

Coalition Update: 13-19 September

Tory rumblings

Last night in the Thatcher Room, a new Eurosceptic Movement of Tory MPs was born (*ConservativeHome*, 13 September)

“Given the coalition, progress will only be made if there is agreement between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats on the need for EU reform. ... The phrase European localism is targeted at the Achilles [heel] of the Liberal Democrat position – it is inconsistent at best to be a big supporter of pushing power down within the UK closer to the citizens, while wanting to centralise it in Brussels as far away from citizens as possible.”

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thecolumnists/2011/09/anthony-browne-last-night-in-the-thatcher-room-a-new-eurosceptic-movement-of-tory-mps-was-born.html>

Cameron feels the heat of meltdown on Continent (*Independent*, 15 September)

As well as further weakening Britain's already anaemic growth, the crisis in the eurozone threatens to create a major political headache for David Cameron. The Prime Minister faces a dilemma over whether to risk a rift with Conservative backbenchers or his Liberal Democrat coalition partners over Britain's stance when a new European treaty is devised to allow the 17 nations in the euro to adopt fiscal union.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-feels-the-heat-of-meltdown-on-continent-2354969.html>

Neither Clegg nor Cameron can afford to back down on human rights (*Total Politics*, 15 September)

Immigration Minister Damian Green attacked the European Convention on Human Rights in a speech at the Centre for Policy Studies

<http://www.totalpolitics.com/blog/258392/neither-clegg-nor-cameron-can-afford-to-back-down-on-human-rights.thtml>

Tory thinkers offer a glimpse of life after Cameron (*Telegraph*, 15 September)

After the Coalition, sends an unmistakable signal to the Prime Minister – and to Clegg, too, whose own party's conference meets next week. We will continue to support the arrangement during this Parliament, its authors suggest.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8765318/Tory-thinkers-offer-a-glimpse-of-life-after-Cameron.html>

Boundary changes

Boundary review angers senior MPs (*Guardian*, 13 September)

Reduction in number of constituencies will see high-profile figures face election battle as seats are merged

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/sep/13/boundary-review-angers-tory-mps>

Cameron warns Clegg not to dispute new boundaries (*Independent*, 14 September)

Downing Street is aware that it faces a backlash from Tory MPs, who may lose their seats as a result of the changes

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-warns-clegg-not-to-dispute-new-boundaries-2354308.html>

Labour

Labour and Liberal Democrats could still have a future together (*Guardian*, 16 September)
Polly Toynbee makes the case for a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/16/labour-lib-dems-future-pact>

Miliband seeks to appoint Charlie Falconer to shadow cabinet (*FT's Westminster Blog*, 14 September)

Jim Pickard discusses the widely-expected reshuffle of the Shadow Cabinet
<http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2011/09/ed-milibands-shadow-cabinet-dilemma/?catid=165&SID=google>

Lib Dems must be willing to talk to Labour, says Clegg adviser (*Guardian*, 18 September)
Norman Lamb argues for civilised dialogue over social issues despite 'hysterical' reaction of some Labour members to coalition
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/18/liberal-democrat-labour-dialogue-cooperation>

The real reason for the Liberal Democrats' odd cheeriness: Ed Miliband is doing worse (*Economist*, 19 September)

"In 2015, things may still be bleak, he conceded. And pointing to a recovery had been part of the initial assumption about how to survive in 2015. But so long as Labour's answer on the economy is Ed Miliband and Ed Balls, who were both so close to Gordon Brown and the economic policies of the previous Labour government under Gordon Brown, the Lib Dems would be able to point to Labour's complete lack of credibility."
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/bagehot/2011/09/britains-liberal-democrats-0>

The NHS

Challenges of the fall: what are the big health issues facing the Government this autumn? (*MHP blog*, 13 September)

"The truth is that the Liberal Democrats were never going to be able to unite behind a Bill which retained Conservative support. ... there are no concessions which Nick Clegg can extract from the Conservatives that will appeal to all of his party. Liberal Democrat opinion spans those who believe in the Blairite model of competition to those who reject any role for competition within the NHS. Indeed the draft text of Dr Charles West's emergency motion states that "a competitive market is not an appropriate model for delivering healthcare in the UK." A position which would not be shared by many in his party, let alone the Conservatives. So the Government is in for a rough ride in the Lords on the Bill."
<http://mhpc.com/blog/health-challenges-fall>

The Health and Social Care Bill: what next for the Liberal Democrats? (*MHP blog*, 13 September)

Mark Pack discusses Conference and the Health and Social Care Bill
<http://mhpc.com/blog/health-and-social-care-bill-what-next-liberal-democrats>

What Paul Burstow should say to his party (*MHP blog*, 19 September)

Mike Birtwistle: “[Burstow] must explain a set of policies which many in his own party now describe simply as being “Lansley’s reforms,” almost denying that the Liberal Democrats have had anything to do with them.”

