

## 23.5.25

### **WE WILL NEVER SELL OUR CITIZENSHIP NOR BREAK RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN**

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#### **TWO ISSUES**

As SVG gears up for general elections later this year or early next year, two issues have been gaining prominence: First, the refusal of the ULP government to sell our treasured citizenship and passport; and secondly, maintenance of our steadfast diplomatic relations with our reliable ally, the Republic of China (Taiwan). The opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) wants to change all this: It has as its main planks the selling of our citizenship and passport and the breaking of relations with Taiwan in favour of the People's Republic of China (PRC) or mainland China.

Indeed, both issues are conjoined in SVG: The NDP is being financed by the overseas companies which specialise in selling citizenship and passports to foreigners (mainly vagabonds and disreputable persons); and some of the companies are owned or controlled by mainland Chinese with links to the government of mainland China.

In CARICOM, there are 14 member-states but only five are selling their citizenship and passports (Antigua and Barbuda; Dominica; Grenada; St. Kitts and Nevis; and St. Lucia); and of the 14, nine have diplomatic relations with mainland China (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago). Those with diplomatic ties to Taiwan are Belize, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The three CARICOM countries with the most valued passports, globally, are Bahamas, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. None of these three sells its citizenship and passports. SVG is the only English-speaking CARICOM member-state which does NOT sell its citizenship and passports, AND has diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Our unique status, in this regard, has served SVG very well in its economy and international relations. Indeed, SVG has excellent relations with countries that have diplomatic relations with mainland China. In fact, almost universally, these countries respect and applaud our independent stance. It is noteworthy that in June 2019, SVG defeated El Salvador overwhelmingly for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (185 votes for SVG; 6 against; and 2 abstentions), the smallest country ever to achieve this feat; and in 2023, SVG was unanimously elected as the Pro Tempore President of the Community of

States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC), the first English-speaking Caribbean country and the smallest ever to do so. In regional or global entities to which SVG and China belong, our government does not pick any fight with China; on matters of mutual interest, we oft-times collaborate. But, historically Taiwan has been our faithful friend; we will never allow any other country to bully us to abandon or sever our friendship with Taiwan. SVG under the ULP government is a friend of all; and we strive for a better world.

## **THE CASE AGAINST SELLING CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORTS**

The ULP government has repeatedly affirmed that it will never sell its citizenship and passports. Our position is based on five grounds: Principle; Practicality; Unsustainability; the Recklessness involved in selling; and it Undermines Democracy.

- (1) **PRINCIPLE**: The ULP holds as a matter of high principle that the highest office in the land is that of citizen; higher than Governo General or Prime Minister. Citizenship is the elemental, existential bond that links individuals together in a political society called a NATION-STATE. It is not a commodity for sale. And the passport is the outward sign of the inward grace of citizenship; that, too, is not for sale to any buyer as if it were an ordinary commodity. Indeed, in SVG the two most important books in our citizens' households are the Bible and the Passport; the Bible is sacred, spiritually; the Passport is sacrosanct, temporally. Neither must be sullied, nastied, or compromised by that which is unsavoury, for example, by treating them as mere transactional commodities. Our birthright, our sovereignty is precious. Our National Hero, Chatoyer, would never have contemplated the infamy of selling our citizenship.
- (2) **PRACTICALITY**: The central objective of any country that sells its citizenship and passport is to provide a major source of money for government's recurrent and capital spending. Thus, at its core, it must sell lots of passports. The more passports a country sells, the more money it receives; selling more invariably means cutting corners with due diligence. It is well-nigh impossible to conduct high quality due diligence on applicants galore in these circumstances in these small countries. Everyone knows this to be case. The reliable reports of vagabonds galore, disreputable persons, and even terrorists who purchase citizenship and passports as commodities, are evidence in this regard. The Americans, Canadians, British, and Europeans know this.
- (3) **UNSUSTAINABLE**: As a major plank in a country's strategy to finance development, the selling of citizenship and passports is unsustainable. The would-be purchasers of other countries' citizenship/passports are from counties which cannot secure entry at all, or easily, to the USA,

Canada, Britain, or the 27 member-states of the European Union; these would-be purchasers want to enter easily these western countries. It is unsustainable to continue selling citizenship/passports because after some time the governments of the USA, Canada, Britain, and the European Union will clamp down; this is what is happening now. Vincentians are in real danger of losing visa-free access to the United Kingdom and the countries of the European Union, if SVG begins to sell the citizenship and passports; even getting visas would be more difficult and problematic. Dangers loom, too, in respect of money transfers to SVG. The risks are real and huge. Only the foolish and the greedy take these risks against the backdrop of the sacrosance of our passport and the other downsides of selling our citizenship.

Less than two years ago, Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, averred publicly that his government's "Citizenship by Investment" programme (selling of citizenship and passports) was on "borrowed time." "Borrowed time" means that the programme is unsustainable; it is coming to an end! This is sooner rather than later; time is running out fast on this vulgar outrage which is antithetical to SVG's interest.

- (4) **RECKLESSNESS**: It is pure economic and political recklessness to base your "financing for development" strategy on selling citizenship and passports. It is akin to a junkie on cocaine addiction. Countries in the Eastern Caribbean that sell citizenship and passports rely on this as a source of their revenue for between 15 percent to 55 percent of their recurrent expenditure. When the passport money dries up, as it is drying up and will dry-up further, the addicted government will suffer severe "withdrawal symptoms", metaphorically; the government and people of that country will crash economically and politically. All hell will break loose.

The NDP is particularly reckless in its current eagerness to promote this selling of citizenship/passports at the very time when the programme is in its death-throes globally. In the European Union, the similar programmes in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Malta were forced to close shop. The noose is tightening everywhere else. President Trump's US\$5 million "golden green card" is not the same thing as selling citizenship or passport; only dummies, and the selfish, greedy ones in SVG contend otherwise.

