

Coalition Update: 17-23 May

Cabinet Government during Coalition

Cameron isn't in full charge of the Cabinet (*Conservativehome*, 17 May)

Paul Goodman claims that Chris Huhne has not been sacked by David Cameron because he is not in control of Lib Dem Cabinet appointments; "the first modern Prime Minister to have relinquished control over four appointments to his own Cabinet".

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/05/a-lesson-of-the-huhne-affair-cameron-isnt-in-full-charge-of-the-cabinet.html>

Times Editorial (*Times*, 19 May) **££**

The Times' leader writer discusses claims that Nick Clegg has a veto on Chris Huhne's removal. If true, he claims that it would be wrong if David Cameron was "forced to allow a minister to behave as a freelance, because the Prime Minister's political writ does not run across the Government, only stretching to Conservatives."

<http://www.timesplus.co.uk/tto/news/?login=false&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Ftto%2Fopinion%2Fleaders%2Farticle3024350.ece>

David Laws interview (*Times*, 18 May) **££**

David Laws warns in a Times interview that "throwing crockery" across the Cabinet table (as Chris Huhne did) will not achieve anything, and that coalition politics requires a more consensual approach.

<http://www.timesplus.co.uk/tto/news/?login=false&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Ftto%2Fnews%2Fpolitics%2Farticle3023090.ece>

Party Management during Coalition Government

Clegg may soon be facing the unpalatable choice of holding the coalition together and keeping his party intact (*Conservativehome*, 17 May)

Mark Field MP claims the Lib Dems could lose the support of 15-20 of its own MPs in order to maintain the coalition, but that if this happens, the party will be a more reliable coalition partner.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/platform/2011/05/mark-field-mp-keep-clegg-and-carry-on.html>

Clegg's conundrum (*LibDemVoice*, 21 May)

Scott Hill claims that Nick Clegg faces a "conundrum" in that the people who voted for him wanted an "alternative" to the Conservatives. He also compares Simon Hughes' dutiful adherence to government lines, whilst Vince Cable openly disagrees with his colleagues.

http://www.libdemvoice.org/?p=24176&utm_source=tweet&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=twitter

Lib Dems move HQ (*Independent*, 22 May)

Lib Dem party managers are hoping that their move to a new building in Westminster will improve communications within the party.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/lib-dems-move-hq-from-rabbit-warren-to-the-thick-of-it-2287605.html>

Separate Identities

Backbench committees and the louder LibDem voice (*LibDemVoice*, 23 May)

Stephen Williams claims that that backbench committees are a key mechanism for demonstrating a separate identity when in coalition.

http://www.libdemvoice.org/?p=24215&utm_source=tweet&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=twitter

Voters readier to give Clegg credit for good things (*Conservativehome*, 20 May)

A poll has claimed that those most likely to vote Tory are broadly in favour of coalition candidates at the next election. However, 16% would vote UKIP if their candidate was a Lib Dem. Tim Montgomerie repeats his claim that the junior partners are taking credit for the coalition's softer side.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/05/target-voters-readier-to-give-clegg-the-credit-for-coalitions-good-things-on-nhs-environment-tax-and.html>

Clegg should hit the ejector button (*LibDemVoice*, 22 May)

Scott Hill claims it is "obvious and imperative" that the Lib Dems must leave government in order to demonstrate a separate identity to the voters.

http://www.libdemvoice.org/?p=24177&utm_source=tweet&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=twitter

Policy Differences in the coalition

Peers and MPs scorn Nick Clegg's plans (*Guardian*, 17 May)

Conservative MPs yesterday expressed disapproval of Nick Clegg's plans for Lords reform, despite support from George Osborne and Liam Fox. Lord Strathclyde, who will pilot the legislation through the Lords, has expressed skepticism about their desirability.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/17/house-of-lords-reform-nick-clegg>

Clegg set up to fail on House of Lords reform (*Totalpolitics*, 17 May)

Dennis Skinner told Nick Clegg Tory colleagues were setting him up to fail on Lords reform. Total Politics agrees, claiming Clegg is "on his own" and that the plans are a "poor consolation" for a failure to get electoral reform.

