**Coalition Update: 10-16 May**

**The Lib Dem strategy for Displaying a Separate Identity**

**Nick Clegg to boast of blocked Conservative policies** *(Telegraph, 10 May)*

Nick Clegg is to claim the Lib Dems are "punching above their weight", having blocked Conservative plans to cut inheritance tax, replace Trident in this Parliament, build more prisons and reform the Human Rights Act.


**Coalition 12 months on: Nick Clegg pledges to flex his muscles** *(Guardian, 10 May)*

David Cameron is refusing to concede that the Lib Dems have softened Tory policies, whilst Nick Clegg has denied his attempts to forge a separate identity will lead to Blair-Brown type discord.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/10/coalition-clegg-lib-dems-cameron

**Change in coalition relationship inevitable, says David Cameron** *(Guardian, 10 May)*

David Cameron has claimed the AV referendum will change Cabinet politics, saying "there will be more noise, more debate and more public airing of differences".

http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/10/change-coalition-relationship-inevitable-david-cameron

**Be liberal, Clegg** *(New Statesman, 10 May)*

Graeme Archer claims the Lib Dems are more likely to succeed if they work with the Conservatives, rather than against them. To achieve this, he calls for the sacking of Chris Huhne and Vince Cable.


**Clegg's next dilemma: does he reaffirm the Coalition deal - and risk his party's wrath?** *(Independent, 10 May)*

Andrew Grice notes division within the Lib Dems over how to approach working within the coalition there has been talk of scrapping plans for a "Coalition Agreement Mark 2" which would update the original deal signed by the two parties.


**Nick Clegg and the Lib Dems shouldn't throw a tantrum - just keep their heads down** *(Telegraph, 14 May)*

Tim Montgomerie claims that the Lib Dems should be focused on making the coalition work rather than seeking to promote their own identity.


**Policy Differences and their effect on Government Legislation**

**NHS**

Cameron urged not to let Nick Clegg dictate on NHS reforms *(Telegraph, 10 May)*
The 1922 committee has warned David Cameron that his backbenchers are keen to avoid further "pandering" and concessions to the Lib Dems. Backbencher Peter Bone said the coalition would end soon, once the economy was repaired.


David Cameron to come out fighting over NHS reform (Telegraph, 14 May)
A David Cameron speech will attempt to take the NHS issue from the Lib Dems, setting up a dividing line between the coalition parties.


Lords
Plans to reform House of Lords could include a lottery to cull peers (Guardian, 11 May)
Lib Dem figures have warned they would see it as a further breach of faith if David Cameron does not enthusiastically support Lords' reform.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/11/plans-reform-house-of-lords

Nick Clegg (and Lord Strathclyde's) road to reform (BBC, 12 May)
Mark D'Arcy discusses coalition politics in the House of Lords, claiming each party has to stick to the coalition agreement in order to achieve their objectives.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13382752

Clegg finds unlikely ally in Osborne for Lords reform plans (Independent, 15 May)
George Osborne is to intervene to drive through reform of the House of Lords, following Lib Dem calls for him to be more consensual.


Tories, not Clegg, charged with selling Lords reform (Times, 16 May) ££
Lord Strathclyde, the Tory Leader of the Lords, and Mark Harper, a junior Tory minister in the Cabinet Office, are to be responsible for “selling” Lords reform.

http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article3020447.ece

Police
Police commissioners' plan has its heart ripped out in the Lords (Telegraph, 11 May)
The House of Lords has voted in favour of a Lib Dem amendment that will see police commissioners appointed, not elected. There were 13 Lib Dem rebels.


Lib Dem rebels threaten David Cameron-Nick Clegg unity rift (Independent, 13 May)
Reports indicate that Lib Dem lords are opposing Conservative police reforms following negative campaigning during the AV referendum, with Tory peers set to oppose Nick Clegg's plans for Lords' reform in retaliation.

