



PRESS RELEASE

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Picardo Responds to GSD

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, reacted to a statement by the GSD on his work as a professional at Hassans, before he took office, saying:

"The suggestion by the GSD that I should make a statement in Parliament about my professional work before being elected into Government as a partner of Hassans, is nonsense. I made clear last night on Direct Democracy that I represented Mr Gertler in the acquisition of a Uranium mine in order to prevent Iranian interests acquiring it. Most people will agree that was a very good thing to do. I also made clear that I acted in keeping with all relevant national and international rules. Additionally I made the point that the parties I was representing were then, at the time I was instructed, internationally accepted as reputable. For example, at the time I was acting for him, Mr Gertler was meeting on related issues with the then US Secretary of State, Ms Condoleezza Rice. To be clear therefore: at the time I and Neil Costa were involved, Mr Gertler was being feted by the United States Government, not investigated by them. Ironically, the Maginsky Act was brought into our laws by my Government and specifically by Neil Costa, as Minister for Justice, who the GSD also refer to. We have also led in making other changes to our legislation to facilitate investigations of the type now on foot against Hassans' former client. Hypocritically, in making political mischief regardless of the potential international consequences for Gibraltar, the GSD have failed to highlight that their former election candidate Chris White, who they said was a financial services expert, was also a director of the relevant company. They have also failed to highlight that the father of the former GSD Leader, Mr Feetham, was also a director of the company. And they have also singularly failed to point out that Mr Azopardi, their current leader, is representing a client who is also involved in matters relating to Mr Gertler. Additionally, their former interim leader and alleged "finance guru" Mr Clinton was a director of the Safra Banking group, one of the shareholders of which has also been arrested on bribery allegations in Brazil, which he has denied and which were subsequently dropped some 9 months later. Mr Clinton said nothing in the interim. Should they all make a statement as to the work they have done? I do not assume that any of them has acted other than entirely properly in the discharge of their professional obligations. But it seems the GSD are foolishly ready to immediately think otherwise of us. It would in fact be outrageous, as the GSD now suggest, if lawyers and accountants or their integrity are to be judged by the clients they represent. In my view, Mr Azzopardi's, Mr Feetham's and Mr Clinton's current or former clients are as irrelevant to their work in the GSD as my and Neil Costa's former legal work is to our current roles. Those outside of Gibraltar who want to do our jurisdiction harm will, however, no doubt be delighted at the GSD's approach. The GSD can always be relied upon to play into our opponents hands and new leadership hasn't changed that old habit. This is not responsible politics and the GSD should know better. But they clearly don't."