. The reason for the people's representatives and members of parliament to be subjected to these situations results from the present crisis. It all shows up, in the same way that an illness manifests itself through outer symptoms. On the other hand, the JVP has proven that all 37 MPs had played a politically uncomplicated and decisive role, by being of the same stand, and not being victims of such buy-outs. Therefore, even within this crisis we have proven that our people's representative is the one who is the most accepted and trustworthy.

Is not our electoral system the reason for all this? Is not it because of this that members of political parties are able to change their parties, as if they are changing colours? Cannot your party intervene to change this situation?

The problem is not just the electoral system; it is about the crisis affecting the whole social system. J R Jayawardena created a constitution with the world's strongest executive presidency powers, in the name of creating stability. Even the U.S. Presidency does not enjoy this type of power. He built a beautiful new Parliament in the middle of the Diyawanna lake. He did all types of things, while changing the laws month after month. 2/3 was amended. Yet where is the desired stability? Stability does not arise from laws, or powerful dictatorships; it arises from the people having a democratic opportunity to enjoy socio-economical benefits. If the people have been distanced from this process, or there are obstructions in terms of progress, there will surely be protests in society. Changing the electoral system or any other system will only be a technical remedy. This cannot obliterate the reasons for permanent instability.

Although the JVP was not in agreement with the budget proposals, it voted in favour of the budget allocation for defense expenditure. Is your party supporting the government, however indirectly, because of the war, or is there another reason for this?

We have no need to show such support, either directly or indirectly. We voted against the budget on November 19. Until the last moment, this decision was not made public. It was when we were voting that everyone knew we would vote

against it. We did not need others to make their calculations based on our decisions; or to use our decisions for their opportunistic plans. This is why no one knew of our decision to vote against it on November 19, till we actually did so. Then came along the budget allocation for defense expenditure on December 6 that you referred to. We must very clearly state that one of the main reasons for the JVP to work for the success of President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the 2005 Presidential Elections, was to turn Ranil Wickremasinghe's pro-separatist journey back. If there is one issue on which we agree with this government, among all other issues on which we disagree, it is the war that is being fought against the separatist Tiger terrorists. Yet there too we must say that the government has failed to make the necessary political decisions, especially those such as the official abolition of the ceasefire agreement, and the banning of the LTTE. Although the activities of the armed forces are very successful, on the political front, the steps that should be taken by the government have not been adequate. In any case, this is the only point on which we find ourselves in some agreement.

On the other hand, no one is as pleased as us in initiating activities to defeat the cowardly view, which had taken root in our society, that maintained that we were unable to achieve a military victory against the LTTE. The armed forces have proven today that they have the exceptional ability of defeating the LTTE terrorists. As a result, we voted in support of the December 6 defense expenditure. If anyone had even an iota of brains, they could have decided what the JVP was going to do on December 14, in view of the sign we gave on December 6. On November 19, we voted against the entire budget, because of the government's lack of good governance, enormous wastage, and corrupted journey. Similarly, the budget has not created any novel avenues. On December 6 we voted in favour of the defense expenditure.

By December 14, others began to build dream castles based on our decisions. They began to build their own worlds. Especially four MPs who had become patriots by voting in favour of the budget on November 19, had begun to jump to the other side by December 14. What we wanted to do was to show our opposition to the failed processes of the government's budget, which lacked good governance norms and was corrupted, and to show opposition to the UNP's schemes. The way to oppose both these factors was to abstain from voting. We cannot vote any which way we prefer at Parliament. What can be done is to vote for or against, or to abstain from voting. By November 19, this kind of complication had not arisen. The UNP did not have the ability to conduct a successful conspiracy of this nature. Once we had voted against the budget, the UNP had taken advantage of this and had launched a conspiracy-driven process. We had no desire to support this, or to act in favour of

the government. The way to achieve both of these was to abstain from voting. That is the decision we took. That is the correct decision.

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the government.

The opposition parties are making various accusations against the JVP regarding the destruction of their dream castles built on the decisions of the JVP. What is your opinion of this?

As I mentioned before, they built various dream castles. All types of walls were built based on the foundation of the 37 JVP MPs. We were unaware of this. They had built the walls, and put up the roofs, and were ready to fix the curtains by December 15. They only had to move in on December 15 and 16. We had never agreed to make our 37 MPs the foundation of someone else's housing project. Now these dream castles have come down, and they are showing their hatred through pathetic and manic behaviour. It's similar to the tantrums children throw when someone has destroyed what they have been doing. People like that will attack the JVP with whatever comes to their hand. In psychological terms, it is not a surprising form of behaviour, only average and natural behaviour, witnessed in anyone who has had their hopes dashed. We do not believe that there is anything to be done, except to watch patiently or to laugh.

Some claim that the JVP lost an opportunity to topple the government by abstaining from voting.
Whenever the people decide to topple the government, the JVP will always be with that decision. Yet we have stated before that if the people are in the frying pan under this government, the UNP is trying to take them to the fire itself. We have no intentions of supporting such a project. In fact, we want to take them out of the frying pan. The UNP is asking the people whether it isn't hot there in the frying pan, and then suggesting that they go down to the fire instead. This is not correct. Therefore what we are suggesting is to take the people out of the frying pan, without letting them fall into the fire. The UNP is trying to take advantage of the pressures of the frying pan context, and to take the people into the fire. We will topple this government, together with a process to ensure that the people do not fall from the frying pan into the fire. Other than that, we have no intentions of

toppling or not toppling governments depending on the power agenda of the UNP or Western embassies. We have no intentions of toppling or creating governments to please the whims of Western diplomats. We are here to act in accordance with the people's expectations. We are not a party that can in any way be controlled by an agenda of an embassy. Yet, you are aware that our country's politicians and political parties are being controlled by certain ambassadors. The latter are the ones who are making the agenda and the timetables to make or break governments. We are not a part of this agenda. We make our decisions based on the feelings, needs and expectations of the people of this country. It is based on this that we would either make or break governments.

Recently, the British Ambassador made a statement saying that the LTTE is not an illegal organisation. Although we are a free country, interferences by the imperialists into our ruling system has not ceased, has it? Is our political decadence the reason these Western ambassadors behave as they please?

It has to be stated first that Mr Chilcott had made a statement that is completely out of the purview of his ambassadorial role. Maybe they firmly believed that there would be a Ranil Wickremasinghe-led government after December 14. Therefore, they were of the opinion that it was all right to say anything before that. I suppose that Sri Lankan Airlines refused to give a ticket to the President, believing that they could disregard him if the government was toppled on the 14th. The ambassadors too were probably of the same view, which is why Chilcott came out of his designated zone, and made a statement of this nature. He had said that the creation of a Tamil Eelam state was a legitimate expectation, similar to how a division arising between Scotland and Northern Ireland would be legitimate. He does not know that the north and the east are not separate countries that were yoked in to Sri Lanka. Geographically speaking, the ocean surrounds it from all four sides.
Chilcott is of the opinion that similar to how Ireland was yoked in by the British imperialists, the north and east were yoked in by the Sri Lankan state. He believes that this is a historical fact. If in reality a separate country had been forcibly included as the north and the east, then Chilcott's statement is correct. Then the desire to separate is legitimate.

Yet here Chilcott has made a grave error, on purpose. We consider this to be one of the most brutal statements ever made against Sri Lanka by someone in the diplomatic community, in its entire history. In fact, in comparison to the gravity of

that statement, the reaction of the government was very frivolous. This reveals that these people are interested in controlling the political aspirations of Sri Lanka according to a new imperialist agenda. At one time Chilcott stated that the national language of Sri Lanka should be English. Then, in his speech, he goes on to say that the government should not support the JVP's publicity campaign against UNICEF. It is not up to Chilcott to decide whether the government should be in support of it or not. The old imperialist master is trying to enliven a role that is out of bounds. They are able to behave in this erroneous manner, since the politicians of the past few decades have paved the way for them to do so. In any case, this behaviour should be controlled at least now, and it should be put a stop to.
They are interested in turning Sri Lanka into one of their haunts. This is a force that is interested in establishing long-term instability by helping LTTE succeed; in cleverly taking advantage of this country's geographical location; and in pillaging the essence of our oceanic, oil and natural gas resources. When they captured the upcountry kingdom in 1815, they said they were going in because the upcountry Sinhalese were begging them to rescue them from the cruelties of the Malabar king of the Nayakkar race. Then, too, they invaded in the guise of a humanistic story. Today, too, they are interfering in a similar manner, saying that human rights in Sri Lanka are being violated and that the Tamil people are facing problems.
We are aware of this, yet they will never succeed in these aims, because Sri Lanka is not full of people made ignorant by imperialists, as was done in the African continent. Our people are very intelligent. We have a society enlivened by anti-imperialist sentiment. Therefore as long as there is one last breath in this society, they will never be able to direct this country according to their agenda.

I suppose that Sri Lankan Airlines refused to give a ticket to the President, believing that they could disregard him if the government was toppled on the 14th.

As Mr Chilcott stated, why is your party opposing UNICEF in such a strong manner?

We have no need to make unfair, incorrect and absurd accusations against UNICEF or any other inter-state organisation. On three occasions, information was revealed to the country, about UNICEF, through special statements made in Parliament. All that was revealed with great responsibility. The information we revealed about the questions regarding the ready-to-eat meals that they brought into the country, which was actually the kind of processed food that is only used by soldiers in guerrilla warfare, was correct. Investigations carried out following our revelations proved that this food had indeed been brought in.

Their answers are similar to the answers that the man who climbed the tree had to give. They claim that this food was brought in to feed the people of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka will never suffer the kind of famine that necessitates this. It even contained water purifying tablets. Whatever happens in Sri Lanka, there will not come a time when we are unable to get a bottle of water. This proves that it was brought in to be given to the LTTE. We revealed this, and they have no suitable reply. They have sent Jennifer the person who was specially subjected to our accusation, out of the country. If she was blameless, there would have been no need to send her away.
Then, members of UNICEF participated in protests following the killings of several Red Cross workers. People employed in such organisations are not allowed to participate in protests of any kind. It has come to be known that the four people involved in the protests have been relieved of their duties. If the accusation we made were false, they could have kept these people.
Then, there is the issue of funding the LTTE through the TRO (Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation). We revealed information about it, together with internal documents. They are yet to give a clear answer on it. Millions have been transferred through the TRO, within a very short period of time. People with links to the LTTE were provided with employment in their organisation. We revealed all this. They have taken steps to install bulletproof metal sheets to their vehicles. The LTTE have been given the use of their vehicles. We revealed all this, with a lot of responsibility, along with vehicle and voucher numbers. Therefore, Chilcott, or anyone else, has no right to say that the government must not support the revelation of this information. Inter-state organisations are involved in a very smooth process of interference to save the LTTE.
Following all this, the Head of UNICEF visited Kilinochchi, without government approval. When the government has very clearly informed all those in the diplomatic community not to go without obtaining the Sri Lankan government’s approval, why did this person do so? This itself reveals their skillful intention. It is these inter-state organisations that are carrying out a very smooth process, on behalf of world imperialism.
For instance, they are working to destabilise the Latin American countries. If you take China, it recently asked its citizens not to furnish foreigners with information about their country. This means that inter-state organisations are working to destabilise these countries. Recently, the Nepalese Prime Minister made a public statement that organisations belonging to the UNO are initiating programmes to create divisions among its minorities. Even in East Timor, the people were asked two questions at a referendum on separating East Timor. One question asked them whether they wanted to keep East Timor with Indonesia the way Hong Kong is with

China; and the other asked them whether they wanted to separate. The UN workers in East Timor told the people to vote in favour of separation. They have no right to influence the decisions of the East Timorese. What they are involved in, whether it is Kosovo, East Timor and many other places in the world, is to invoke internal conflicts, and to use these to increase regional and state instability.
As you stated, certain countries are working against the activities of these types of inter-state organisations. Is there adequate governmental support for your party's activities against these inter-state organisations, based on the information revealed by your party?
We have not received the level of support that we expected, but limited steps have been taken. We are not mean-spirited to not appreciate this. These people have been called in for questioning. There is an investigation under way by the CID (Criminal Investigations Bureau). It has been said that in the UNICEF issue, the CID has been brought in for a discussion. Yet the decisions that have to be made, have not been made. This is a question of a lack of self reliance, which is why we once stated in Parliament to bring a suitable spine from somewhere in the world for our rulers.

