



Date: 4th October 2018

Chief Minister's Welcome Address at the Accountants Association Annual Dinner 2018

M President
Ladies & Gentlemen

I am delighted to be able to be with you tonight.

Sally:

Welcome to Gibraltar!

I am sorry I am not going to stay for dinner.

But the work on Brexit negotiations is now almost entirely round the clock.

The work is digital as well as in person in meetings in an out of Gibraltar.

The Attorney General is in Brussels.

I have been all over the geography of Europe in the past 96 hours.

The Deputy Chief Minister has been travelling with us in the past weeks and in constant communications with us when we are in different jurisdictions.

The Financial Secretary has accompanied us on many of these journeys as part of my core team.

I will be travelling again in the coming days at the drop of a hat.

Additionally, on Tuesday, we are scheduled to be in New York to attend the meeting of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

But I wanted to be here tonight to tell you that I remain very confident that Gibraltar will be part of the UK – EU Withdrawal Agreement.

That is, so long as no one thinks that at the last minute we are going to be pushed to accept things which will not be good for Gibraltar.



We are not going to blink at 5 minutes to midnight.

And that is why we continue to plan for no-deal as much as we are working towards a deal.

I have said repeatedly that Brexit will have cross generational effect.

For that reason, if we get it right, the positive effects will reverberate through the generations.

Equally, if we get it wrong, the negative effects will echo also down the generations.

Most of you here will have children.

Or maybe even grand children.

So you will understand when I tell you that I will not do the wrong deal for Gibraltar and its future generations.

You will understand when I tell you that I will not sell the wrong deal for Gibraltar.

A deal that is Constitutionally retrograde for Gibraltar would not be a good deal for Gibraltar.

A deal that contains hidden sovereignty time bombs would not be a good deal for Gibraltar.

And let me tell you loud and clear so that they can hear me on the right side of the European Parliament if they have to:

There will not be any aspect of any deal that will contain any timetable for any discussion of sovereignty because there will NOT be any discussion of sovereignty.

That applies as much today to the current negotiations on withdrawal as it will tomorrow to any negotiation about the future relationship.

And in the definition of sovereignty, I include the key ingredients of jurisdiction and control also of course.

And let whoever has to hear that loud and clear hear it loud and clear.

We believe that there is a very good chance that we can do a good deal for Gibraltar.

A good deal for Gibraltar is also a good deal for the Campo de Gibraltar.

We believe that there is reason for optimism.

We have a clear vision of how we can improve the relationships across the frontier.

We have a clear ambition to work to bring a Brexit Dividend to the whole region.



And we have arrangements we can already fall back on, like the Cordoba Agreement on the airport.

But I am reminded of the words of the Prime Minister, of the Foreign Secretary and of the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union :

No deal is better than a bad deal.

And if that is true for the United Kingdom, then it is certainly true for Gibraltar.

In 1987, we said 'NO' to a bad deal on the Airport.

In 2002, we said 'NO' to a deal on Joint Sovereignty.

We know how to say 'NO' when we have to.

And what we cannot allow is even the thought that there may be "cherry picking" to be done in respect of the Cordoba arrangements.

One could not, for example, welcome the arrival of the Instituto Cervantes if we were not also seeing the rest of the Cordoba arrangements being honoured.

It wouldn't make sense.

And I think it is now understood that a no deal scenario is as potentially negative for the Campo de Gibraltar as it might also be for Gibraltar.

So best that some 'patriots' in Madrid get the message sent by the Partido Popular's last Foreign Secretary, Snr Dastis, who was unequivocal in putting sovereignty to one side.

Or, indeed, the clear and laudable position of the President of Spain, who has been very clear in his desire to reach an agreement which creates opportunities for the people of the Campo and the people of Gibraltar.

Those are the clear instructions from the top in Spain to their negotiating team!

The same has been said by the Prime Minister, Mrs May - a huge supporter of Gibraltar.

And, indeed, we have made the same point repeatedly from the Government of Gibraltar also.

And rest assured that I, and every one of my team, will stretch every ounce of our energies.

We will stretch our ability as far as we are able.

We will strain every sinew - in order to do a GREAT deal for Gibraltar and for the area around Gibraltar.



Rest assured that we will not rest until we have done our level best to secure that GREAT deal.

And rest assured also that we will use all the same energy and ability to stop a bad deal.

For that reason, dear friends, I will continue working and leave you to a sumptuous dinner without me.

This marathon is not yet over.

I very much look forward to joining you next year.