Coalition Update: 26 April-2 May

The AV referendum

Andrew Grice: Miliband finds he has little room for manoeuvre on AV (Independent, 26 April)

Talk of an early election: the Tories have plenty of money, unlike Labour and the Liberal Democrats. The Government’s spending cuts have not yet sunk in and the Tories remain steady in the polls. Labour is plainly not ready for an election. It is blamed by the public for the deficit. Ed Miliband has not had time to establish himself and his policies are a "blank sheet".

http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/andrew-grice/andrew-grice-miliband-finds-he-has-little-room-for-manoeuvre-on-av-2274690.html

At least there’s a silver lining to this pointless AV referendum (Telegraph, 28 April)

Cameron appears revived, not as a politician, but as a Conservative.

http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/benedictbrogan/100085315/at-least-there%E2%80%99s-a-silver-lining-to-this-pointless-av-referendum/

Ed Miliband urges Labour voters to back AV (Guardian, 28 April)

Yes campaign needs 60-40 split in its favour among Labour voters, but polls show majority oppose alternative vote

http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/apr/28/ed-miliband-labour-alternative-vote

Two new polls show NO campaign well ahead (UK polling report, 28 April)

http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/3513

AV vote mounts pressure on to an uneasy coalition (Guardian, 29 April)

With a snap election likely to benefit neither party, Cameron and Clegg remain bound together – however difficult that is: "If they couldn’t do it last May, they can’t do it now."

http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/apr/29/av-coalition-david-cameron-nick-clegg

Tories plot to overturn referendum results (Independent, 29 April)

supporters of first-past-the-post would approach the Commons business committee of MPs, which has the power to set aside time for issues concerning backbenchers. The tactic of using the business committee to force a Commons division was successful in overturning moves to give the vote to prisoners.


Which party leader will be happy on Thursday? It may surprise you (Observer, 1 May)

Analysis of the impact of the AV referendum, and a prediction: "If the polls are broadly right, there will be a Nationalist government in Scotland; a Labour government or Labour-led coalition in Wales; Labour will be in charge of most of the big English cities except London; the capital will have a Tory mayor; a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition will continue to govern at Westminster."

http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/01/andrew-rawnsley-av-winner
For the future of the Coalition, leaders play down the AV vitriol (*Independent*, 2 May)
Co-ordinated show of unity by Cameron and Clegg is undermined by continued sniping in the lower ranks

**Lords Reform**

Why plans for replacing the House of Lords with an elected Senate should not be a priority (*ConservativeHome*, 26 April)
"Irrelevance to the economic mess we’re in, increased cost of government, more partisanship, less expertise, less diversity. They make a formidable case for delaying this legislation."

**You can forget about Lords reform too, Nick** (*Mail*, 1 May)
The Cameroons are also going cold on Clegg’s next pet project, House of Lords reform. They are making it clear to their own MPs, who are massively against attempting to reform the Lords on top of everything else the Government is trying to do, that the issue will not be allowed to dominate the Government’s legislative agenda.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1382373/AV-referendum-You-forget-Lords-reform-Nick-Clegg.html#ixzz1LDW8Q0ny

**Labour**

**Labour has a nasty dose of self-delusion** (*Independent*, 1 May)
The coalition is unpopular, but a lack of policies will wipe out any gains Ed Miliband makes in this week's local elections
http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/john-rentoul/john-rentoul-labour-has-a-nasty-dose-of-selfdelusion-2277242.html

**Revenge is sweet but Labour needs Clegg after May 5** (*Guardian*, 2 May)
Miliband will be sitting prettiest after the local elections. But if he is serious about power, he must talk to Lib Dems
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/02/revenge-sweet-labour-needs-clegg-referendum?INTCMP=SRCH

**Elections and coalitions**

**Guns and Roses** (*Economist*, 28 April)
On the Northern Ireland coalition, including how they've frozen out minor members of their coalition
http://www.economist.com/node/18621214?story_id=18621214

**Groundhog day** (*Economist*, 28 April)
Primer on the Canadian election
http://www.economist.com/node/18620784

**Welsh Labour upbeat over Thursday's assembly elections** (*Observer*, 1 May)
Carwyn Jones, the party leader, says that a year of coalition government has reminded Welsh voters of their Labour roots
http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/01/welsh-labour-optimistic-assembly-elections

The question is not whether the Lib Dems will lose, but how badly they will perform (Independent, 2 May)
Overall, the party could lose control of half the 22 councils it is defending. Such an outcome might well prove a greater source of discontent within the party than defeat for the Yes side in the AV referendum.
http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/the-question-is-not-whether-the-lib-dems-will-lose-but-how-badly-they-will-perform-2277686.html

Individuals
Under the scalpel (Total politics, 26 April)
Interview with Andrew Lansley on the proposed Health reforms
http://www.totalpolitics.com/articles/157167/under-the-scalpel.thtml

Nick Clegg interview: A year in the eye of the storm (Observer, 1 May)
Sympathetic portrait of Clegg: "I'm adamant that what we're doing is the right thing. My conscience is clear. I think that over time people will see that the difficult decisions we are taking now are the right ones."
http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/01/nick-clegg-andrew-rawnsley-interview

A year on and the loser is now the master (Times, 1 May) ££
Anthony Seldon on David Cameron as PM
http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/newsreview/features/article615362.ece

Miscellaneous
Tories are excluding us, claim Lib Dems (Times, 26 April) ££
Important article, outlining a protocol allowing Lib Dem chairs of parliamentary committees access to coalition ministers and departmental briefings
http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article2998505.ece

Twilight revolt: MPs hit back at whips' demands for evening votes (Independent, 26 April)
Article on the whipping operation under the new government

Why Cameron shouldn't and won't try to force a general election soon (ConservativeHome, 27 April)
"A snap poll would thus produce either an overall Labour majority or - more likely - a hung Parliament. And in a new Commons with no overall majority, one could kiss goodbye to a second blue-yellow Coalition: having being ditched after less than a year, the Liberal Democrats would be unwilling to trot again up the aisle with the Tories."
Vince Cable in renaissance as Lib Dems embark on battle for soul of party (Guardian, 27 April)
Discussion of 3 senior Lib Dems and their independence from the Tories: Tim Farron, Vince Cable and Chris Huhne

How a degree of separation will strengthen the coalition (Spectator Blog, 1 May)
Comparison between the Lib Dems at Westminster and in Holyrood: the Lib Dems in Holyrood had a coalition with clear dividing lines. Labour and the Lib Dems had separate spin teams and there were identifiably Lib Dem departments whose ministers were seem to perform well. The Scottish Lib Dems had a clear election message: if you like the Lib Dem parts of his coalition, then vote Lib Dem and you’ll get more of them. Clegg can’t say the same.
http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/6907778/how-a-degree-of-separation-will-strengthen-the-coalition.html