



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057**

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Government and Opposition remain poles apart on Constitution and Cordoba

The latest statement by the Opposition in relation to the 2006 Constitution and the Cordoba agreement has missed the point.

The position of the Government on these two issues remains unchanged.

The Government does not believe that the 2006 Constitution represents the maximum level of self-government short of independence. It represents the maximum level that could be extracted from the United Kingdom in the Constitutional negotiations which took place at that time. There are further steps between the present Constitution and independence. Indeed, the full proposals contained in the House of Assembly Select Committee Report of 1999, which were then watered down in those talks, is an example of such a step.

The Chief Minister was simply making the point in Washington, which had been made several times in the past, in the context of the requirements of the United Nations for the removal of Gibraltar from the UN list of colonies.

The plain fact is that the 2006 Constitution did not alter the international legal status of Gibraltar, and therefore it could not have led to decolonisation. Gibraltar simply became a more modern colony after 2006.

The position of the GSD has always been that the 2006 Constitution represented "de facto" decolonisation. There is no such thing in international law.

Moreover, the position of the Opposition in respect of attendance at the United Nations is totally contradictory. When they say that there is no need to attend the Committee of 24 sessions, but that it is necessary to attend the 4th Committee, they ignore the reality that the C24 reports to the 4th Committee and that the latter's full title is "the Special Political and Decolonization Committee."

In relation to the Trilateral Forum and the Cordoba agreement, the parties in Government have always maintained that the process would be judged by its results. The views of the Government today have not changed.

It is therefore incorrect for the Opposition to claim that the Government have come round to their position. Nothing could be further from the truth because regrettably, the Government and the Opposition remain poles apart on these issues.