Why do we lack the self reliance to make such a strong decision?

We will complete 60 years of independence in February 2008. The result of our journey during these 60 years is the loss of our spine. If our journey had been one of pride, had involved economic welfare, and an identity of our own, then at the end of these 60 years, we should have been able to stand on our own feet in front of any country, whether powerful or not. The beginnings of our country's civilisation show such a state. We were a country that produced steel in the third and fourth centuries. The pure steel needed to make the Damascus sword of the Arab was sent from our country. It is amazing that we had the necessary technology to produce steel. Recently, a British scholar revealed the technology that would have been needed to produce steel at the time. Today, we have had 60 years after independence. Following colonialism, we have been unable to even go back to the start. What we do today is to send the women of our country to Arab nations, instead of steel. Today, our economy is based on the money sent by the men and women who clean the streets, pavements and hospitals, and who work as domestic aides in houses, in these Arab countries. We should be ashamed of this. If we were a country with self-pride and a conscience, we should have been weeping at Rizana's fate. Our women, children and ourselves have been subjected to such a fate as a result of the journey we have taken. If we had been on the correct path for

60 years, we would not have gotten such a result. This is also the case in terms of the war and the changes in people's behaviour patterns.
It is as a result of this journey that we are unable to make firm decisions in the face of foreign forces and have been rendered helpless, as you mentioned before. We cannot regain that lost strength without changing all this, and directing the country towards a path that can enliven our country's power, strength and abilities.

Certain individuals used the UNICEF issue as a weapon to attack your party.
Those are the statements of those who are politically displaced. There are many who have been displaced following this budget; those who boarded the wrong bus at the wrong time. Mangala and Sripathi are two of those displaced. Then, many new members joined in, including Anura Bandaranaike. This is their way of expressing their helplessness and grief. There is nothing to do, but to laugh at these claims.

If our journey had been one of pride, had involved economic welfare, and an identity of our own, then at the end of these 60 years, we should have been able to stand on our own feet in front of any country, whether powerful or not.

At present, human rights and media freedom are being discussed in an unprecedented manner. Is this situation a result of weaknesses of the government or a result of too much freedom?

We have to accept that whatever the situation in the country, the protection of human rights of the people is the unshirkable responsibility of the government. Progress is difficult for a society in which human rights are violated. That is where we are in terms of human rights. If there are problems with regards to the violation of human rights, we can solve them ourselves. We will not let these problems be used to serve the agendas of outside forces. That is wrong.
As I mentioned before, in 1815, Governor Brownrigg used the Nayakkar King Rajasinghe's punishment of Ehelepola Kumarihami, the killing of Madduma Bandara, and the use of the people's labour for the construction of the lake as reasons for interference. They used the same human rights tune to take on the right to interfere back then, and their weapon, today, is still the same. They are trying to paint a disastrous picture by saying that human rights have been violated, people have gone missing, and many journalists have been killed, and use these as a red carpet from which to continue their invasive interferences.
The problem here is one of an exaggerated discussion. We are not saying that there are no human rights issues. In any case, we have to understand that a country at

war with the world’s number one separatist terrorist organisation cannot claim that its human rights are protected 100%. A country that is at war with an organisation such as the LTTE that created the world’s number one barbarous suicide bomb, that does not adhere to the principles of war in any way, and that is ready to commit any atrocity to achieve its objectives, will surely have some amount of human rights violations taking place.

When considering the human rights violations that could happen in our country, the violations that do actually happen are less. For instance, when a Claymore bomb explodes, our armed forces do not attack the nearest Tamil village. There is no record in recent history of the armed forces ever abusing a Tamil woman. They captured Vakarai and Thoppigala, but there is no accusation that they plundered the belongings of the Tamil people. It is the armed forces that bring these people to camps, provide them with food, and uplift their lives. We have proven that the Sri Lankan armed forces can maintain a high standard, even when they are at war with the world’s number one terrorist organisation.
In reality, what is referred to as human rights is the job of a fair amount of people in this country. Their livelihood consists of these slogans. Consider the issue of corruption. Corruption is the twin of the 1977 open economic policies. This child was born of that mother. Before 1977, corruption was discussed on a very minimal level. Even when it was discussed, it was a cause of shame and fear. Yet, at present, it is a general topic of discussion. Corruption is a twin of the journey taken so far. There are organisations that are there to look into the corruption they created. These organisations receive money from foreign countries to make reports saying that there is widespread corruption in Sri Lanka. We talk about corruption to find ways to remedy it, but they talk about it to make reports to send abroad and receive funds. There is no one to find out just how much of that money is subjected to corruption. Human rights are also similar to this. There is a group of people who inhabit Colombo society, and who are awake at night and asleep in the day. They are not people who earn money through a job, a business or hard work. They make money by picking through the country’s garbage, sending a report on it somewhere, doing a project report about it, and by ruining the country’s self-pride. They live on this money, and so they need human rights issues for their survival. If not, they need to show that there are such issues, and make their money that way.

The human rights issues at present have been exaggerated by various people. Yet, we must say that there is no exemplary protection of human rights in Sri Lanka, which cannot be, under this conflict-ridden situation. To pre-condition to the

stabilisation of human rights is the defeat of the LTTE. As long as a brutal and blood-thirsty organisation such as the LTTE remains armed, the chances of them changing into a behaviour that respects the legitimate armed forces, the police and civil society is slim.
Therefore, if someone is genuinely affected by the human rights condition in Sri Lanka, the only thing that he/she can do is to help defeat the tiger terrorists, who are the main obstacle. If someone is advocating the protection of human rights at the peril of losing the opportunity to defeat the tigers, that is similar to advocating a bath without getting wet.

In answer to a previous question, you maintained that although the activities of the armed forces in terms of the war are successful, that there have not been adequate steps taken by the government on the political front. Are you saying that the Government is not on the correct path regarding the war? Is their focus aimed another way?

On the war front, liberating the east was a great success. We are happier that we were a party that worked to obtain the judicial decision to divide the north and the east provinces. Now the Eastern Province is liberated in terms of the war and in terms of politics. The Eastern Province is no longer yoked to the north. What should happen is that developmental activities should follow the success of the war. Those people should be given help to rebuild their lives. They had no democratic rights or freedom under the brutal terrorist control of the LTTE. They lacked the freedom to freely engage in their livelihoods. These should be reinstated, and it is only then that the victories become certain. Although there are victories, we do not feel that there is an adequate process following these, from the government’s side. These processes happen at a very weak pace.
When considering the movements to liberate Vanni and Kilinochchi, we have the capability to attack them. Therefore it is clear that the armed forces are involved in a planned and consistent process. Yet this has to be accompanied by political backing, such as the abolition of the ceasefire agreement that we have mentioned before. Someone might say that the government is conducting the war with no regard for this agreement. This is a false argument. We accept that the ceasefire agreement is not in force at present. Yet this does not mean that it has died altogether. Let us assume that there was a change of government on December 14, and that UNP came into power. If that had happened, this agreement would have come into effect. Why would that happen? The ceasefire agreement coming into effect would mean that the LTTE would take up the positions it held at the time the

agreement was signed.

We cannot regain that lost strength without changing all this, and directing the country towards a path that can enliven our country’s power, strength and abilities.

