

## **STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**

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There are reports in Spain which say that the Spanish Government held a round of technical talks on Monday to discuss the way in which the “Spanish zone” of the new Gibraltar air terminal building will operate.

The reports say that the Spanish Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and the Treasury were present in the meeting along with the state owned airport operator AENA. The situations that could arise with Spanish passengers or those of other nationalities arriving on flights from Madrid to Gibraltar were analysed in detail.

The use of the term the “Spanish zone” of the new air terminal means that the Spanish perception of what is going on is that there is one terminal which straddles the frontier and is composed of a Gibraltar zone and a “Spanish zone”.

There has been no indication given in Gibraltar that this is what is being planned and there is certainly nothing to justify this interpretation from the public account of what was discussed in the Cordoba meeting.

The explanation that has been given in Gibraltar was that the extension of the terminal to the frontier fence was to enable direct access to the aircraft on flights to and from Spain in substitution of the present bus service. In addition there was to be an arrangement where Spanish officials would be behind a glass compartment in an area adjacent to the terminal but on the Spanish side of the frontier and would clear Gibraltar passengers.

In addition, there has been unrelated talk of La Linea wanting to capitalise on the anticipated huge increase in traffic by building a shopping centre in the area. However, by no stretch of the imagination can a shopping centre, simply because of its location, be considered to be the Spanish zone of the Gibraltar terminal, nor would one expect the opening of a shopping centre in La Linea to require a meeting in Madrid of the Spanish Foreign, Treasury and Interior Ministries.

While there is clearly no way of establishing the accuracy or otherwise of this report in the Spanish press, it is understood from other sources that a meeting did take place on Monday in Madrid. This meeting involved the state owned operator of Spanish airports and senior officials from the Foreign, Treasury and Interior Ministries and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss matters relating to the use of the new Gibraltar terminal which, incidentally, the

Spanish press continue to describe as a terminal for the joint-use of the airport.

Given that reports in the Spanish press regarding the airport have proved to be accurate in the past, the Opposition feels it has a duty to bring this information to the attention of the public.

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