**June 21st 2019**

**Non Permanent membership at the UN Security Council**

**Introduction**

Last week St. Vincent and the Grenadines continued to receive positive reviews from local, regional and international commentators, lecturers, columnists and other persons, who want to compliment the country, on the achievement, as being the smallest country to attain a non permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Persons here and there are truly mesmerized about this achievement, the way the ULP administration went about the campaign process over a ten year period, and the possibilities for economic and social development that are available. Naturally there are those, particularly some members of the opposition NDP, who desperately tried to derail the process, including the so-called Frontline. This is an NDP grouping, led by Luzette King of the tsunami fame. Readers will remember her Face book posting, where she wished that a tsunami could destroy the airport project at Argyle.

For the most part the local, regional and international comments have been very favourable. Most writers have commented that the size of the country is an indication of the massive victory at the United Nations. A victory of 185 to 6, over El Salvador, is indeed a tremendous vote of confidence, and a clear indication of the stature of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on the international stage.

**Behind the result**

It is instructive to quote from a letter written by David Commissiong, who describes himself as a proud citizen of the Caribbean. Writing in the Searchlight newspaper of June 14th 2019, Commissiong says “Clearly, this electoral victory, with such a commanding majority of votes, is a tribute to the very principled, courageous and responsible manner in which St. Vincent and the Grenadines has conducted its Foreign Policy over the past several years”.

It is very instructive that this statement should come from David Commissiong, at a time when at home, the ULP is being criticized by the opposition NDP, for the way in which the government’s foreign policy is being implemented. The ULP is also being criticized for the countries it has befriended. Clearly a political entity that subscribes to the view of “What will America think”, could never understand the approach of the ULP administration.

In the 2015 manifesto, on page 62, it states that the ULP will accelerate the preparatory work in the quest for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to become a non permanent member of the UN Security Council, for the 2019-2021 period.

So there can be no question of the ULP springing this subject on Vincentians, as some commentators are claiming. In fact this subject was raised in the House of Assembly, around 2010.

And so the ULP administration continued its process of strengthen relations with close friends and partners, without in any way, creating any discordance.

And the work has been tremendous. Every time Prime Minister Gonsalves paid an official visit to any country, the subject of building stronger diplomatic relations, was always on his mind. Every time Prime Minister Gonsalves attends the general assembly of the United Nations, the issue of building stronger relations was always part of his agenda.

As a small state, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has always been at the forefront of the international debate on a number of issues, including climate change, and reparations for native genocide and African slavery. The score line of 185 to 6, shows the level of respect and admiration, that a great number of countries have, for the work that the ULP administration has been doing, in the area of foreign relations.

As David Commissiong puts it, “this tremendous vote of confidence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines demonstrates the respect that the great majority of the countries of the world will always have, for a nation that defends the all important principles of international law, and that promotes a constructive diplomacy of peace”.

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the ULP administration, has already extended thanks to the nations which supported its candidacy at the Security Council. The ULP administration now extends thanks to those Vincentians at home and abroad, who supported the candidacy of their beloved country, and who, in one way or another, demonstrated their show of support, by word and deed.

The leadership provided by Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves during this process, has been outstanding. Every step of the way, Dr. Gonsalves has been able to use his experience and his foresight, to guide the process. Dr. Gonsalves has already shown the country how to cross the chasm, with giant steps. We all saw this through the Education Revolution, the International Airport at Argyle and the bridge at the Rabacca Dry River.

**Conclusion**

The ULP administration must now prepare itself for some hard work at the United Nations Security Council, for the two year period beginning January 1st 2020. Prime Minister Gonsalves has already indicated that the staff at the UN mission in New York, headed by Ambassador I Rhonda King, will get some support, as the mission prepares for its new role.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kingstown will also get busier in 2020, providing advice, support and direction to the UN Mission in a number of ways. The ULP administration will be on the lookout for the many opportunities that will become available, to provide economic and social development for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The future indeed looks brighter for our beloved country, despite the efforts of the NDP and their spokespersons like Luzette King, Margaret London, Patches Knights and Jeffery Providence, to attempt to block our progress. But they will not succeed.

What ere the future brings, our faith will see us through.