



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

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Opposition have no compunction in undermining Gibraltar

The GSD Opposition clearly have no compunction in undermining the international position of Gibraltar in order to score cheap political points. Their latest comments on the lengthy delays at the border are designed to give a misleading impression to the public that queues at the frontier are a new phenomenon which did not happen in the fifteen years that they were in office.

The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth.

The frontier has not operated properly since the day it opened and Gibraltar has been brought to a standstill by frontier delays at the time when the GSD was in Government, as it was both before and after their time in office. Indeed, the queues became so bad when Mr Caruana was in Government that he even set up a frontier complaints office at the border in order to collect complaint forms from EU nationals and send them to the European Commission. He also trumpeted that fluidity at the frontier was an achievement of the Cordoba agreement when quite clearly, this has been shown to be a complete fallacy.

A glance at the local and Spanish media will show four hour queues in February 1999, the frontier queue to Natwest Bank in February 2011 and an hour for motorbikes in September 2011.

Moreover, it is a bit rich for the Opposition to link the queues to fishing when they created the fishing mess in the first place by making allowances for Spanish fishermen to be able to fish in Gibraltar waters in breach of the law. The origin of the so-called fishing dispute dates back to the mistaken policy that was applied by the GSD when they were in office.

The plain fact is that Spain does not need an excuse to create delays at the frontier because Madrid's ultimate motive is political and sovereignty-related as opposed to anything else. Therefore the Spanish Government's reaction to the fishing, the GFA's provisional UEFA admission and Gibraltar's participation at the United Nations are nothing more than smokescreens designed to cover the sovereignty agenda that lies underneath.

The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo added:

"Instead of accepting the Government's invitation to present a united front at the UN, a united front before the City of London on Gibraltar Day and a united front in seeing off Spain on the unacceptable delays at the frontier, Mr Caruana chooses to try to undermine unity in Gibraltar by making a statement blaming me and the Government for the problems. I have no doubt that Mr Rajoy, Mr Margallo and Mr Landaluce will be delighted at the justification that Mr Caruana and the GSD have ascribed to their unconscionable actions. The people of Gibraltar know that Spain will create queues on any issue, using any excuse. This time the excuse they have given relates to tobacco smuggling (not fishing), something which grew exponentially under Mr Caruana's successive administrations. Mr Caruana's statement is therefore clearly off the mark and opportunistic in the extreme - but then again so characteristic of him and his politics."