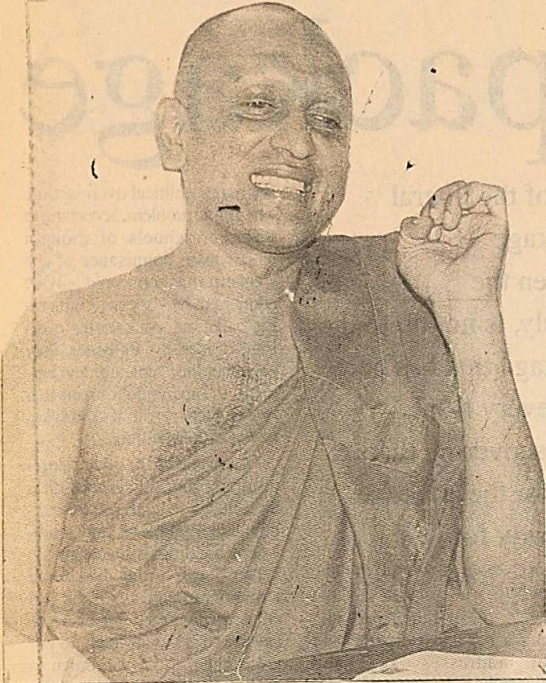


Co-operation vital to save Lanka from war and division-Sobitha.  
(1995, September 10). *The Sunday times*.



Ven. Sobitha: 'package has clauses that are very asathariya'

# Co-operation vital to save Lanka from war and division-Sobitha

The Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha Nayake Thera, one of the leading opponents of the Devolution Package has warned that the Package would create an 'achcharu' in Sri Lanka.

In an interview the monk said those who proposed or supported the package were day-dreaming and building a pie in the sky.

Excerpts from the interview.

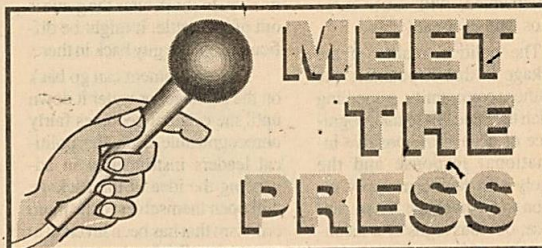
**Q.** During the election campaign you stated you were not supporting Chandrika Kumaratunga and the PA, but you were fighting the corruption and injustice of the UNP. Could you explain this?

**A.** For seventeen years the UNP government indulged in corruption and political murders. It alienated India and so that country offered training camps, weapons and cash to strengthen the LTTE. This accounts for the Mahashakthi (great power of fighting) shown by the LTTE.

We were angry with the UNP. Also the UNP signed the Indo-Sri Lanka accord which merged the North and East and thereby making these merged provinces a stronghold of the Tamils. We also opposed the coming of the IPKF.

**Q.** You have been vehemently attacking the devolution package. Why?

**A.** The package has clauses



By Roshan Peiris

that are 'asathariya' (very unfair) to the Sinhala and Muslim people. This package seeks to divide the country on racial lines and we would have racial wars in the future. The Tamils will virtually own the Northern and Eastern provinces. They will first give land to those who have been living there and then to those who come within the Regional Council all of whom would naturally be Tamils. It is grossly unfair to give one third of our land to seven percent of the population. Two thirds of our coast will also be

long to them.

**Q.** Then what do you propose as a solution?

**A.** Our solution is that those who have been born and bred in this country be they Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher or Malay should have the freedom to live anywhere. After all take Wellawatte in the heart of Colombo. Many Tamils live there with Sinhala and other people. So why cannot it be adopted as an all-island policy?

**Q.** If some of the proposals

are amended will you support the package?

**A.** I hope the bad features will be removed. There must be provision to remove any Regional Council that works against the interests of the nation. All state land must come under the Centre. The provision for Regional Councils to get aid directly from other countries must be removed. If not our foreign policy will not have direction. It will be at cross purposes. The Regional Council will then use this right to get arms and ammunition which the LTTE is doing now secretly. Though so much had been offered, the LTTE has rejected all and is continuing the war with greater intensity.

Neelan Tiruchelvam, Douglas Devananda, Kumar Ponnambalam and crowd are dreaming and making pie in the sky. They are not down to earth.

**Q.** Minister S. Thondaman is asking for a separate Regional Council for the Indian

Tamils and the right for the LTTE to rule the North and East for five years. How do you view this?

**A.** He well illustrates the points I have made. Our country will be politically speaking an 'achcharu' with this one and that one asking for regional divisions. He is really asking for Eelam on behalf of Vellupillai Prabhakaran. If Prabhakaran becomes Chief Minister he will appoint his men to the police force including the Police Commissioner. Police power must be vested with the Centre.

**Q.** In the first year of PA government has corruption decreased or increased.

**A.** I don't want to speak against the government as such. Not just now. Our main wish is to save the country from this terrible war. We would like no divisions as Sinhala Buddhists, Tamils, UNP, PA and so on. We should forget differences and cooperate to save the country from war and from being divided.