



CHIEF MINISTER HON FABIAN PICARDO QC MP

ADDRESS TO UNITED NATIONS C-24

12 June 2017

Dedicated to the Hon Juan Carlos Perez 1955 – 2017

Mr Chairman,

Let me start by saying that I will be writing to you about the things you have said this morning about 'visiting missions' which defy logic and which are unacceptable to the Government and people of Gibraltar and which the General Assembly had previously rejected.

Since I last addressed this Committee, the people of the United Kingdom have voted to leave the European Union. The people of Gibraltar also voted in that referendum.

We chose by 96% to remain in the EU.

We nonetheless will leave the EU on such terms and at such a time as the United Kingdom may agree with the EU.

It is therefore an auspicious year for me to address you. In fact, it is particularly special because it will also be 50 years on the 10th September since we first voted in a referendum. 99.64% voted to remain British.

In these five decades, we have been made to pay a high price for the audacity of our choice.

The Spanish fascist dictator, General Franco, closed the land frontier and cut all communications between Gibraltar and Spain as a direct result of that referendum.

He sought to compel us by siege and pressure to change the view we had freely taken and fairly at the ballot box. He failed.

Families were physically divided, patients were denied oxygen in our hospitals, businesses were ruined. Jobs were lost and thousands of people were displaced.

A cruel punishment was imposed on our cherished Referendum Generation because they had the temerity to cast votes to remain British.

The exercise our right to choose.

This Committee should therefore immediately have removed Gibraltar from the list of Non-Self Governing Territories then.

50 years on, you have not yet done so despite our continued political emancipation which, in effect, terminates your jurisdiction as we reach the maximum level of self-government, short of independence.

Indeed, in 2006, we exercised our right to self-determination to choose our current Constitution as a method of decolonisation, representing the tailor-made Fourth Option available to us under the Resolutions.



Because, Mr Chairman, our right to self-determination is not vitiated by a non-existent doctrine that sovereignty disputes suspend application of inalienable rights. No such doctrine exists, nor can exist, however much you try to shoehorn one in. No such distinction should determine which territories you chose to visit.

And therefore this Committee's failure to heed the result of the exercise of the right to self-determination of the People of Gibraltar is a failure of the very reason for the Committee's existence.

A failure, quite simply, of your sacred mission to protect the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, a failure you have yourself recognised today, Mr Chairman. I welcome your candid recognition of the stagnation of this Committee.

We will not change our position because this Committee fails to act as the UN treaties require and as the Resolutions of the General Assembly demand.

We will not give up in order to make the work of this Committee easier and you should not allow your visits not to include Gibraltar as, to do so, makes a mockery of what your work is supposed to be.

We will not roll over and allow the Spanish claim to our land to succeed because we are worn down by years of this Committee's inactivity and failure.

This is not going to happen, whether you come to Gibraltar or not.

In fact, we confirmed our choice in a second referendum, on Joint Sovereignty in 2002.

That result was as clear as it had been 35 years earlier.

99% reflected Joint Sovereignty again.

Because our People wish to be de-listed and de-colonised.

We do not want to be re-colonised by Spain,

We do not wish to end up with two colonial masters, two Administering Powers, under Joint Sovereignty.

So, have no doubt, Mr Chairman Brexit or no Brexit, if we held another referendum today on Joint Sovereignty or full Spanish sovereignty, the results would be the same.

We remain steadfast in our rejection of any aspect of Spanish sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over our affairs. Because 'No' means 'No.'

Despite that, the former Foreign Minister of Spain, Snr Margallo stated immediately after the result of the Brexit referendum that the Spanish flag would fly over Gibraltar within four years. Ironically, he was removed from his post soon afterwards.

We, of course, welcome the more conciliatory tone adopted by the new Spanish Foreign Minister, Snr Dastis. But we reject the continued insistence on the already-rejected notion of Joint Sovereignty.

Snr Dastis may represent a different tone but he represents the same objective, a Spanish Gibraltar, despite the contrary wishes of the People of Gibraltar.

Democrats must accept the results of free and fair choices made at the ballot box and our response to Spain's Joint Sovereignty proposals is crystal clear:

'Thank You but No Thank You.'



Despite that, we do not reject the notion of cooperation with our neighbour. Every day 12000 very welcome cross-frontier workers enter Gibraltar from Spain to work on the Rock.

Independent studies show that we represent 25% of the GDP and of the jobs of the Spanish region around Gibraltar. We remain ready to cooperate and to return to the Trilateral Forum for Dialogue which this Committee itself we, comes in years past.

The U.K. Has also said it remains strongly committed to that Forum for Dialogue.

The only party absent from that Forum for Dialogue is Spain.

I therefore strongly urge the Kingdom of Spain to be brave and to engage with us in a mutually-acceptable dialogue designed to resolve the many mutually-concerning issues that will arise as a result of the UK's decision to leave the European Union.

Talking would be a more modern and progressive approach to cooperation to pursuing a policy of vetoes which will achieve nothing.

What we must achieve in the context of the years to come is to continue to see our region grow economically for mutual benefit.

What we must be mindful of is what our people expect from us.

They do not wish politicians to find conflict

They wish politicians to find the common ground between our respective red lines

They wish politicians to find solutions without compromising our principles.

We remain ready to engage

Because, Brexit or no Brexit, Gibraltar will remain a highly successful international business hub. None of that is going to change. Neither will our resolve to determine exclusively for ourselves the sovereignty of our Gibraltar. Of that you should be in no doubt!

Come to visit Gibraltar and see for yourselves.

If you don't, you simply compound your failure to the people of Gibraltar. But, at least, ask yourselves why some might not wish you to come Gibraltar - no doubt because you would see the truth for yourselves and you would then have to support our request to de-list Gibraltar without more ado.

On that - as on all else - WE WILL PREVAIL!