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GSD Unelected Leader continues to try to divide and Gibraltar on Brexit

The Government is astonished that on the very day when the House of Commons is voting on the Withdrawal Agreement, the GSD's unelected Leader should continue to attempt to divide Gibraltar with his distorted and misinformed views on the subject.

It is deeply regrettable that Mr Azopardi has shown no sense of statesmanship or of loyalty to the wider national interest and that he seems more concerned with scoring cheap political points.

It is also worthy of note that the position adopted by the unelected Mr Azopardi, since he became GSD Leader, is markedly different to that of the GSD's elected MPs on the Brexit Select Committee of the Gibraltar Parliament.

They have adopted a far more positive and constructive approach to the Brexit process. Indeed, Mr Feetham himself is on record as having said that 'the Government has left no stone unturned' during the negotiations.

The GSD's elected MPs have been briefed twenty times on Brexit since the Select Committee was established. These have been detailed briefings including discussion of the strategy and approach to the negotiations being adopted by the UK and Gibraltar Governments. Mr Azopardi himself has been briefed directly by the Chief Minister as a matter of courtesy, despite being unelected and having no right to be briefed.

This probably makes the GSD Opposition the most up to date Opposition in the whole of the European Union in terms of what was happening behind the scenes in the withdrawal negotiations.

It is important to record that these briefings started well before Mr Azopardi became Leader of the Party and indeed even before he had re-joined the GSD.

The statement by Mr Azopardi that he would have "explored" and "made efforts" to negotiate a better deal is a shameless play on words which mean absolutely nothing. They cannot have done more than the Government itself has done. This has been made clear by Mr Feetham himself. Therefore any claim to the contrary is complete and utter nonsense.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The statements from Mr Azopardi are fantastical nonsense. It's childish and unfortunate given how much is at stake for our nation. He is putting out a wishlist as if it were a likely potential outcome of a negotiation. This is a barefaced attempt to mislead the public which everyone will see through. Mr Azopardi is able to pretend that he would have done better only because he knows it is a hypothesis that cannot be tested because he isn't even an MP, having failed abysmally to get himself elected in 2007 and 2011 when he last led a political party. But now Mr Azopardi has fallen into a classic Spanish trap: he has not realised



that he is watching the negotiating bullfight from the barriers and not from inside the bullring, where the real negotiations were going on. In fact, if it had been Mr Azopardi leading the negotiations, he might have got a much worse result if it had panned out in the same way as his attempts to negotiate with Sir Peter Caruana a handover of the leadership of the GSD to him in the early 2000s! With failures like those to his credit, Mr Azopardi might want to reflect a little on his self-aggrandising remarks about how well he would have done if he had been this community's leader. More reality and less dreaming might be the best tonic for the unelected Mr Azopardi's newfound arrogance."