



PRESS RELEASE

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Contradictory GSD Statements add Nothing of Substance

The statement issued today by the GSD Opposition on Brexit is little more than a desperate attempt to keep themselves relevant and directly contradicts things said by Mr Feetham in Parliament in the Budget Debate. As is increasingly the case, this GSD statement adds nothing of substance to the debate on Brexit and offers no substance in terms of policies and solutions.

The White Paper entitled “The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union” was published by the UK Government on 12th July 2018. This is a UK Government paper which sets out their views regarding that future relationship once the UK is outside the European Union.

The document contained a number of references to Gibraltar and to the Overseas Territories.

It is quite incredible that it has taken the GSD Opposition two weeks to analyse the document in order to come up with an unsubstantial view that provides nothing of any note to the Gibraltar position.

Most importantly, however, is the fact is that the White Paper discloses that objective of the UK is to seek “specific arrangements” for Gibraltar and the other territories. This was something that the Opposition specifically argued at one time would not be possible in the context of the UK's departure from the EU. Yet it is now the declared policy of the United Kingdom Government. Once again, it is now clear that the GSD got that important issue wrong at the time.

Secondly, there is a serious misunderstanding on the part of the GSD Opposition when they choose to compare Gibraltar and Northern Ireland. The truth is that beyond the fact that both territories will have a border with the European Union, the two situations are NOT the same. Northern Ireland is presently in the Customs Union in relation to goods and enjoys a common travel area with the Republic of Ireland in relation to the movement of persons. This means that there are currently no customs or immigration checkpoints or controls. That situation will have to change in future. Gibraltar, in contrast, has never been in the Customs Union or in the Schengen Area. This means that there always have been checkpoints and controls for both persons and goods at Gibraltar's frontier. That will not change.



Additionally, it is pretentious in the extreme for the GSD to now offer a joint negotiating platform with the Government, as if they had any particular expertise which was lacking in the Government team. In fact, at the end of every one of the very full briefings offered to Opposition members, the Deputy Chief Minister has repeatedly asked whether any members consider that the Government should do anything we have not yet done or if the relevant members of the Select Committee on Brexit have any ideas or potential actions to put forward. None have been forthcoming in the past briefings, suggesting that the inclusion of GSD members in any joint negotiating platform would clearly add nothing but useless numbers to the Gibraltar team.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "This is just another desperate attempt by the GSD to make some Brexit noise to try to stay relevant. How can they say we have not pressed the UK government enough if they have not been in the room to see us do so? If they had been in the room, they might very well think we have pressed the UK government too hard and might have ended up asking us to push them less. In fact, Daniel Feetham - who was and clearly remains my principal political foe these days - said in Parliament during the Budget Debate that the Government had left no stone unturned in respect of our handling of the Brexit issues. Now, the GSD pretends to say the complete opposite, despite their clear and unequivocal statements in Parliament. It's incredible to see the GSD relegated to the sort of political group that says one thing one day and the opposite the next in an attempt to be heard. How the mighty have fallen."

NOTES TO EDITORS

The very extensive references in the White Paper are as follows:

Page 7: Executive Summary

"...ensuring the deal delivers for the Crown Dependencies, Gibraltar and the other Overseas Territories, noting there will be no change in their long-standing relationships with the UK."

Page 15: Chapter 1 – Economic Partnership

"The UK will be seeking specific arrangements for the Crown Dependencies, Gibraltar and the other Overseas Territories. These arrangements should take account of the significant and mutually beneficial economic ties between these economies and EU Member States, including their overseas countries and territories."

Page 34: Streamlined border arrangements and administrative procedures

"Streamlined arrangements are particularly important at the Gibraltar-Spain border, which is crossed every day by thousands of people from other Member States".

Page 97: Conclusion and next steps

"...meeting the needs of the wider UK family, including the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories."