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What is Nirj Deva's real agenda?

30 August 2004

By Ibrahim Hameed

Even at the very first moment I wondered that how could Nirj Deva, a British member of the European parliament, be sitting beside the anti-Maldivian government element who was holding a press conference, in Colombo, on the 16th August, firing a salvo of ghastly propaganda against the elected government of Maldives, unless the former was not pursuing his own personal agenda.

That day, the so-called spokesman of Maldives Democratic Party (MDP), Mohamed Latheef, called for a "boycott" of Maldives as a tourist destination, in an apparent desperate attempt to overthrow the government of Maldives.

Almost borrowing words from Latheef, Deva called Maldives "a land of torture, oppression and murder."

He said: "The truth is, far from being the majestic paradise promoted by scores of glossy brochures in travel agents up and down High Streets across the United Kingdom, the Maldives is a land of torture, oppression and murder."

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Did Deva know the truth, or had he the patience to know the truth? I doubt. In fact, he could not have been an honorable man as he might have pretended. Otherwise, he would not have rushed to give his verdict, sitting besides a self-appointed person, as if he was the latter's henchman.

It is now reported that Nirj Deva was lobbying for an EU sanction against the Maldives.

How could a supposed honorable member of European parliament behave so irrationally? My assumption is that the anti-Maldivian government elements have bribed him, because of which only he was acting like their poodle. It is also possible that Deva was promised of a huge booty that awaits him, if he plays a leading role to overthrow the present government of Maldives.

Deva is likely to scornfully snub off these assertions perhaps as something sponsored by the Maldivian government. But why else would he be sitting beside an anti-Maldivian government element, borrowing words from him, and hastily passing a judgment? If Deva is after the truth, and is wishing anything good for the Maldivian, then he might have to listen to those elements but hold back his judgment until he was able to verify what he heard. And then he should try to find a middle ground, so that the ordinary people of this country would not be negatively affected.

However, Deva hastened to enlist Maldives for an EU sanction. Didn't he know that it would be the ordinary people of this country who would bear the brunt of such an action? As a Maldivian, I have only one message for this Brown Englishman: you are not invited, and you are not welcome in the Maldives, ever!