- (5) **UNDERMINING OF DEMOCRACY**: The companies, professionals, and agents involved in the business of selling a country's citizenship/passports routinely undermine the country's democracy and good governance. In countries which sell citizenship/passports, the rival companies,

professionals, agents pick which political party favoured them: there is an in-crowd and out-crowd of these companies and personages; they finance the competing political parties. Money becomes the oxygen of elections and popular democracy.

### **POLITICAL TANGLE, MONEY JINGLE**

In SVG, the companies, professionals, wannabe agents who traffic in the selling of citizenship/passports are fully in support financially, propaganda-wise, and more of the opposition NDP. They are conjoined with those who will profit from the establishment of relations with mainland China. The NDP has been directed by these conjoined forces to abandon their former campaign operators (SCL) and offshoots of Cambridge Analytica); others have now been chosen for the NDP; the paymasters are calling the tune. This campaign is now directed out of a unit within the Embassy of a foreign country resident in a neighboring Caribbean country. (Incidentally, that Embassy is not American, Canadian, Australian, Japanese, Korean, or Russian).

Incidentally, too, there are persons high-up in the NDP who are already working or linked with companies selling citizenship/passports from other Eastern Caribbean countries. We in the ULP know who they are. We also know their link to a Jamaican financier who was hired recently in a senior executive position in a regional sporting entity; that is among the principal reasons for the hiring.

A few years ago, in the clash with Allen Stanford of Caribbean Star airline, Comrade Ralph told him: "If money were everything, the Americans would not have lost the war in Vietnam." That telling is still relevant.

Moreover, the maturing sons and daughters of parents who purchased citizenship/passports for the entire families are now playing vital roles in subverting democracies in some countries in our Caribbean. The ULP will NEVER allow that to happen here in SVG! NEVER, NEVER!

Ask yourself this question: Why are all these foreigners financing, and waging, political war in SVG against the ULP and Ralph? They do not care if a civil war is ignited in our beautiful SVG. Be assured that Ralph and the ULP will NEVER permit, allow, condone or engage in, the selling of our citizenship or passports. Let everyone be clear on this.

In the programmes of selling citizenship and passports, corruption is at its core, including corrupting our democracy. The wannabe-sellers of our passports are determined to sell as many as they can as fast as they can. Their local collaborators want to sell and thief as much as they can, as fast as they can; speed is essential for them.

## **THE CHINA CONNECTION**

Vincentians overwhelmingly do not want to break relations with Taiwan and embrace mainland China. We have good reasons for our stance. The aggression and greed of the Chinese companies against the ULP and Ralph combine their economic and political agendas for hegemony. They will fail, too. So, too will the on-line publications, radio stations, commentators, and assorted opportunists who are paid by the wannabe foreign sellers of our citizenship and passports, and the Chinese operators. We have the facts! They will be exposed in due course.

## **IMMATURE NONSENSE**

Some well-meaning but immature “non sequiturs” have been advanced by presumably learned persons in favour of selling citizenship and passports. The first bit of abstract nonsense is that every country has the sovereign right to define and accord citizenship as it sees fit. Within well-recognised limits of international law, that is true. But other countries also have a sovereign right to disregard any self-serving definition and reject your passport-holder, or put limits upon the passport’s acceptability, for the purpose of entering their countries. If those “other countries” such as USA, Canada, Britain, and member-states of the European Union, are the desirable ones for your passport-holders to enter and reside, what practical purpose or benefit is your sovereign right as a seller of passports? Who will purchase them?

Secondly, there is the obscene proposition by some advocates of passport-selling that it is an anti-imperialist activity. Is anti-imperialism merely defined by doing something which the western world opposes? This is such an infantile and essentially servile proposition with no scientific or rational rigour which reflexively defines yourself in opposition to another.

The truth is that selling your citizenship and your passport to rich Chinese, Russians, certain Middle-Easterners, Afghans, Africans, and others is selling your soul, your patrimony, your sovereignty, your nationhood, to the holder of money, usually dirty money. That is a species of subjugation every bit as harmful to one’s country as imperial domination. The hegemony of money simpliciter, of dirty money specifically, is a path to thralldom. Embrace the money, and the greed for it, is the road to cock-eyed reasoning.

So much for those follies which define blue as pink, and pink as blue! Grow up guys and entre the real world, not a make-believe world in your infantile heads with puerile abstractions.

## **ASSAULT ON OUR PEOPLE’S CORE VALUES**

The coming general elections are about the soul of our nation. Among other things, our wise, elderly ancestors taught us: (i) Do not grudge anybody what they have; you don't know how they got it; (ii) Work hard in a disciplined way to achieve what you want and train or educate yourself to make something of yourself; (iii) Beware of easy money: Easy come; easy go; (iv) Treasure and love your family, your neighbour, your community, and your country; (v) Look out for one another; solidarity is important; (vi) Take care of your environment; cleanliness is next to Godliness; and (vii) Believe in God, our Father and Saviour.

The worshiping of easy money, laziness, jealousy, rank individualism, and dog-eat-dog attitudes are at the core of this fantasy of development by selling citizenship and passports. Abandoning our faithful friend of Taiwan for mainland China is like the proverbial dog on the bridge who left the bone and dived for the gleaming shadow of it in the water.

One recurring theme in the NDP's outlook is that they know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

The debate ensues; the struggle continues for the beautiful soul of our nation and the genius resident in our people. The NDP will fail yet again!

Meanwhile, the ULP government advances its compelling developmental narrative, in practice. The progress since 2001 is evident for all to see. And we have not sold our passports.

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