"Sri Lanka no threat to international security, no nagging concern to UNSC"- Russian envoy Vladimir

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By Ravi Ladduwahetty Colombo (Asiantribune.com): Sri Lanka is no threat to international security and there should not be any nagging concerns to the United Nations Security Council on the Sri Lankan affairs which are largely internal, Ambassador of the Russia Federation to Sri Lanka Vladimir Mikhaylov told Asian Tribune.

"Russia, China and some benevolent countries to Sri Lanka do not see the need for the frequent preparation of frequent reports on Sri Lanka as we do not see the Sri Lankan state of affairs as a threat to international security and peace," the Russian Federation envoy said. This is a sequel to some of the non members of the United Nations Security Council to arrange for a briefing on the situation on Sri Lanka. There was a report which was prepared following the visit of the United Nations Deputy Secretary General in Sri Lanka and then it was decided that a briefing on the Sri Lankan situation could be arranged at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, he said. The report was quite balanced and that was the view of both the United Nations Security Council and the Government of Sri Lanka, but there was a request for another briefing on the Sri Lankan situation here and that was quite unnecessary as the situation here is quite stable and there is no dramatic change in the situation here, he pointed out. He also said that it was up to the Government of Sri Lanka to make use of the Military Technical Cooperation Agreement that existed between the two countries and added that there was not a single arms purchase in recent times. Sri Lanka has taken delivery of helicopters, transport aircraft and Armoured Personnel Carriers which was around a decade ago but no procurements have been made in recent times. There have been some consultations by the Governments and it is up to the Sri Lankan side as to what it really wants, the categories of the equipment and decide accordingly with the changing demands and we are very willing to help, he said. The envoy also believed that there were strong and active relations between Sri Lanka and the former Soviet Union but there was a temporary set back in the relations between the two nations after the disintegration which is bouncing back soon. The Russian Federation is pursuing an active foreign policy now with Latin America, Europe and Asia with a special emphasis on Sri Lanka. He also said that there have been high powered consultations between the two countries with reciprocal visits of Government officials on both sides and complemented Sri Lanka for supporting Russian Federation on a series of issues against international terrorism and also disarmament. Inter Government Draft Agreements There have been a series of Inter – Governmental Draft Agreements currently under consideration between the two sides, ranging from air services, agreement on readmission, cooperation on tourism and mutual legal assistance in investigating criminal cases. There is a need to amend some of the agreements as that in existence was signed between Sri Lanka and the former Soviet Union. He also said that the proposed air services agreement would also see the resumption of flight between Colombo and Moscow and they would be mutually beneficial. He said that the air services agreements which would be signed between the two countries would also be helpful between the two capitals - Colombo and Moscow. There are charter flights from Moscow and St. Petersburg to Colombo and where there is a charter flight from Moscow to Colombo every ten days and the establishment of air links would boost the Russian arrivals in Colombo by large numbers, while also facilitating the corresponding increase of Sri Lankan arrivals in Moscow parallely. “The latest proposal has been conveyed by the Russian side and the stand of the Government of Sri Lanka is expected on that soon. The Draft Agreement was conveyed to the Sri Lankan side on December 8 last year and the response of the Sri Lankan side is expected,” he said. The readmission agreement is when transit passengers to Colombo and Moscow travel to a third destination and when they are deported from the third destination, they have to travel back to the transit destination before they are deported to the country of origin. The bilateral discussions were held in February and the text was agreed upon barring one article and consensus was to be reached within the next six months, “he said. “The agreement will also decide who will bear the expenditure and other such modalities,” he said. The fourth agreement which is in the draft stage is on an agreement on mutual legal assistance in investigating criminal cases where the draft of the Sri Lankan Government is on the Russian side. There are two draft agreements which are ready to be signed which is on agreement on cooperation to suppress the traffic of illicit narcotics and a Memorandum based on mutual understanding between the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Sri Lankan Ministry of Disaster Management. - Asian Tribune -Courtesy: asiantribune.com