

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The commemoration of the Battle of Britain by the Royal Air Force in Gibraltar was particularly welcome this year given the constant challenges and questioning of the territorial waters and airspace of Gibraltar by Spain. The fact that the RAF Red Arrows painted the skies around Gibraltar red, white and blue during their display served as a very pointed and pertinent response to the Spanish claim.

It will be recalled that only last week there was an incident where a Spanish helicopter did not respond to calls from air traffic control in Gibraltar even though there were safety issues involved as a civilian aircraft was approaching the Rock. Gibraltar air traffic control had to contact Seville who in turn contacted the helicopter and asked that it answer the hails from Gibraltar.

The Opposition understands that at the same time as the Red Arrow display was going on there was a Spanish environmental agency aircraft visible in the area.

In the context of the threats to the waters around Gibraltar, and to the airspace above it, the Opposition consider that the presence of twenty British military aircraft to commemorate the Battle of Britain was a significant reminder to those who continue to question their sovereignty. It was also an important tribute to all those who died defending the cause of freedom and democracy at a time when Franco's Spain maintained a questionable neutrality slanted in favour of Hitler's Germany.

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