Coalition Update: 18-24 January

Electoral pacts

Tim Bale: Even Churchill considered an electoral pact with the Liberals in the 1950s (ConservativeHome, 18 January)

Tim Bale discusses the history of the relationship between the Tories and Liberals: this is not the first time the Tories have considered greater cooperation.

A dangerous liaison for Cameron – an emerging Lib Lab pact (Telegraph, 17 January)

Article details growing number of contacts between Lib Dems and Labour.

Lib Dem influence waxes and wanes (Guardian, 19 January)

Interesting for the discussion about the links between the Lib Dems and Labour; and for the difficult role of Simon Hughes, deputy leader of the Lib Dems.

Michael Gove urges voters to back Lib Dems to beat Labour (Telegraph, 20 January)

Gove encourages Tory voters to engage in tactical voting in council elections.

Liberal Democrats to fight next election as totally independent party (Guardian, 20 January)


The Centre

NHS cuts: Scale of shakeup took No 10 by surprise (Guardian, 19 January)

Cameron orders a strengthening of his own policy unit so the centre is better equipped to challenge departmental plans in future.

Polling

The LibDem Collapse, Fact or Fiction (Politicalbetting.com, 19 January)

Jo Grimond, former head of polling at ICM, is critical of 'voting intentions'--voters will only know how they will vote when presented with options from the parties.

What would happen in an electoral pact? (UK Polling Report, 19 January)

Would supporters of the coalition parties vote tactically in favour of a 'coalition candidate'? Heavily laced with qualifications, but conservative voters are likely to switch votes to support a coalition candidate.
**Eric Pickles blames councils for UK’s budget deficit** *(Guardian, 19 January)*

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government says local councils must share the blame for the deficit; councils reply in turn.

**Big society plans raise concerns for parliamentary democracy** *(Guardian, 21 January)*

Gus O'Donnell asks the Permanent Secretary of DCLG to look into the impact of the localism bill on government accountability.

**Communications**

**This is embarrassing: I agree with Tom Baldwin** *(Telegraph, 19 January)*

Ed Miliband's head of communications sends letter to broadcasters asking them to stop using the term 'coalition' and use 'tory-led government'. Brogan: political labels carry meaning.

**After Coulson, Downing Street should make four strategic shifts in communications strategy** *(ConservativeHome, 22 January)*

Following Andy Coulson's departure from Downing Street, Tim Montgomerie suggests a number of changes, including greater contact with the parliamentary party and reversing the decision to limit the number of special advisers.

**What print journalists, broadcasters, commentators and bloggers want from Andy Coulson's successor** *(ConservativeHome, 24 January)*

Tim Montgomerie suggests what No 10's communications team needs to do: more expansive briefing; less silence; greater focus.

**The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill and the House of Lords**

**Labour 'heavies' run riot in the House of Lords** *(Telegraph, 22 January)*

The Telegraph argues the filibuster on the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill is being organised by newcomers from the House of Commons.

**Why are Labour Lords keeping their peers up late?** *(LSE blog 18 January)*

Ron Johnston explains.

**Miscellaneous**

**Chris Huhne: His modest mission: to save the world** *(Independent, 23 January)*

Interview with Chris Huhne, who asserts his pro-European credentials; reduction of carbon emissions; acceptance of nuclear power.