

**May 12<sup>th</sup> 2023**

## **THE WINDWARD HIGHWAY AND SVG-TAIWAN RELATIONSHIP**

---

### **Introduction**

During a recent debate in the House of Assembly, Minister of Finance and MP for East St George Comrade Camillo addressed what he referred to as the 5 stages of NDP opportunism. It was a scathing but very honest exposé on the modus operandi of the parliamentary opposition in the country that is essentially a mixture of positions that shifts, when necessary, is revised when required, or invented when none exists. According to Comrade Camillo, the process starts with the NDP condemning any articulated plan/program of the ULP as a lie or an election gimmick but ends with the NDP claiming the same policy as their own. This type of blatant distortion of facts and events has become the hallmark of a desperate opposition that has no credible ideas for development and is losing traction more and more among Vincentians especially the youth. As the youth look towards the future, they analyse the circumstances and conclude which party is promoting ideas that are most compatible with their best interest. Time and again, they correctly conclude that the ULP is the natural party of young people since it's the only party that has a clear vision for the future of this country. The debate in the House of Assembly on the Road Improvement Bill was just the latest example of NDP's opportunism with their shameless attempt to misleading the house and the Vincentian public about their record while in government. They sought to take credit for two things done under various administration claiming to have done them while they were in office. The claims were not just laughable, they were downright false, however it didn't prevent the repeating of the claims by their members in the face of facts that prove otherwise. This week we examine the ridiculous claims made by the opposition for what they are — dishonest, misleading, and totally false.

### **Our Record on Roads Include the Windward Highway**

Despite his disrespectful shouting across the hall of the Parliament in defiance of the Speaker's intervention, and his incessant pounding of the table, the facts were the same as before those theatrics of the West Kingstown MP. It would take some maneuvering to make a point that the ULP has neglected the roads in SVG, while at the same time recognising that it is this same ULP that constructed the Windward, South Leeward (Nelson Mandela) and Vigie Highways. To reconcile the two positions, members of the opposition have no choice but to make the spurious claim that "the NDP conceived, designed and implemented the Windward Highway project". The fact simply is that it wasn't until 2003 that monies were budgeted and spent for works related to the design and construction of the Windward Highway. Comrade Camillo did a masterful job, using the estimates of Income and Expenditure for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2003 to expose the lie that any designs at all for the Windward highway was done by the NDP, since no part of the EC\$4 million

allocated from 1999 to 2001 for the designs was ever spent. It is this ULP lead by Comrade Ralph that financed the design of the Windward Highway and sourced the finance to complete the work from Kingstown to Fancy, including securing the Byrea tunnel, making it wider, and putting in sidewalks and lights. The project also included the building of the historic Rabacca Bridge and rehabilitating other bridges along the way, including the Colonaire Bridge that required major work. It was the ULP that source and secured funding for the project from the CDB, the Republic of China (Taiwan) as well as local sources to complete the construction of the highway. The main highways in our country are well kept and the credit for this, except for the North Leeward highway, belongs to the ULP, plain and simple. Now our government has secured funding to embark on a massive program to repair our secondary roads, and we deserve every bit of credit for this initiative.

### **We Remain Committed to Taiwan**

It was in 2016, after the electoral defeat that the NDP under then leader Arnhim Eustace made the official announcement of the change in the foreign policy of their party. No doubt driven by ulterior motives including the prospects of selling off the patrimony of SVG, through the sale of passports to the highest bidder, the party was ready to make the ultimate trade-off. Reading from a prepared statement, the origins of which may well be traced beyond the creativity and penmanship of the party leader, it was formally announced that the new policy of the party out of government is to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the only legal representative of the Chinese people and Taiwan, as a province. The statement further went on to state, that once elected, an NDP government would move to have the policy of the party reflected in governance, by breaking diplomatic ties with Taiwan and establishing such ties with China. For context, it must be remembered that it is not possible to recognize both countries, its one or the other and the current NDP recognizes the PRC. It was therefore quite astounding to hear the member for East Kingstown proclaim incorrectly that it was the NDP that established diplomatic relations with Taiwan, has always supported Taiwan and doesn't intend to change that. All claims are patently false, the SVLP under Milton Cato established relations, and the NDP's stance is the non-recognition of Taiwan's independence. The ULP under Comrade Ralph has strengthened the relationship between this country and Taiwan, standing up for Taiwan's sovereignty and independence and calling for its inclusion in UN agencies and other bodies. It is the ULP that worked with Taiwan to establish a scholarship program that has trained more than 250 university graduates, secured funding from Taiwan to construct learning resource centres across the country, build the Rabacca Bridge, build the terminal at the AIA, and contribute to the modern port in Kingstown. While the NDP is trying to dishonestly take credit for SVG's relationship with Taiwan, the ULP continues to work with the government and people of Taiwan on issues of mutual interest building a strong and enduring relationship. When Taiwan needs an ally on the global stage, they know where to turn, to the ULP government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.