

A catalogue of hypocrisy and sinister motivesThe moment someone is put behind a counter, Albert Camus has said, he or she begins to put on airs and graces. That is what authority does to nincompoops sans any achievement. They, when placed in a position of authority, throw their weight about, given half a chance in a bid to nurse their massive egos.

The same goes for some hoity-toity types in foreign diplomatic missions in this country and their local acolytes. No attempt is being made to tar all foreign diplomats with the same brush. The majority of them are decent men and men who can boast of having strengthened bonds between their countries and the host nation. This comment--let it be stated at the very outset--is not about those respectable diplomats. Instead, it is about a bunch of rotten eggs in the garb of foreign envoys advancing an anti-Sri Lanka agenda.

Some foreign missions are infested with terror sympathizers--mostly their local staff--who manifestly derive sadistic pleasure by riding rough shod over visa applicants. Only the terror activists get visas over the counter! If the objective that foreign nations are trying to achieve through their missions here is to build friendly ties with Sri Lankans, they have achieved exactly the opposite of it by employing such workers. Those unsavoury elements are however not confined to visa sections. At some missions they have infiltrated the highest decision making levels.

The UN Colombo office, it may be recalled, went all out to help the LTTE gain international recognition in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami disaster. Some closet Tigers in that office almost succeeded in taking the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to LTTE-held parts of the country. What stood in their way was stiff resistance from President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who, to her credit, refused to allow Annan to visit those areas. She came under a vilification campaign from a section of the international media over that issue. A journalistic hanger-on trailing Mr. Annan went down to the level of casting slur on her in a book he wrote subsequently.

The pro-terror elements who overstepped their diplomatic limits in a bid to take Annan to meet the LTTE are at present all out to prevent foreign dignitaries from meeting the Eastern Province Chief Minister S. Chandrakanthan, who has entered the democratic mainstream, having defected from the LTTE. Their intentions are as clear as crystal. They don't want any Tamil party to emerge as an alternative to the LTTE and explode the myth of the latter's sole representative status. They are trying to achieve their sinister end by starving the anti-LTTE outfits like the TMVP of international recognition. These diplomatic mercenaries are, no doubt, the worst enemies of democracy but they have remained true friends of Prabhakaran. (He should seriously consider conferring mahavir title on them!)

It is against this backdrop that the controversial cancellation of an EU delegation's visit to the Eastern Province in July should be viewed. The EU delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia led by Robert Evans had to call off its two-day visit to Trincomalee due to what the EU parliamentarians chose to describe as 'a catalogue of chaos and confusion' [involving domestic air travel].

The present government has, as is fairly well known, earned notoriety for chaos and confusion in most of the things it does. But, on this score, it was clear that someone at the EU mission in Colombo sabotaged the high profile EU visit by cancelling a domestic flight, (for the reservation of which the EU delegation had advanced US \$ 2,500) and ordering a flight all the way from South Africa.

The predictable outcome of this well planned exercise was last minute chaos, as the South African flight needed regulatory security and safety clearance to conduct an air transfer. Sri Lanka was conveniently blamed for the bungling which, the world was told, had prevented the EU MPs from going to the Eastern Province. This newspaper exposed the other day that the fault lay not with Sri Lanka but with the EU mission in Colombo. It provided details of the cancelled domestic (Deccan) flight.

Now, we hear that the Sri Lanka government has taken up the issue with the EU. The Foreign Ministry has sought a clarification from the EU over the cancellation of its delegation's visit to Trincomalee. It has pointed out, not to put too fine a point on it, the EU Colombo Office's sheer stupidity displayed in cancelling a domestic flight and ordering an aircraft from South Africa.

The Sunday Island yesterday reported that, in a letter to Charge d'Affaires of the EU Colombo mission Peter Maher, the Foreign Ministry had faulted the EU delegation for pinning the blame on the Sri Lankan government for the cancellation of its visit. It has also called for a withdrawal of Robert Evan's statement critical of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's ambassador to the EU Ravinatha Ariyasinha is reported to have brought the conduct of the EU delegation concerned as well as that of the EU Colombo mission to the notice of President of EU Parliament Dr. Hans-Gert Pottering.

That is the way to deal with errant functionaries of foreign missions pulling for the Tigers. They must be exposed for what they really are and reported to their big bosses whom they put on a regular diet of misinformation about this country.

They must be made to realise that Sri Lanka is a sovereign state in spite of its size and they cannot function as self-appointed viceroys surrounded by a coterie of boot-licking pet poodles aka pro-terror NGOs and INGOs.