

## **Party Political Broadcast Mr Fabian Picardo**

**5th December 2006**

Good evening,

In my view, last week you sent a very clear message to your politicians with your very low participation in the referendum on the new Constitution.

I believe you are tired of Mr Caruana's style of politics by accusation and insult.

Politics should be about respecting each other's views and not respecting only the views one likes.

It is not proper debate to pillory and personally attack any party, group, trade union or individual who takes an opposite view, as Government does.

I believe you want your politicians to serve the purpose of arguing the substance of issues and that personal slanging matches should be left to one side.

It is time we all got the message.

My responsibilities in Opposition include the environment, employment, financial services and the media.

Tonight I want to address some of those areas and ask you to review the substance of the actions of the Government in the past year.

In many respects 2006 has clearly been a year of Government saying one thing and doing another.

For example, whilst Mr Netto tells us that he is designing a programme to reduce harmful carbon emissions, and talks about voluntary adherence to the Kyoto Protocol, we find Government anticipates an almost threefold increase in CO<sub>2</sub> over the next 5 to 10 years.

Similarly, although the GSD's words create the pretence of great environmental awareness and concern, the reality is that in the past year areas of Gibraltar have been plagued by noxious fumes from bunkering operations – some of which have left children and adults nauseous.

Or what about the Upper Town Renewal Programme which was to have commenced in 1996?

Well, you can see for yourselves that this potential historic asset is being allowed to degenerate completely whilst our premium sites are developed for the very rich.

Is this your vision for the future of Gibraltar? A concrete jungle for the rich where our people cannot afford to buy?

Even in dealing with something as non-partisan as the environment you can see how GSD Ministers say one thing but mean and do another.

Also in respect of the economy the picture is not as rosy as the Government would have you believe. We are now seeing redundancies in the area of on-line gaming and there are still almost 300 Gibraltarians unemployed. Yet, there is no action to address their needs. Instead the Chief Minister continues to organise expensive Gibraltar Days that bring no tangible benefit to those in our community who need help the most.

I sincerely believe that spending £75,000 of your money on a one day party in London is a waste of your tax pounds.

And yet, even in respect of the finance centre which is the main focus of Gibraltar Day, we have seen no progress on important issues. Mr Caruana paints himself as a champion of this sector, but Gibraltar has lost exempt status for its companies and we have had neither a “low tax” nor a “no tax” corporate product ready to replace it and no clear indication of when a new product will be available.

Recently we have also seen how the Board of GBC appears to have almost bent to the will of the Government’s “yes” campaign for the new Constitution – although the GSD tell you it believes in an independent media.

And that is to say nothing of Waterport Terraces, the apparently “affordable” development that so few could afford.

Or of the government’s repeated statements that it cares about social services – whilst it dismisses the statements of the Disability Society and Minister Del Agua allowed waiting time for child welfare reports to rise to over 12 months.

Or what about the Government’s repeated statements that all major projects should go out to tender, when in fact the most important projects, like the mid-town development, are handed to one developer without any tender at all?

So you can see that this Government is one that says one thing but does another.

Perhaps the best example was the centre of cultural and theatrical excellence that you were promised in the heart of the city. For now that is still a rat infested crater that is a monument to the Government’s folly. Why is the area not at least made safe and used for parking?

In that context, of a government that says one thing and means another, now, together, we must face the challenge of ensuring that the transfer of powers under the new Constitution is not abused by any person or body.

Next year, as we rush into the first General Election under the new Constitution, cast a sceptical eye on the GSD's press statements and promises.

Remember the gap between what the Government says and what it does.

Remember that even in their third term in office the GSD are not yet delivering many of the things they promised you in their first manifesto.

And remember that the deal Mr Caruana has done with Mr Moratinos on the airport has been described by Spain's Foreign Minister in the Spanish Parliament as resulting in flights between Gibraltar and Spain being designated as "internal" or "national" flights when the new terminal is completed.

No one in Spain has said Mr Moratinos is lying or accused him of misleading parliament, but there is no doubt in my mind that the statements of Mr Moratinos and Mr Caruana on the effect of the second stage of the new Airport Agreement cannot be reconciled.

That is why we are committed to implement only the first stage of the new Airport Agreement, but not the second.

Remember all of those things whilst Mr Caruana accuses and insults each of his political opponents instead of addressing these issues that concern us all.

I think you will come to the conclusion that such a failure to debate the substance of issues is an insult to each of you.

Goodnight.

Ends.