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GIBnews

Massive 80% say NO

The poll, carried out over the last 2 weeks, showed unswerving opposition to the repairs.

To the question "As a matter of principle, do you think nuclear submarines should be repaired in Gibraltar?", 80% said NO, 15% said YES, and 5% said DON'T KNOW.

PANORAMA pioneered opinion polls in Gibraltar nearly 25 years ago. Since then, for example, PANORAMA polls have accurately forecast the winners of all elections held in Gibraltar as well as other events and trends in public opinion. It has built up a first-class reputation, and it is the poll everyone awaits with maximum interest.

The present poll has followed exactly the same methods used by PANORAMA opinion polls since their inception, being based on the Register of Electors.

It included a range of questions of public interest, other than submarine repairs, all of which will be published in subsequent editions of PANORAMA.

COMMENTS

In general terms, the Tireless issue transcended party political considerations. Respondents were also asked to make whatever comments they liked:

A GSD supporter said: First of all nuclear submarines should not exist - also, the UK government treat us like a joke and do whatever they feel with us.

Said another: It is shameful that Gibraltarians should be threatened by stating financial facts, when all we are trying to do is to defend the rights of our population in the same way any UK citizen would do under similar circumstances - and no one would dare threaten them as they are not colonials.

Someone who said YES to the repairs, added: It is shameful that the people of Gibraltar have made such a big issue over the submarine when all year round we breathe the oil refinery fumes and have the Acerinox plant across the bay which has already had a radiation leak that we know about!

Pollution from Spain was a recurring theme. Said a GSLP/Liberal supporter: If the nuclear submarine does not kill us the refinery in Spain will.

Another person said: I welcome all HMS/RFA calls, including nuclear subs, but nuclear repairs is another matter.

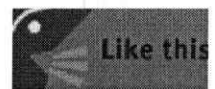
A more negative tone: No nuclear vessels should come into Gib, let alone being repaired.

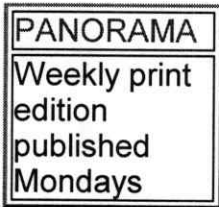
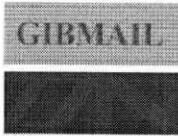
Someone who said did not support any of the political parties, said: I am sure the Spanish Government were informed of the decision to repair HMS Tireless in Gibraltar before the Gibraltar Government was. And had the Spanish protested strongly to the

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Government was. And had the Spanish protested strongly to the British Government and the European Union, HMS Tireless would have been towed to the UK.

While against the repairs, there was an appeal for "a bit of flexibility", and another who was in favour, said: The stupid Gibraltarians should complain about the refinery and Acerinox instead of the submarine.

Another person said: I think nuclear submarines should be repaired in their country of origin.

Another comment: Tireless is probably as safe as Concorde was or as Sellafied was; accidents do happen!

A GSLP/Liberal supporter said the Government only gave out what was propagandistic and added: On nuclear submarines, they need to be clear and say what they think.

Voting YES, a GSD supporter said: We have a British base and must accept the good and the bad. We have no mandate over the base.

ILF supporter: The submarine should go to the UK - the sooner the better.

Another person, voting NO, said: The MOD deserve a little more support than the lynch-mob treatment they are getting. OK they have a problem, but they are dealing with it sensibly.

Another thought that whatever Gibraltar said, it would be repaired here.

Someone else was emphatic: Kick the British government where it hurts, and show them who we Gibraltarians are once and for all.

A GSD supporter: Spain took away our NATO status, and with it she should take the responsibility that goes with it. If the sub cannot be towed to UK, then it should be repaired in a NATO berth.

We the people of Gibraltar have to decide for ourselves, not anybody else, said a GSLP/Liberal supporter who did not know if nuclear submarines should be repaired here.

Someone else thought "lots of people have been jumping to conclusions without knowing enough about it."

Another said: Panorama should inform Gibraltarians and all Gibraltar that nuclear submarines were dry-docked in Gibraltar for maintenance and refit when the dockyard employed over 3,000, was there no danger then?

Said someone else: Nuclear energy is a wonderful thing but it carries with it a terrible downside when things go wrong as witnessed in various parts of the world, we should not be forced to accept an unacceptable risk.

Submarines should not be repaired in a place like Gibraltar with a high population but in a more isolated area, said someone, who also mentioned the potential loss to tourism through concern of the dangers posed.

A GSLP/Liberal supporter: What kind of government have we got when they do not appear at a demonstration - we must get rid of them.

Said a GSD supporter: While HMS Tireless is berthed in Gibraltar for repairs, Union Jacks should be flown upside down as a sign of distress! (210800)

“Serious rift between London and Gibraltar over submarine”

Britain will try today to defuse a row over plans to repair a Royal Navy nuclear submarine in Gibraltar, where it has been stranded for three months, says today's Daily Telegraph.

A 2mm crack in one of the reactor cooling pipes aboard Tireless has created the most serious rift in relations between London and the colony in recent history. Peter Caruana, Chief Minister of Gibraltar, stressed yesterday that the row was "an issue between friends". But he remained adamant that repairs should not start unless his government's advisers - who meet Ministry of Defence officials in London this afternoon - are convinced that the work carries no radiation risk.

Some campaigners in Gibraltar, who have been organising demonstrations against carrying out reactor repairs only a few

demonstrations against carrying out reactor repairs only a few hundred yards from people's homes, said they would be satisfied only when the hunter-killer submarine was towed the 1,000 miles to Devonport. But British ministers, who misread sentiment early on among the 29,000 people in Gibraltar, insist that the work carries no risk to the colony.

The paper adds: reports that, because of the growing disharmony, Whitehall would embark on the repairs only if the Gibraltar government agreed were described as "not necessarily true" by British officials yesterday.

Mr Caruana, in the face of disquiet among the electorate, remains to be convinced: "There is a genuine concern among people here who are not used to having nuclear submarines repaired outside their windows." (210800)

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