



PRESS RELEASE

No: 389/2017

Date: 14th June 2017

Opposition Mistaken on UN Analysis

The suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition that the policy of the Government on decolonisation issues is now the same as that of the Opposition is as wrong as it is ridiculous.

The reality is that the policy of the Opposition on this matter has shifted and changed so often over the years that nobody quite knows what it is that they stand for any more.

The position of the GSLP-LIBERALS in Opposition is the same position that we now take in Government. The Government is of the view that the 2006 Constitution has not of itself actually decolonised Gibraltar.

However, we make the argument that it can be seen to have done so if the UN determines that the Constitution grants us the maximum possible level of self government short of independence. This is because, to date, the 2006 Constitution has not led to a change in the international legal status of our nation in order that we cease to be a listed, non-self-governing territory. That was the argument which the Chief Minister – again - made in New York. This is the crux of the matter. The attainment of a decolonised status internationally does not depend on whether our Constitution is more modern or less modern. Neither does it depend on whether the relationship with UK is more colonial in nature or less colonial in nature. It depends entirely on the international legal status of the territory itself. The present rules used to determine that may be out of date or not, but they are still the relevant rules.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The position of the GSLP-LIBERALS has been clear when we were in opposition and remains the same now that we are in Government. We want to see the Committee recognise the level of self government we have attained and the freely expressed choices we have made at the ballot box. That is what I was saying on Monday at the United Nations and it is exactly what we have said in the past. Mr Feetham seems to have forgotten that, in order to seek to progress this international aspect of the issue of our decolonisation, it was the GSLP-LIBERALS, not the GSD, that submitted the 2006 Constitution to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the Committee of 24. Both have failed to respond at all to the question of whether or not, in their view, the Constitution gives Gibraltar the maximum possible level of self government short of independence. Therefore, the Opposition remains fundamentally mistaken in their assessment that our position is somehow the same as the position of the GSD. Interestingly, however, Mr Feetham, seems to think that the political moment is comfortable enough that his only press release for the past couple of weeks should be an attempted "I told you so" in respect of something as seminally important as our de-listing and de-colonisation. It is also important to stress



that this week's events showed that it is essential for the Chief Minister of Gibraltar to attend the annual session of the Committee of 24 on Gibraltar. When in government, the GSD chose not to attend but the GSLP-LIBERALS continued to attend to put Gibraltar's case. Monday's interventions by the Committee's chairman and by the Spanish delegation once again show the crucial importance of Gibraltar's Chief Minister being there in person during the discussion on Gibraltar to respond appropriately and with authority to the nonsense being spouted about our nation."