We remember that the LTTE was present up to Sampur, and therefore according to the agreement, the LTTE should be there. This means, that if the ceasefire agreement came into effect, the LTTE would come into possession of the north, which they had lost earlier. This is why we say that the victories achieved need to be legitimised.
Take the issue of not banning the LTTE. Why did the Head of UNICEF go to Kilinochchi to meet LTTE without informing the government? Why are UN organisations still working with the LTTE? Why are the buildings they make for the LTTE? All this is because the LTTE has not been banned in Sri Lanka. If there is no ban, we cannot stop someone from an organisation that has not been banned, from declaring open their buildings.
The most important step to take is to ban the LTTE. That cannot be done by a gazette announcement, since another gazette announcement can cancel it. It has to be done through a parliamentary act. There are similar important steps that the government has not taken. This has put the victories of war in peril. We wholeheartedly accept the processes of the armed forces, which are being carried out extremely successfully. What we are saying is if this perilous situation is to be changed, there has to be a political process following it.

Is the reason for our inability to enter an effective political process, as you say, our dependence on inter-state organisations and Western imperialists?

It is about dependency and fear. We are aware of how those in power in Sri Lanka and the ministers believe that decisions should be made the way Western diplomats desire. Many governments come into power through the people’s vote, and then make decisions to please three or four ambassadors. If you take Chandrika Kumaratunga, she has often behaved according to the needs of these ambassadors in dealing with national issues. Norway was made a peace broker, and became involved in that issue, because of ambassadors. Our rulers believe that a country cannot be run without pleasing these people. Within the past two, three years there have been incidents that had not pleased them, but these things happen as if you are trying to drink medicine without the throat being aware of it. In reality, these

people do not like the war, but they do. Of course the government maintains that it is not war, but retaliation.

To take another example, America does not like President Mahinda Rajapaksa visiting Iran. It ultimately happens, but in the guise of dropping in on the way back from somewhere else. They do certain things that the Western countries do not approve of, by showing that these things are done unintentionally. Western countries are not incapable of understating this, for they are no fools. On the other hand, this behaviour garners some amusement. This shows that nothing would happen to us by not pleasing Western countries.

There is another international community, apart from that of the western countries. It is based on the power of this new international community that Russia's Putin garnered more than 60% of the vote. There is a new anti-Western international force created from among the Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, and even from Europe, which refuses to kneel at their feet. It is necessary to get together with this force, and make straightforward decisions, if a country like ours is to progress.

The problem is that we are scared. If we show these western countries that we are prepared to do certain things without fear, they will change their behaviour. They do not want to see Sri Lanka becoming a member of their opposing camp. The more tendencies we show of joining the opposing camp, the more valuable we become, and the more they will try to win us over. What has happened now is that we have come to be known to raise the hand at anytime, and thus have earned the fate of the homeless, with them trying to wash their hands over our heads. We must show our power and our value, and not doing so has brought us under their influence.

You stated previously that the JVP is not in agreement with the budget, because it is opposed to the government's lack of good governance, enormous wastage.

Definitely. The government is talking about patriotism. It believes that the only type of patriotism is defeating the tiger terrorists using the armed forces, and that stealing public funds is not an issue connected with this patriotism. The Cabinet, at present, is not a scientifically constructed one. There are many more ministers who have no understanding of their roles, since it is enough for them to have several opportunities to go abroad in a year, and to keep their wasteful lifestyles afloat. It is to this type of unscientific Cabinet, created haphazardly without a valid need that we are allocating public funds to. You are aware that each ministry has a ministerial expenditure allocation. Usually, ministers use this up by mid-year, and ask for more money through a supplementary estimate. It there are 35 ministers, there has to be 35 allocations; 107, if there are 107 ministers. If there are 35 ministers, only 35 offices will be required, but if there are 107, then you need 107 offices. For 35

ministers, only 35 teams of staff will be needed, now the figure is at 107. Dividing public funds into these 107 allocations does not mean progress for the country.

In Any Case, We Have To Understand That A Country At War With The World's Number One Separatist Terrorist Organisation Cannot Claim That Its Human Rights Are Protected 100%.

Therefore, it is very clear that this government has failed to give the qualities of good governance to this country; instead, what has been given is a corrupted and wasteful path. Patriotism and this are not twins. According to the government, it has given birth to triplets – patriotism, corruption and wastage. As far as we know, the same mother cannot give birth to all these three types, since triplets are identical to each other. What may happen is the birth of patriotism, good governance and anti-corruption. As far as we know, there can be no discussion on patriotism, without these factors. Therefore we firmly believe and would like to emphasise that following the budget, the government is in a red alert position. There is another opportunity for the government to leave this corrupted path. This is that sign, and if the government lacks the intelligence necessary to change, then the next time, it must be prepared to face the consequences of it as well.

