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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: social, economic and environmental challenges

**Saint George's, Grenada
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STATEMENT BY

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(GIBRALTAR)

Mr Chairman

There have been many false dawns, in the expectations of the Kingdom of Spain, the C24, Fourth Committee and General Assembly that some new initiative, or other would succeed in placing the Gibraltarians under the sovereignty of Spain, not just against our wishes, but even without so much as by your leave.

I am proud to say that since 1964, I have dedicated my life to ensuring that all those initiatives, sometimes promoted with the connivance of the administering power, aimed at our elimination, as a People, came to nothing.

These initiatives, a self-evident breach of the most basic concepts of democracy and freedom, stem from the myth fabricated by the Fascist Government of Spain in 1964.

A myth regrettably repeated by Governments to this day, that because we arrived in Gibraltar after 1704, we do not exist as a distinct Colonial People with Human Rights.

These seminars are held to facilitate participation by the Peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and I have been participating in

the first, second and third decade, so clearly the UN accepts we are a People who have to be decolonised and rejects Spain's description of us, or else why am I here?

Indeed at the midterm meeting of the first decade in Port of Spain in 1995, the Chair held by India responded to my presentation by saying: "I completely endorse the statement of the Chief Minister that the Committee should not dictate options to People. It should be the People who choose the options. There has never been any doubt in the minds of the members of this Committee and it is the only way. Their wishes, their will about the future status is the one that will dictate the result to the Committee, it is the only way."

I would like to take this opportunity to record the appreciation of our People for this and also to the C24 Chair who send a message of solidarity to our people on the celebration of our National Day rally.

Moreover, C24 in its first consensus declared the Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, fully applicable to us, leaving no doubt that Gibraltar is a Colonial Country entitled to Independence and we are its People.

I promise C24 that, for as long as I have breath in my body, I will

continue to do everything in my power to prevent the handing over of our nation, the Gibraltarian nation, to a foreign power. A proposal to perpetuate Colonialism and frustrate the objective of the three decades.

The handing over of land and its People and imposing who should rule them was the norm in 1713, when Spain granted England the privilege of transporting West African slaves to the Americas.

I attach for the benefit of members a map showing the territorial extend of Spanish sovereignty at start of the 13 year war and the loss of territorial integrity, it suffered by 1713 when it ended. The loss of our 6 square km was insignificant in the context of the other losses. Many of the other territorial borders and even whole nations existing in 1713 have since disappeared as a result of wars since that date.

Other than by Spain in respect of the Gibraltarians, has anyone ever suggested such shifting borders and population movements gave rise to the loss of the inalienable Human Right to self-determination, 300 years later?

Let us now consider the indigenous people argument.

The French took Grenada, exterminated the Caribs and imported African people as slaves, 12000 by 1753.

The British took it over in 1763 in a peace treaty following a war as happened to Gibraltar. Another war and France took it then returned in 1783. This is what used to happen in Europe and its colonies and what Spain wants to perpetuate in Gibraltar. When Grenada achieved independence no-one suggested that the descendants of the slaves were imported by the colonial power and therefore not the People of the territory, nor has such an argument prevailed in the liberation struggle against colonialism anywhere in the world.

It seems Spain still lives in that era and continuous to rely on this Treaty in its attempt to deprive us of our Homeland, as if the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Chapter XI of the Charter had no relevance whatsoever.

No Government in Gibraltar has ever accepted that the Treaty constrains the UK in our decolonization by excluding independence. Resolution 2734(XXV) clearly provides that the obligations under the

Charter, in the event of a conflict, prevail over treaty obligations.

Now there is, once again, a new optimism in the corridors of the Palacio de Santa Cruz in Madrid, their Foreign Affairs Ministry where the plot was first hatched in 1964.

They seek to take advantage of the fact that all the British Overseas Territories will lose their relationship with the EU when UK leaves.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margallo, said our exit from the EU was the best opportunity Spain had had to take us over since 1700 and that we would be under Spanish rule within four years, that is by 2020.

His successor Minister Dastis, has shown less aggression and more patience and Margallo himself is now saying Spain has to seduce us and UK has to help them.

