



BRITISH POLITICS REVIEW

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Can he deliver? *The arrival of Gordon Brown in Number 10 has raised expectations for change, hopes that the incoming Prime Minister may find difficult to accomplish.*

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The dawn of Brown's Britain

Prospects and challenges for the new PM

Per-Kristian Foss: The Chancellor's legacy - and prospects for 10 Downing Street

David J. Hutchinson: Gordon Brown's agenda for constitutional reform

Richard Gowan: Gordon Brown: at the mercy of American politics?

Kristin M. Haugevik: David Miliband and British foreign policy revised

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Gordon Brown's chance to govern

*What are the prospects as Gordon Brown finally takes on the role as Prime Minister? This issue of **British Politics Review** analyses the political challenges facing Brown and his Cabinet, the alternatives at hand and suggested responses from the new PM.*

*Former Norwegian finance minister **Per-Kristian Foss** sums up the policy priorities of Brown as chancellor and draws some comparative parallels to portray him as a competent, and strongly internationally committed, leader. **Sissel Rosland** looks at the emergency situation accompanying Brown's first weeks as prime minister and compares the government's counter-terrorism approach with policies under Tony Blair and, interestingly, with an earlier time where the internal threat came from the IRA.*

***Richard Gowan** and **Kristin M. Haugevik** both look at the foreign policy scene, where the appointment of David Miliband and assumed critical stance towards the present US government have been much debated. **Atle L. Wold**, meanwhile, considers Brown's difficult relationship to Scotland in view of his promotion of "Britishness", a topic that is also followed up in **Anders Selliaas'** article on Brown and sports patriotism.*

*Finally, **David J. Hutchinson**, former senior lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, reports on the constitutional agenda of the new prime minister. Here, a range of proposals have been raised, regarding the composition of parliament, the electoral system - and, a suggested written constitution. Seen from within the party, Brown's policy of change could begin with redefining Labour in the world of party politics. **Øivind Bratberg** discusses the Blair era on this background. **Jan Erik Mustad**, finally, looks at the strategic game against the Conservatives in which Brown will have to position his government over the next two years.*

The key players of Gordon Brown's Cabinet

The members of the new Cabinet, revealed by the Prime Minister on 28 June, represent a mixture of new and old, stretching across suggested divisions in the Labour Party. These are some of the key members of the Cabinet to govern Britain under Brown:

David Miliband is at forty-one the youngest to hold the post as foreign secretary since David Owen served in 1977-79. The older of the two Miliband brothers has been close to Blair's group of policy advisers and has climbed quickly in the government apparatus since entering Parliament in 2001. He moves to the Foreign Office from the post as Environment Secretary - offering, it has been suggested, a fresh approach to the EU and the United States, Britain's two most important relationships (see articles by Richard Gowan and Kristin M. Haugevik on pp. 5-6).



David Miliband
© the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Alistair Darling succeeds the new Prime Minister in his post as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a daunting task considering Brown's decade-long control over the treasury. Darling, a stern Scot with a reputation for competence rather than drama, may well be the best choice available for that role. In Parliament since 1987, Darling's last brief in the Blair government was as transport secretary.



Alistair Darling
© HM Treasury

As one of the surprise announcements of Brown's Cabinet, **Jacqui Smith** moves from a position as chief whip to become the first female Home Secretary. Her first week amounted to a baptism of fire with internal security under challenge from an attempted terrorist attack in the London and a similar incident in the airport of Glasgow. The restructured Home Office, which has now delegated prisons and sentencing to the



Jacqui Smith
© the Home Office

new-formed Ministry of Justice, is yet bound to play a key role in the years to come as security threats prevail. The choice of Smith for the job has generally been favourably received.

Other important members of Brown's Cabinet: **Ed Balls** and **John Denham** will share the broad education portfolio, splitting children, schools and families (Balls) from innovation, universities and skills (Denham). **Jack Straw** remains in the Cabinet in charge of the new Ministry of Justice. **Hillary Benn** will lead the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Brown ally **Douglas Alexander** is the new Secretary for International Development, expected to play an important role in foreign policy.

Finally, **Harriet Harman**, the new Labour deputy leader, is now also Leader of the House of Commons and Minister for Women. **Alan Johnson** takes charge of the precious NHS as Health Secretary, while arch-Blairite **John Hutton** will head the Department for Trade and Industry, essential to Brown's concerns for sustained economic growth.

The Chancellor's legacy - and prospects for 10 Downing Street

By *British Politics Review* Guest Writer *Per-Kristian Foss*,
Member of the Norwegian Parliament

Per-Kristian Foss has during the last twenty years played a central role in the Norwegian Conservative Party, Høyre. First elected to the Storting in 1981, Foss soon rose to become a prominent spokesman on financial policy. From 2001 to 2005 he held the pivotal position as minister of finance in the coalition government of Høyre, Kristelig Folkeparti and Venstre. Deputy leader of Høyre since 2002, Foss was also a leader of the Oslo branch of the party from 2000 to 2004. In the present parliamentary period he serves in the the standing committee on scrutiny and constitutional affairs.



EU countries, whether they had socialist or non-socialist governments. Placed on the Norwegian political spectrum, New Labour would be solidly anchored in the middle of the centre-right scale.

