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Government welcomes US Resolution supporting and thanking Gibraltar

The Government welcomes the Resolution in support of Gibraltar which has just been tabled in the House of Representatives of the United States of America. This has come about following a sustained lobbying campaign of senior political figures in Washington.

The Resolution is sponsored by Republican George Holding and it is signed by seven other Congressmen from the Republican and the Democratic parties.

The title of the Resolution is "Recognizing the self-determination of Gibraltar to determine its status as a British Overseas Territory". It acknowledges Gibraltar's status as a British Overseas Territory and the two referenda in 1967 and 2002 where the people of Gibraltar voted overwhelmingly to retain their links with the United Kingdom.

The Resolution also highlights the value of Gibraltar to the military interests of the western world and it refers to the fact that the United States made use of Gibraltar during its first military intervention in 1801 against the Barbary States. There is special mention made of the role that Gibraltar played during the Second World War when General Dwight Eisenhower used Gibraltar as his headquarters to plan the liberation of North Africa.

"The United States honours the contribution that Gibraltar has made to advancing United States security interests in the Mediterranean region since 1801 and extends its deepest appreciation and thanks to the Government of Gibraltar and its citizens," declares the Resolution. It adds that the views and rights of the Gibraltarians should always be imperative in any discussion of Gibraltar's status as a British Overseas Territory.

The Government is very pleased that the profile of Gibraltar has been raised in this way in the circles that matter in the United States Congress. While it is unlikely that the Resolution will be debated in the floor of the House, it nonetheless marks a historic point in the relationship between Gibraltar and the United States of America. The next step in the procedure is that it now moves on to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

Commenting on the matter, the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said:

“The Government is very keen to foster political, cultural and economic ties between Gibraltar and the United States. The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and I have been to Washington on a number of occasions precisely in order to lobby the relevant parties and pursue the question of the Resolution. It is very good to see that it enjoys cross-party support with both Republicans and Democrats supporting it. The Government is very grateful to George Holding and to all our friends in the United States who have made this possible.”