

**THE STATUS OF GIBRALTAR: ROOTS AND CONSEQUENCES
OF THE ANGLO-SPANISH EVERLASTING DISPUTE**

Gibraltar is one of the most strategically important places in the world. Here passes the route from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic. The dispute between Great Britain and Spain concerning the status of it has been going on for about three centuries. Gibraltar is officially an overseas territory of the United Kingdom. Spain has tried to return Gibraltar many times, but attempts were not successful.

Gibraltar was captured by the British Fleet in 1704 during the War of the Spanish Succession. Both Britain and Spain claim sovereignty over the territory of Gibraltar partially due to the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which forced Spain to cede the territory. In 1968 a referendum was taken on and the majority of Gibraltarian people voted to stay with Britain. In the referendum of November 2002, they again showed their desire to remain British. During the last years, Gibraltarians' major goal has been to gain a voice in the political discourse between Great Britain and Spain. They have rejected any suggestions that Spain and Britain share sovereignty.

The dispute has many roots, but the main is Gibraltar's strategic importance. During ancient times, Gibraltar was regarded as a place of religious and symbolic importance. Gibraltar operated as a strategically located naval and air force base for the British. Gibraltar's location also gives it important access to commercial shipping, oil transportation and military-related transport. Geographically, Spain has reason to claim Gibraltar, as it is located on the country's southern border. In addition to the economic and strategic benefits, Spain also points to the region's historic ties with Spain. During World War II, Gibraltar served a vital role controlling virtually all naval traffic into and out of the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean.

Another cause of the dispute is the Gibraltar's economy. Gibraltar boasts a solid and flourishing economy having tourism, maritime and financial services as its principal sectors and with ongoing economic growth. Gibraltar can set its own

low taxes and tariffs on goods imported from outside the European Union. There is Gibraltar's cultural importance as a symbol of national resilience and strength. The Gibraltar's climate is a pleasant addition to the place.

After Brexit some issues were left on the negotiating table, including what to do about Gibraltar. There were limited border controls in Gibraltar, because Britain has never been part of the Schengen agreement. Under the compromise it was announced that Frontex officers will control passengers in the port and airport of Gibraltar. The UK and Spain have agreed in principle that the land border will go and many things will change, possibly within six months. The single road linking the territories will be widened to allow people to travel freely. For the border to disappear, Gibraltar will effectively become part of the Schengen zone. New arrivals will only be checked if they enter by sea at the port and by air.

The status of Gibraltar is not only about the land. The 300-year-old conflict is about gaining and maintaining the upper hand in a battle that was physically fought centuries ago, but still is being waged politically. Spain's claim on the territory will probably never be realized. The Gibraltarian people have made it clear that they wish to either remain connected to the British or have total self-determination.