Distinguished delegates you will appreciate from this statement how incredibly strong we are, the 22,000 of us. Margallo accepts they need the weight of 40 million in Spain combined with no less than 60

million in the UK, to attempt to bend our will.

Well it will get them nowhere, they tried it before and failed.

In 2003 they got a helping hand from the administering power and cobbled together a joint sovereignty deal. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw came to Gibraltar to help seduce us and I met him with a demonstration against it. The Parliament organised a referendum and the people rejected the very Principle of Co-sovereignty by 98%. That referendum was considered illegal by Spain and UK. Since then we have legislated to provide the legal framework to make it legally binding and irreversible, other than by a new referendum.

Spain's newly found optimism follows the disgraceful, undemocratic and legally questionable stand decision by the EU to give them a lever to put pressure on us.

So much for the much vaunted Western European values which the EU parades before the rest of the world, but does not practice itself.

U.K.'s membership and ours will terminate at next March. Whatever is

offered to the UK after this will not apply to Gibraltar, unless the UK can get agreement from Spain.

We shall wait and see where the EU levers lead to.

I would now like to deal with the two related issues that have previously surfaced in seminars and New York.

Spain wants to replace the Tripartite Forum created in 2004. This deals with cooperation between Gibraltar and Spain and is without prejudice to our respective views on sovereignty. After it was launched in 2004 Spain told the seminar in Fiji that even I had expressed favourable comments on it at the seminar in Canuan. Today we continue to support its reactivation as does UK.

In 2007 here in Grenada Spain spoke highly of the effectiveness of the Tripartite and referred to the Cordoba agreement that had been reached in 2006. That agreement included a provision for the enhanced use of airport.

Spain has now said it was to see greater use of our airport again.

I place some facts before you, distinguished delegates, so that you can appreciate what it's like trying to cooperate on practical issues with Spain.

In 1986 Gibraltar was part of the EU air liberalisation programme when Spain joined.

The first action they took was to veto further liberalisation for the whole of Europe unless we were excluded and their blackmail worked.

They then did a Joint Use airport deal with UK in 1987, which we opposed and refuse to implement when I became Chief Minister in 1988.

That agreement was the price Spain expected us to pay to get back the rights that we had enjoyed between 1973 and 1986, until they came in.

In Cordoba a new Enhanced Use agreement was entered into. This required Gibraltar to build a new terminal. Gibraltar spent £80m on

this and a further £40m for an underpass to deal with increased traffic.

Spain failed to deliver its commitments.

Then the current Government reneged on the airport agreement, restored the EU ban on air liberalisation for Gibraltar, and withdrew from the tripartite.

They now want to replace this with a four, five or six sided forum.

If the previous machinery was working so well why replace it?

Because they want to downgrade the role of our government. They want a two tier system with UK and Spain operating at one level, relegating Gibraltar to a municipality, which we are not.

If Spain wants a forum to discuss cooperation the only option is a tripartite structure with 3 voices and 3 vetoes. The Spanish delegation can be as big as they want.

If Spain thinks that they can take us back to the rejected 1987 Airport Deal, done as part of the Brussels process, they can forget about it and save their time and ours.

Never again will there be bilateral negotiations between UK and Spain, and imposition of the results on Gibraltar. Those days, which I have fought against between 1974 and 2004 are gone and finished and will never come back, however many levers they think they have from the EU.

Mr Chairman this seminar is about our decolonisation and C24 has the obligation to support the progressive growth in self-government of the People of the colonial territory which UK is obliged to deliver under article 73. This obligation cannot be eliminated by Spain's outdated ideas firmly rooted in the values of the 1700s.

Any support that is given to Spain by the committee or seminar participants in opposing the development of greater self-government is in direct conflict with the requirements of article 73 of the Charter.

The eradication of colonialism is about addressing the relationship between the People of the colony and the colonial power.

It's about transferring power from the latter to former, and nothing

else.

The sooner this committee devotes its time and attention to that relationship, the greater the prospect that the Third Decade will start producing results.