



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **'We Have the Right to Determine our Future,' Says Garcia**

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told the Gibraltar-American Council that the core of the issue surrounding Gibraltar is that a people, however small, must have the right to determine their own future. In 1967 and in 2002 the people of Gibraltar chose that their future lay with the United Kingdom and not with Spain.

He suggested that retaining Gibraltar in British hands is both in keeping with this principle of democratic choice and in the best interests of the United States. He was addressing a meeting of the Council in New York, the day after the Chief Minister's speech to the United Nations.

The Deputy Chief Minister and the Attorney General Michael Llamas remained in New York for an extra day of meetings. The Gibraltar delegation was welcomed by Mrs Toby Roosevelt and by the Gibraltar Representative in the United States David Liston.

The Deputy Chief Minister went over the positive contact that had existed this year between Gibraltar and the United States. This included calls by the US Navy vessels USNS Leroy Grumman in February and USNS Carson City in September.

He also provided details of the three separate visits by Members of the US Congress to Gibraltar during the course of 2017. Three members of the Appropriation Committee of Congress, Freilinghysen, Visclosky and Calvert, visited Gibraltar in July. This was followed by a visit from two other Members of Congress Patrick Meehan and Linda Sanchez as part of a US trade mission later that same month under the umbrella of the Gibraltar-American Chamber of Commerce AMCHAM.

Dr Garcia then went over the successful Congressional visit under the UK MECEA programme from 7-10 August which included Congressmen Holding, Sensenbrenner and Connolly.



There was considerable interest on the potential effects on Gibraltar of leaving the European Union. The Deputy Chief Minister briefed the Council on this. He explained the detail of the potential Spanish second veto under Clause 24 of the EU Council's negotiating guidelines and described the question of the border, access to the UK market and the future trading relationship.

He said that Spain could not be allowed to take advantage of Brexit to push its sovereignty claim over Gibraltar.

In answer to a question, he said that the way in which London had handled the independence referendum in Scotland was very different to the way in which Madrid had recently dealt with the issue. Spain had a lot to learn.