<http://www.totalpolitics.com/blog/158972/clegg-set-up-to-fail-on-house-of-lords-reform.shtml>

Liam Fox revolt delays law on increased aid budget (*Telegraph*, 17 May)

Downing Street has said there is no fixed timetable for proposed foreign aid legislation, with sources saying ministers are concerned about a Conservative backbench rebellion on the issue., encouraged by the knowledge that Liam Fox is also opposed to the plans.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/8519055/Liam-Fox-revolt-delays-law-on-increased-aid-budget.html>

David Cameron has lost his zeal for the radical in favour of retreat (*Telegraph*, 18 May)

Benedict Brogan claims that coalition politics is dampening down David Cameron's zeal for radical reform, despite the argument being pushed by the chief engineers of the Coalition project, such as Oliver Letwin, that it is necessary to retreat in order to advance.

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/benedictbrogan/100088576/david-cameron-has-lost-his-zeal-for-the-radical-in-favour-of-retreat/>

Chris Huhne, David Laws and Andrew Lansley in deep water (*Guardian*, 18 May)

Policy differences abound. Jenny Willott claims to have permission to speak out on welfare matters, whilst Liam Fox has said the Lib Dems are to explore alternatives to Trident replacement. Clegg also said yesterday that the parties disagreed on "the nature and shape of the state" but fiscal tightness was the "glue" that bound them together.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/18/huhne-laws-lansley-trouble-rows-surface>

Andrew Lansley cheered to rafters at meeting of Tory 1922 committee (*Guardian*, 18 May)

A "mole" in the 1922 committee has told Nick Watt that Tory MPs are unhappy about Lib Dem opposition to NHS reforms. "We want to get those bloody bastards – the Liberal Democrats who are now playing this political game", the mole says.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/wintour-and-watt/2011/may/18/andrewlansley-nhs?CMP=tw_t_gu

Coalition's divisions over NHS deepen into open warfare (*Guardian*, 19 May)

Nick Clegg and David Cameron are both claiming to be the driving force behind planned amendments to the NHS reform legislation before Parliament. Addressing Lib Dem members, Clegg this week angered Cameron by criticising him openly, a move seen by Evan Harris as an indicator the former will do what his party wants on the issue.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/18/coalition-nhs-reforms-clegg-cameron>

Nick Clegg: Remove key clause from NHS Bill (*Guardian*, 21 May)

Nick Clegg has given his MPs assurances that competition in the NHS will be a dealbreaker on negotiations over health reform plans, a move that "will cause potentially unsustainable tensions in the government, where there is growing restlessness on the right of the Tory party about the posturing of their coalition partners".

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/may/21/nick-clegg-nhs-reforms-bill>

21 Tory rebels object to supplementary vote for election of city mayors (*Conservativehome*, 21 May)

21 Tory MPs have voted against plans for the use of the supplementary vote in the election of city mayors, with one moving an amendment against it.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/parliament/2011/05/21-tory-rebels-object-to-supplementary-vote-for-election-of-city-mayors.html>

Labour and the Lib Dems

Labour urges councillors to form coalitions with Lib Dems (*Independent*, 18 May)

A leaked Labour circular to councillors supports "progressive coalitions" with Lib Dem councillors opposed to spending cuts imposed by the coalition. One Labour official claims that some Lib Dems have realised they are in coalition with "natural born killers" at national level. Some Labour politicians have expressed concerns Ed Miliband is "obsessed" with wooing the Lib Dems.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-urges-councillors-to-form-coalitions-with-lib-dems-2285515.html>

Ed Miliband speech today (*New Statesman*, 21 May)

The New Statesman claims that Labour should not condescend when talking to Lib Dems and their voters or brag about how Labour votes at local elections came from disgruntled Lib Dem voters

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/05/speech-today-labour-party-lib>

Miscellaneous

Kenneth Clarke delays announcement of sentencing reforms (*Guardian*, 20 May)

Lib Dems have expressed concerns that Ken Clarke might have to resign, as they consider him more friendly to their interests than alternative Conservative candidates for the post.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/19/kenneth-clarke-sentencing-reforms-delay>

Velcro man (*Times*, 20 May) **££**

Colleagues of Nick Clegg have claimed that "man-marking" David Cameron whilst managing his party is putting a strain on his family life. He has called himself "Velcro man", a sidekick to Cameron's "Teflon Man".

<http://www.timesplus.co.uk/tto/news/?login=false&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Ftto%2Fnews%2Fpolitics%2Farticle3025832.ece>

Saturday interview: Vince Cable (*Guardian*, 20 May)

Vince Cable claims the Tory journey "from nasty to nice" was reversed during the AV campaign and discusses the media targeting of senior Lib Dems such as himself and Chris Huhne.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2011/may/20/saturday-interview-vince-cable>