

Coalition Update: 9-15 August

The Distinctiveness Problem

Nick Clegg faces calls to distance his party from the Conservatives (*Independent*, 9 August)

Tim Farron and other senior Lib Dems are expected to call for Nick Clegg to put "clear orange water" between them and David Cameron.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/clegg-faces-calls-to-distance-his-party-from-the-conservatives-2334134.html>

Spin doctors step in to try to save Tories (*Independent*, 9 August)

A new group of lobbyists and PR men has been created to prevent the party losing touch with grassroots supporters and struggling to articulate traditional Tory values.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/spin-doctors-step-in-to-try-to-save-tories-2334135.html>

What to watch out for at Liberal Democrat conference (*Mark Pack's blog*, 13 August)

Mark Pack previews the Lib Dem conference, saying few motions contain outright rejections of government policy, but adding that the theme is likely to be distinctiveness from the Conservatives.

<http://www.markpack.org.uk/23486/what-to-watch-out-for-at-liberal-democrat-conference/>

Policy Differences

Re-negotiation is not an option (*Conservativehome*, 9 August)

Marc Glendinning warns against debating the issue of renegotiating Britain's EU membership, because such an eventuality will not come to pass, as "the Lib Dems simply will not permit it". All it will do is split the coalition, he claims.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/platform/2011/08/marc-glendening-re-negotiation-is-not-an-option-and-banging-on-about-it-risks-splitting-the-right-le.html>

Lib Dems to urge changes to stressful benefit tests (*BBC*, 9 August)

A Lib Dem conference motion has called for reform of the way in which disability benefits are assessed.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-14449896>

Tories mutiny, coalition splits: Cameron under pressure to reverse cuts (*Times*, 11 August) **££**

Tom Brake has said that the plans for elected police chiefs should be reconsidered in the wake of the recent unrest, despite the policy being part of the coalition agreement.

<http://www.timesplus.co.uk/tto/news/?login=false&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Ftto%2Fnews%2Fpolitics%2Farticle3121235.ece>

Ministers plan removal of rioters' benefits (*FT*, 14 August) **££**

Liberal Democrats have expressed opposition to plans to stop benefit payments to people convicted of offences related to last week's unrest.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/c8970a8c-c688-11e0-bb50-00144feabdc0,Authorised=false.html?i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2F

[s%2F0%2Fc8970a8c-c688-11e0-bb50-00144feabdc0.html& i referer=http%3A%2F%2Fconservativehome.blogs.com%2F](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/aug/14/lib-dem-mansion-tax-proposal)

Lib Dems push for mansion tax (*Guardian*, 14 August)

Vince Cable and other Lib Dems are pushing for a mansion tax to be brought in and the 50p tax rate to be abolished.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/aug/14/lib-dem-mansion-tax-proposal>

Osborne and Cable at odds... (*FT*, 14 August) ££

Sources close to Vince Cable have claimed he opposes Treasury plans to delay the deadline for bank ringfencing. A "big fight" is predicted.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/e8d1ddb8-c65a-11e0-823b-00144feabdc0,Authorised=false.html? i location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2Fe8d1ddb8-c65a-11e0-823b-00144feabdc0.html& i referer=http%3A%2F%2Fconservativehome.blogs.com%2F#axzz1V4SFSa9y>

Ministerial Relationships

A local landmark (*Epolitix*, 15 August)

A feature on how the coalition parties are united on the issue of localism. Minister Greg Clark notes that the Localism Bill is receiving little coverage for this reason. He also says the Bill will give a government "a more Picklesian tone".

<http://www.epolitix.com/latestnews/article-detail/newsarticle/a-local-landmark/>

Internal Party Dissent

How Boris Johnson's week ended on a better note (*FT*, 13 August) ££

Jim Pickard claims that Boris Johnson's opposition to police cuts has Cabinet support (namely Michael Gove and Liam Fox). He also notes that David Cameron is understanding of Johnson's need for "clear blue water" between him and central government.

<http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2011/08/how-boris-johnsons-week-ended-on-a-better-note/#ixzz1UvOnfonK>

Blue foxes spark Tory spat over hunt ban (*Telegraph*, 14 August)

There is dissent within Tory ranks over the hunting ban, with a group of new MPs, mainly female, fighting to retain it.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/8700702/Blue-foxes-spark-Tory-spat-over-hunt-ban.html>

Will George stop Dave... (*Mail*, 15 August)

Iain Martin claims that George Osborne is as likely to rein in David Cameron's conservative instincts as Nick Clegg, because the Chancellor is an "ultra-pragmatist" and this guides his every political move.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2025534/London-riots-Will-George-Osborne-stop-David-Cameron-curing-sick-Britain.html>

The politics of the riots

How Labour could get caught on the wrong side of public sentiment (*FT*, August 10) **££**

Analysis of Labour's mixed messages on the riots and their causes.

<http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2011/08/uk-riots-how-labour-could-get-caught-on-the-wrong-side-of-public-sentiment/#axzz1UilVNIR8>

Coalition united in restoring law and order (*Spectator*, 11 August)

Columnist claims that Nick Clegg sounds like a "tory wet" when talking about the riots.

http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/7159003/coalition-united-in-restoring-law-order-and-property.shtml?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

After the inferno (*Economist*, 13 August)

Bagehot claims that the riots will lead Mr. Cameron in a more conservative, authoritarian direction, with the Lib Dems less able to put a brake on his instincts in this regard.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21525894>

Mr. Cameron has been handed a chance to mend this broken society (*Telegraph*, 14 August)

Tim Montgomerie claims that prior to the riots, the coalition had no "compelling sense of mission", and David Cameron looked like the public spokesman for George Osborne's government. He also asks if Nick Clegg will "let" Cameron to put family breakdown and law and order at the heart of his premiership.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/8700270/UK-riots-Mr-Cameron-has-been-handed-a-chance-to-mend-this-broken-society.html>

Miscellaneous

Our political leaders seem to be paralysed by crises (*Telegraph*, 10 August)

John McTernan claims that all three party leaders are basically espousing SDP ideals, with little between them on broad issues of political belief.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/8693544/Our-political-leaders-seem-to-be-paralysed-by-crises.html>

Fury over tax-payer gold card cover up (*Mail*, 14 August)

Sir Gus O'Donnell is reportedly blocking plans by Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude to make civil service expenses claims more transparent.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2025760/Fury-taxpayer-gold-card-cover-Ministers-blame-head-Civil-Service-blocking-exposure-abuse.html>

The slow road to reform (*Telegraph*, 14 August)

Peter Hennessy claims that central government remains overly secretive.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8701483/The-slow-road-to-reform-in-a-nation-once-ruled-by-secrecy.html>