

## STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

10/2010

9 February 2010

The latest incursion into the territorial waters of Gibraltar by a launch from Spain's Servicio de Vigilancia Aduanera (SVA) on Saturday is the clear consequence of the political position of the Spanish Government that Gibraltar has no territorial waters and therefore it is the duty of the SVA to patrol the waters that belong to us. For as long as this is the position of the Spanish Government, we will continue to experience these violations of our sovereignty. It is clear that until Spain accepts that there is an area of the Bay which is Spanish and an area which is not theirs, demarcated by the median line, they will simply change the rules whenever it suits them and no amount of talking is going to change that.

This incident is the latest in a series of incursions into Gibraltar's territorial sea which peaked in December when a Guardia Civil launch entered the Port of Gibraltar and four civil guards came onshore onto the actual land of Gibraltar itself. The fact that those involved in this incident were allowed to get away with it has no doubt encouraged others that they can continue violating our sovereignty and nothing will happen to them. It will be recalled that the four civil guards were not arrested or taken to court and instead they were set free within hours following a telephone call from Spain's Minister of the Interior.

At about 2.45pm an SVA launch was seen about 30 metres from the pier at Camp Bay shadowing a small pleasure boat, much to the annoyance of people on the beach. This incursion was reported to the police by eyewitnesses but the RGP did not arrive on the scene.

The SVA launch then proceeded to chase the pleasure craft through Gibraltar's territorial waters and to the mouth of the harbour. Eyewitness reports received by the Opposition suggest that the SVA entered the mouth of the harbour itself in the area of the detached mole. The SVA left when the RGP arrived on the scene. It is important to note that the present territorial waters of Gibraltar are the median line in the Bay and the three-mile limit elsewhere and the law enforcement agencies of the Spanish state have no business to be there and no jurisdiction to exercise.

Moreover, quite apart from the serious sovereignty implications of these continuing incursions, they also pose a danger to shipping and to other vessels in the area. It is particularly irresponsible for the SVA to have chased the other boat at the mouth of a busy Port where large vessels and small boats commonly move in and out of the area.

It is imperative that the sovereignty of Gibraltar and of our territorial sea is upheld. The Spanish Government and its agencies continue to undermine our

sovereignty both in the European Union and in the waters that surround the Rock. This state of affairs is totally unacceptable and will only be resolved by taking firm and decisive action in defence of our sovereign rights.

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