Do you mean to say that the government is more interested in helping party loyalists, than in the development of the country?

All of that, actually. Everyone who holds government positions. I am not saying that there is not one or two who are not involved in this, but the majority have been given the leeway to waste public wealth, without any fear and in any way they want to. Steps that must be taken against these activities are not taken, and this lack of action has led to more of the same wastage. This is consistently becoming a country of cronies. Of course, this is not a problem that is limited to this government. This same issue was as strongly felt during the UNP's leader's time as well. His close group of friends had become the inheritors of the country's public wealth. This issue was present during Chandrika's time too. This government too is carrying on and exacerbating this situation. What we want is to prevent this, for this is not what the people expected at the 2005 Presidential Elections.
Many are of the opinion that the JVP is a party only good at organising strike actions.
No, it is wrong to say 'many', for it is only the opinion of a few. They do so either through ignorance of the JVP, or because they want to say something against the JVP. There is no reason to say that the JVP is only good at organising strikes, for we

have made significant contributions to the development of this country. There was a time when we held ministerial positions, and during that time we showed what we are capable of. Similarly, we have 37 MPs who are spread across the country, involved in public service. There is also development work being done at the Tissamaharama divisional secretariat. The social welfare organisation called Sri Lanka Red Star has supported the people during times of disaster in the country. In terms of trade unions, you are aware that the southern railway track destroyed by the tsunami was rebuilt by the All Ceylon Public Workers Trade Union. They charged nothing, and in fact, they worked day and night to complete it in 57 days, and prevented a contract worth millions from going to a foreign organisation. We have time and again proven our love, allegiance and generosity for this country, but some do not see any of this, and chose to see what they want to see.
It was the same during the recent budget as well. We activated traffic signals of red, green and orange, and the UNP was looking at their preferred colour, while the government was looking at the signal they wanted to. One of the greatest weaknesses of our country is that everyone looks at only what they prefer to look at, and what is most agreeable to them. Someone who hates the JVP will also only look at what can be used to hurt the JVP; the one who is in favour will do the opposite. None of it is based on the truth.

Your party is working to begin a new movement in the near future, isn't it?

Yes, we have initiated discussions on creating a new national front. At present, we have started discussions with individuals from political parties and various intellectuals. We hope to start working on it in early January, once the policy-making body is in place.
The Western community sees you as a basic type of party that is constantly obstructing the work of the government, and one that follows out-of-date methodologies.
If that is the way Western countries see us, then we are glad. We have no desire to modernise ourselves to suit their whims. What they want to see is the modernity of UNP. They think of us as old-fashioned, because we are not a party that would help take the country to an unnamed, unfortunate future, by showing no interest in the nation state; by not thinking of geographical boundaries; by lacking modern thinking that would work to divide the country at any time; by lacking love for the country; by spending time with friends with no feeling of responsibility towards the country; and by adhering to concepts of globalisation, and the global village. If they

see us as old-fashioned, we do not regret this sense of the old.
We would like to reiterate that we would never modernise ourselves to suit the needs of Western countries. We know whether we are old-fashioned or not, whether our thinking patterns are modern or not, whether we are ready to adapt to new contexts or not, whether we are ready to change or not and whether we are ready or not to use what is correct and to renounce what is wrong. We are of the firm belief that we know all this. No Western ambassador or any other person should concern themselves about changing the way we see ourselves. We answer to the people of this country, and what is of significance to us is the way the people view us.

Yet this has to be accompanied by political backing, such as the abolition of the ceasefire agreement that we have mentioned before.

Although the American Ambassador joined you for various discussions at certain times, erroneous statements have been made that have struck at your party's image. For instance, the recent developments at the University of Colombo were also blamed on your party. What is your opinion on this?

