

Coalition Update: 1-7 November

Healthcare reform in the Lords

NHS bill clause put on hold to stave off revolt by Liberal Democrat peers (*Guardian*, 2 November)

As the Health Bill trundles through committee stage in the Lords, the Tories announce they will pause certain parts of the bill in a bid to allay Lib Dem concerns over the Health Secretary's new role under the proposed reforms.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/nov/02/nhs-bill-clause-hold-lords>

Govt in a flap over health bill in the Lords (*FT Westminster blog*, 2 November)

Despite all sides having apparently reached a ceasefire with the introduction of Lord Mackay's amendment and Baroness Williams' volte-face, it seems there may be another twist in the tale as the Conservatives cast aside Mackay's amendment in pursuit of a fresh compromise.

<http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2011/11/govt-in-a-flap-over-health-bill-in-the-lords/#axzz1cxXaaFaW>

It's my party and I'll rebel if I want to

Exclusive: Tory rebels form new Eurosceptic group (*Independent*, 2 November)

The emergence of the so-called 81 Group, despite considering itself an 'informal caucus' rather than a faction or party within a party, suggests that the question of EU membership may well dog the government throughout the rest of its term.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/exclusive-tory-rebels-form-new-eurosceptic-group-6255896.html>

The era of the Tory supercharged backbencher (*Guardian*, 3 November)

Tim Montgomerie sees the Tory rebellion over Europe as not just an isolated incident, but as an indicator of a more long-term trend amongst Conservative MPs to escape from under the whips' thumbs and establish themselves as independent-minded servants of their constituents. Jon Bercow's speakership is cited as an important factor in this development.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/nov/03/tory-backbencher-rebel-mps-david-cameron?INTCMP=SRCH>

The New Tories (*ePolitix*, 4 November)

Cameron failed to reward Tory backbenchers for their loyalty with total victory in 2010, as Tony Blair did in 1997. When combined with an ideologically-driven Thatcherite intake of new MPs, this fact means Cameron may well face some of the most rebellious government backbenchers in modern history.

<http://www.epolitix.com/latestnews/article-detail/newsarticle/the-new-tories>

Coalition 2.0

Embattled Cameron needs a Grand Bargain (*Times*, 7 November) **££**

Tim Montgomerie argues that Cameron should seek a substantial renegotiation of the coalition agreement with Nick Clegg to prevent the government slipping into potentially terminal decline. Vince Cable for Health Secretary, anyone?

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article3218167.ece>

Rebooting Project Cameron series (*ConservativeHome*, 7 November)

Continuing from his article in The Times, Tim Montgomerie (again!) outlines a 10-stage plan for reinvigorating the government. Links to the other pieces in this series – covering such topics as the frontbench, Tory-EU relations, and the team in No. 10 – can be found alongside the first part.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/11/110-rebooting-project-cameron-cameron-needs-to-renew-his-grand-bargain-with-clegg.html>

The Liberal Democrats' identity crisis

Clegg tells Lib Dems to trumpet their success (*Independent*, 6 November)

To avoid being mistaken for 'little-known Tories', Lib Dem ministers 'have been told to go on TV and declare proudly "I'm a Liberal Democrat" in an effort to improve the party's poll ratings'.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/clegg-tells-lib-dems-to-trumpet-their-success-6258027.html>

'We need to up our game.' As a Liberal Democrat I endorse this message (*Lib Dem Voice*, 7 November)

Blog post welcoming this development, on the grounds that Lib Dems have allowed themselves to fall behind on media training since taking office.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/we-need-to-up-our-game-as-a-liberal-democrat-i-endorse-this-message-25837.html>

Opinion: Nick Clegg's sixth language is Tory (*Lib Dem Voice*, 6 November)

Blog post echoing the above concerns about the Lib Dem message, and claiming that Clegg has managed to learn how to 'speak Tory' whilst 'remaining a solidly Centrist Liberal'.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/opinion-nick-cleggs-sixth-language-is-tory-25792.html>

Miscellaneous

In conversation with... Patrick McLoughlin (*TotalPolitics*, 1 November)

Iain Dale interviews the Conservative chief whip, who – after much affable meandering – provides some insight into his job in the Coalition government, and the unique challenges coalition has brought.

<http://www.totalpolitics.com/articles/268817/in-conversation-with-patrick-mcloughlin.thtml>

Clegg to oppose Osborne benefit cuts (*Financial Times*, 4 November) **££**

Nick Clegg, apparently acting on the advice of David Laws, may be preparing to challenge George Osborne's planned welfare cuts, a move which may result in 'one of the fiercest and most fascinating political battles of the year'.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/602fd24a-06f6-11e1-b9cc-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1cxXSEnSV>