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The incompetence of Lorraine Friday

Introduction

On Wednesday January 17th 2018, the opposition NDP held a much publicized media conference, which clearly highlighted the faults of the political leader of that party, Dr. Lorraine Friday. In fact, political scientists might go as far as to state, that the media conference, or “media concert”, has shown Friday to be a man of low intelligence, for that matter “a dunce”, when it comes to matters relating to the economic development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The media conference was called ostentatiously, to continue the wasted discussion on the Yugge Farrell issue. Imagine a modern-day political party calling a media conference to discuss this matter, when there are greater issues of far more importance which should be highlighted. In fact, the former leader of the NDP, Arnhim Eustace, lamented this while on radio last week. He wanted to move away from any discussion of matters related to “commess” and to spend more time discussing the economy of the country, and the upcoming budget.

For that matter, Friday, after wasting the time of the media, went on to state that “this is what we should be focusing on, especially as we come to the budget. Instead we find ourselves, day after day, dealing with stories of scandals when the business of the people is being left unattended”. Well if this is his position, why did Friday, Kay Bacchus Baptiste, and Daniel Cummings spend eighty percent of their “media concert” discussing scandals?

The 2017 IMF report

The Opposition Leader found himself confused over a number of issues in the IMF report. For example, he could find no reason to justify the increase in the unemployment figures, from 20.9 percent in 2000, to 25 percent today. He laments that all of what he calls the magical things the ULP has done, could not address this situation. But Friday can't get his mind around the fact that it is these “magical strategies” by the ULP administration which has kept the unemployment figure at around 25 percent, which, while very low as compared to the rest of the region, means that more work has to be done by the ULP.

But Friday's problem stems from the fact that his party, and some of his key followers, have already stated that the unemployment rate in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, is around 50 percent. Clearly, in their narrow political vision, things are so bad in St. Vincent and the Grenadines under the ULP administration, that half of the labour force is unemployed. Now the IMF has thrown a spanner in their

works, by stating that the figure is actually 25 percent, up by just four plus percentage points from 2001.

Then there is the matter of the outstanding tax arrears to the value of \$300 million dollars. Friday acknowledges that the collection of the taxes will improve the fiscal position of the government, but adds that this will not really generate growth in the economy. Where did Dr. Lorraine Friday learn his economics? He asserts that the country needs to attract investment to further drive the economy, but then he leads the charge to oppose one of the main vehicles to do this, the Argyle International Airport.

This is truly amazing to say the least. The NDP is using the IMF report to criticize the work of the ULP administration, when they themselves oppose many of the policies and strategies that Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves is implementing, to boost the economy.

Every time there is question period in the House of Assembly, the members of the opposition call for this or that road in their constituency, to be repaired. Well the monies to finance this construction and repair work, will come from several sources, including the collection of taxes. One would expect that the NDP would support the government in the overall drive to collect all taxes. But no, you have the likes of Kay Bacchus Baptiste declaring that she is not satisfied that the Minister of Finance knows how to properly manage the money; so even if it is collected, it will be misused. What a political party.

Conclusion

It is clear to all and sundry that the reason why the NDP held it's "media concert", was to get an opportunity to reap some political capital out of the Yugge Farrell matter, and somehow tarnish the reputation of Camillo Gonsalves, on the eve of his delivery of his first budget. Lorraine Friday has lost control of his party, and so now it is being driven by the likes of Kay Bacchus Baptiste and a bunch of internet crazies, who operate from the apparent safety of their adopted homes in Canada and the United States.

That a modern day political party, should try to derive political capital from the mental health of a young Vincentian woman, is mind boggling, and downright nasty. They in the NDP care nothing for the unfortunate plight of this young woman, and the circumstances that affect her at this time. And all this in an attempt to get at the new Minister of Finance, Camillo Gonsalves, and to derail his budget presentation.

But have no fear. With the help of The Almighty, Camillo Gonsalves will deliver the 2018 estimates of expenditure and revenue next Monday January 29th 2018. And then one week later, he will deliver his maiden budget address, on Monday February 5th 2018.