<http://www.mhpc.com/blog/what-paul-burstow-should-say-his-party>

Miscellaneous

A breakdown of usual channels (Lords of the Blog, 15 September)

Baroness Murphy describes how the ‘usual channels’—the coalition parties’ chief whips—fail to agree on the Welfare Reform Bill should be debated in its committee stages ‘in Grand Committee’.

<http://lordsoftheblog.net/2011/09/15/a-breakdown-of-usual-channels/>

The Liberal Democrats

We must tackle the economy and mend our broken society says David Laws MP for Yeovil (*Sun*, 16 September)

“In its first year, the Coalition focus was on unity ... In its second year, the relationship between the parties has matured. ... Lib Dem voters want to know that we are fighting for our priorities — that we are partners, not patsies. ... But let's be clear — while it is essential that our identity is not lost, it would be a disaster if the Lib Dems were simply to evolve into an internal Opposition.”

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/politics/article3817286.ece>

Top 50 most influential Liberal Democrats 2011: the rise of the left (*Telegraph*, 18 September)

The battle to succeed Clegg and left-wing dissent over the party's role in the Coalition is reflected in this year's list of most influential Liberal Democrats.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/liberaldemocrats/8770599/Top-50-most-influential-Liberal-Democrats-2011-the-rise-of-the-left.html>

Time to change the operational framework (*The Dispatch Box*, 19 September)

Bryan Johnston, Senior Consultant at Bell Pottinger Public Affairs, argues that the Liberal Democrats should call for a loosening of Cabinet collective responsibility if they want voters to dissociate the Party from their Conservative partners

<http://bp-pa.blogspot.com/2011/09/time-to-change-operational-framework.html>

Clegg biography claims the Lib Dems want a new coalition agreement (*Spectator*, 17 September)

“Coalition insiders have always admitted that the legislation mentioned in the agreement should have been mostly passed by 2012. But the Tories have been keen to spend the second half of the parliament concentrating on delivering on what’s already on the statue book rather than dealing with a whole new set of bills. A mid-term review conducted by Number 10 concluded that the only area in which new legislation would be needed is housing. So, if the Lib Dems do insist on a full, second agreement that could bring out a whole host of coalition tensions on various issues.”

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/7245248/clegg-biography-claims-the-lib-dems-want-a-new-coalition-agreement.thtml>

Andrew Grice: Clegg could soothe Lib Dems but what about the voters? (*Independent*, 17 September)

There are controlled explosions and there are uncontrolled explosions. From the outside, it is not always easy to tell the difference. When Mr Clegg claimed he had stopped the Tories allowing providers of free schools to make a profit, some Tory ministers were miffed. But the Liberal Democrats insist there was a prior agreement at the very top to disagree in public.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/andrew-grice/andrew-grice-clegg-could-soothe-lib-dems-but-what-about-the-voters-2356167.html>

The Lib Dems need to be more than just the people who say no (*Guardian*, 18 September)

Nick Clegg's party must be seen to be doing positive things in coalition, as well as putting a brake on the Tories

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/18/nick-clegg-liberal-democrats-coalition>

Cable and Huhne attack Tory right (*Guardian*, 19 September)

Energy secretary denounces 'Tea party tendency' as senior Lib Dems go cold on idea of future coalition negotiations

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/19/cable-huhne-attack-tory-right>

The Lib Dem Conference

How the "negotiating" factor will change conference (*New Statesman Blog*, 16 September)

Mark Pack: now we have a coalition government, there is an extra factor to muddle the communications mix even further: negotiation between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. What a minister says at their party conference is not only a message for their members and their voters, it is also part of a public negotiation with ministers of another party.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/09/party-conference-negotiating>

Liberal Democrats must reject the Toryisation of our conference (*Guardian*, 16 September)

Evan Harris warns of the threat to the ability of the party outside parliament and government to make party policy

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/16/lib-dem-conference-policies/print>

Simon Hughes: it's our job to rein in the ruthless Tories (*Guardian*, 17 September)

The Liberal Democrat deputy leader insists they are emboldened by adversity and recovering in the polls – and that he revels in his role as guardian of the party's left

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/17/simon-hughes-liberal-democrats-interview>

Liberal Democrat Party Conference 2011: 'We're picking fights and punching above our weight', says Clegg (*Telegraph*, 17 September)

Nick Clegg has claimed the Liberal Democrats were picking fights with their Tory Coalition partners every day to "put things right" in the Government.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/19/liberal-democrat-polls-party-future>