**The Environment**

**Historic climate change deal with legal powers agreed by Cabinet** (*Observer*, 14 May)
David Cameron has sided with Chris Huhne on the issue of the "green deal", with George Osborne and Vince Cable opposed to the compromise.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/may/14/historic-climate-change-deal-agreed-chris-huhne

**Chris Huhne's implosion is an immediate boost to Nick Clegg** (*Telegraph*, 16 May)
Benedict Brogan discusses the political impact should Chris Huhne resign. It would boost Nick Clegg personally, but also undermine the agreement on the "green deal" and weaken the Lib Dems in Cabinet.


**Education**

**What started as a better way to pay for universities is now a mess** (*Telegraph*, 13 May)
Charles Moore claims the Lib Dems have had an unpleasant effect on the tuition fee policy, with loans being sold as a tax on the rich to pay for social mobility, a message unpalatable to many Conservative supporters.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/8513225/University-tuition-fees-What-started-as-a-better-way-to-pay-for-universities-is-now-a-mess.html

**Forming the Coalition**

**All Eggs in One Basket** (*epolitix.com*, 11 May)
David Steel discusses the electoral impact of coalition on the Lib Dems, opening with the observation that "Never again should tired politicians be stampeded into making up hasty coalitions."


**One year on- the unavoidable coalition?** (*Conservativehome*, 11 May)
Mark Field MP discusses the formation of the coalition, asking if David Cameron offered the Lib Dems too much in return for their support. He concludes the relatively large Lib Dem ministerial allocation guaranteed Cameron political cover for spending cuts.

http://conservativehome.blogs.com/platform/2011/05/mark-field-mp-one-year-on-the-unavoidable-coalition-.html

**Labour and the Lib Dems**

Clegg pours cold water on Cable's progressive majority (*New Statesman*, 11 May)
Nick Clegg has claimed that there is little chance of a progressive alliance, contradicting Vince Cable. He said the Lib Dems cannot be either the anti-Tory or anti-Labour party.

http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/05/progressive-alliance-clegg

**Progressive majority may find its voice despite AV disaster** (*Independent*, 14 May)
Andrew Grice claims that behind-the-scenes Lib-Lab relations are good, with them working well in the Lords. He claims Clegg would have "given his right arm" to have gone into
coalition with Labour in Scotland, "as it would have shown voters his party had not become a mere adjunct of the Tories."


Public Perception of the coalition
Coalition government weak and indecisive (Times, 11 May) ££
More than two-thirds of the public think the country is weaker under a coalition government and 73 per cent think it is more indecisive, according to a poll conducted for the Institute for Government.


YouGov poll of Lib Dem Members (YouGov, 12 May)
79% of Lib Dem members viewed the Coalition as having been good for Britain. 66% thought it had been bad for the Lib Dems, with 91% thinking that joining the Coalition was right, and 57% thought that the right deal had been struck under the circumstances


The Next Election
Coalition is best hope in age of austerity (FT, 11 May) ££
Michael Portillo claims campaigning as a coalition is a realistic option for 2015, adding that the Lib Dems have given the government added legitimacy and enhanced David Cameron’s ability to be radical.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/255a191e-7bf5-11e0-9b16-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1MERG3e41

Miscellaneous
Midwives await their renaissance (FT, 11 May) ££
Sue Cameron discusses the varying relationships between coalition ministers and officials, claiming that the coalition will need to rely more and more on the civil service as time goes by, with the balance of power shifting their way as "things go wrong".

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/33b17ec6-7c04-11e0-9b16-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1M1t0RtTR

We've had a coalition since 1997 (Independent, 15 May)
John Rentoul claims that the Blair governments operated on a similar model to that of David Cameron, with Blair and Gordon Brown heading rival parties, with separate whipping operations, polling and fundraising measures.

http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/john-rentoul/john-rentoul-weve-had-a-coalition-since-1997-2284203.html