If we are a party desirous of destabilising the country, and one that acts without any sense of responsibility, the decision we made on December 14 would not have been what it was. Through practice we have shown that we are not a party that acts without any sense of responsibility. Had we been a party that did not concern ourselves with what happened to the country in the aftermath, this would not have been our decision.
The problem is we do not make decisions that please these ambassadors. It is only in the JVP that they find people's representatives, who they cannot control. It is possible to gain control of someone by small incentives, such as calling those in the ruling party and the UNP for a dinner, or sending a child for studies abroad. Yet the representatives in the JVP cannot be enticed in this manner. We are the ones who challenge and directly attack their views, something no other people's representative would do. They will never deal with these issues, for fear of failing to get a visa to America, or an opportunity for a child to study there.
We are not concerned with this type of problem, and so we initiate discussions. This angers the others, who in turn constantly view the JVP with hatred. This is why the situation at the University of Colombo is also being called a JVP problem. What is important is a solution to the problem, not whether it is a JVP problem or a LTTE problem. Our retaliatory actions reveal these people to be acting like small children,

and also reveal their small-mindedness. If these are individuals involved in powerful diplomatic services, they would not react so trivially.

What is your party's stand on the proposals presented by Mr Douglas Devananda?

We did not have an opportunity to make a special study of Minister Douglas Devananda's proposals. Yet it has been revealed that based on India's influence, the government is prepared to present a solution of power sharing. Yet, any proposal that contravenes the people's mandate of the 2005 Presidential Elections will create a new problem in the country. It is not important whether these proposals are presented by Mr Devananda, or President Rajapaksa; or whether these are presented to please India or someone else. It is inevitable that any document in breach of the 2005 Presidential Election mandate will create a new problem.

They do certain things that the Western countries do not approve of, by showing that these things are done unintentionally. Western countries are not incapable of understating this, for they are no fools.

Why don't JVP join the government and its rule, and to support it in its endeavours, as a party that backed this government in 2005, and as a party that is committed to achieving peace in this country?

In considering this government's journey from the start, we do not see one that can be embarked on with the government. Especially, when President Mahinda Rajapaksa came into power, we went into discussions with proposals, seeking to work together as an internal stakeholder of the government. We cannot be part of a journey that lacks discipline; we do not want to board a ship with no destination. The President was not ready to abide by the contents of those proposals, and so we had to leave those discussions. It is while conducting discussions with us that Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa sent the first love letter to Mr Karu Jayasuriya.

Under these conditions, the discussions broke down. From that point onwards, we have been involved in an independent political role in the opposition. There is no opportunity or any ability for the JVP to join the government as an internal stakeholder, because the government's journey lacks qualities of good governance, and leans towards corruption and wastage. There is no need to show any interest either. In reality, this is not a question of likes and dislikes, but a question of

whether it should be done or not. Political decisions are not based on likes and dislikes. Sometimes the right decision may not be what is liked. In decision-making, we must look at whether it is correct or not. If it is the correct decision, then we would like it; if it is incorrect, then we would not. In this situation, there is no reason for such a decision to be what we like.

We answer to the people of this country, and what is of significance to us is the way the people view us.

It is due to your party's support that the government came into power in 2004 and 2005. If not for your party's decision at the budget, the government would not be around either. The President has worked to bring the war into the correct path, in order to achieve peace. If your party's support is given in this regard, wouldn't the peace process be expedited?

We do not engage in the type of political behaviour that would obstruct the war being conducted by the armed forces. Yet, we will not let the government use the war as an excuse to cover up all its mistakes. We will not let those victories be used as a cloth that covers the nakedness of the government. Likewise, we are not involved in the type of politics that undermines these victories; we are not representative of the art of saying that Thoppigala is a jungle. We give these victories their due appreciation, and help push these forward.
Our practice is based on this principle. The armed forces have our support for their fight, and we wish them courage. We were the ones who initiated programmes such as 'Manel Mal' with the help of intellectuals, to provide this country with psychological strength. Therefore, we will not distance ourselves from that connection. Actually, it is a fight we hope for, and it needs to be concluded successfully. We will not let the government take advantage of it to conceal its mistakes.

If it is the correct decision, then we would like it; if it is incorrect, then we would not.