Gordon Brown made his mark early by giving the Bank of England new independence and by introducing a British variant of Norway's "fiscal rule" (i.e. for spending oil revenues) called the "Golden Rule". Restraining spending growth and avoiding constant tax increases were the ideas behind this rule. After ten years the time may be ripe for a revision, because among other things it has proved impossible in fiscal policy to distinguish in practice between operating expenses and capital investment.

Economists close to the Treasury also seem to have noted a certain deterioration of the influence of that otherwise powerful ministry. It is claimed that while Brown had a personal leverage beyond the fiscal policy of the Blair government, this may have come at the expense of the Treasury's broader role as watchdog on public expenditures in all areas.

Many have questioned whether Brown will succeed in staking out a new course relative to the Blair government which he, despite everything, was an important part of.

Here I think people underestimate the significance of form and style in politics. Brown cuts a completely different figure from his predecessor and is less smooth, polished and eloquent. I wonder whether the British have not had enough of Blair's polish and now appreciate the more stalwart Brown.

Even though he was Chancellor of the Exchequer for ten years, he increasingly made a name for himself as an all-round politician with initiatives far beyond the Chancellor's traditional role. On the international scene he distinguished himself as a keen adherent of new thinking in international development aid policy, and of raising the total aid

to developing countries. This has given him different friends from those of Blair, both in the UK and internationally.

In the past few years Brown also acted increasingly as the coming prime minister with involvements over a wide area. For that reason the transition from being a minister with a particular remit to becoming prime minister was not particularly difficult.

For his part David Cameron has been impressive in modernising the UK Conservative Party. A Norwegian conservative feels more at home in his sister party. Its economic policies, its promises on taxes in particular, have been moderated and its commitment to environmental policy has become firmer.

But with both Labour and the Tories keenly competing for centrist voters, there is little room for sharp policy clashes. Now that dissatisfaction with Labour is no longer growing and the differences between the parties are not much to speak of

either, David Cameron has his work cut out. Previously the views of the two parties on economic policy, tax and privatisation were in stark contrast. However, given Labour's right turn and the Tories' modernization, there may be few marked dissimilarities in policy for voters to consider.

In that case it may easily become a contest on general trust based on experience, style and form. It will be an exciting battle between a younger Conservative reformer and an experienced Labour prime minister in need of a policy makeover.

Perhaps Cameron's biggest problem is his fellow Tories, who appear rather unmanageable on occasion and seem willing to replace their leader after every setback. Disagreements on policy regarding Europe are also more prominent among the Conservatives than in the Labour Party.

Getting Brown out of Number 10 quickly will not be an easy task for David Cameron.

In a short time the previous long-serving Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has managed to boost Labour well past the Conservatives in the opinion polls. A snap election may be a tough challenge for the Tories' David Cameron.

The differences between the two biggest parties in British politics have narrowed after Labour, under the leadership of Blair and Brown, kept close to Thatcher's legacy. None of her reforms were undone, and Labour managed to distance itself from the British trade union movement. With Gordon Brown as Chancellor, Labour also followed a market economy model closely and avoided the large tax increases which had previously frightened off many potential voters.

"There is no doubt that under the many years of Labour government the British have embarked on a substantially more market-oriented course than other major EU countries... Placed on the Norwegian political spectrum, New Labour would be solidly anchored in the middle of the centre-right scale."

As minister of finance for four years I followed British economic policy rather closely and had the pleasure of serving under Brown's chairmanship of the IMF policy committee for two years. There is no doubt that under the many years of Labour government the British have embarked on a substantially more market-oriented course than other major

A new approach to counter-terrorism?

By Sissel Rosland

Handling the enemy

within. In the early morning of Friday the 29th of June, less than two days after he succeeded Tony Blair as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown was told that a bomb had been found in a car outside a London nightclub. A second bomb was found in another car in a nearby street and it was feared that there could be more bombs.



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No more car bombs were found that day, but the following day news came from Glasgow that a burning Jeep Cherokee containing canisters of petrol had been driven into the departure lounge of Glasgow airport. With everyone fearing more attacks and with the security alert moved to 'critical' - the highest level - Brown's carefully planned first days in office had been turned completely upside down.

The security threat totally dominated the agenda of both the Prime Minister and the media the following week. Most commentators interpreted Gordon Brown and the new Home Secretary Jacqui Smith's handling of the attacks as a fresh approach. Counter-terrorism under Blair was above all coined by the phrase "war on terror" which became widespread after the September 11 attacks. The phrase "war on terror" does now seem to be gone and has been replaced by a more cautious rhetorical strategy. Both Brown and Smith have also avoided the use of "Muslim" when describing the terrorists, and seem to be keen to avoid alienating the Muslim community. Smith instead referred to the terrorists as "criminals whose victims come from all walks of life, communities and religions". A Brown spokesman confirmed to *the Washington Post* on 4 July that the rhetorical changes have been deliberate and aimed at encouraging a "strong consensual approach in relation to all the communities".

Just as striking as the change of phrasing, however, is the change in the style in which the messages have been presented. Instead of Blair's (as well as the former Home Secretary John Reid's) almost apocalyptic approach to counter-terrorism, Brown and Smith have stressed the importance of staying calm. Whereas

Blair in his speeches on terrorism stressed the emergency character of the terrorist threat, Brown's strategy seems at least on the rhetorical level to involve a policy of *normalisation*. Not unlike the changes in the British rhetoric in Northern Ireland in the mid 1970s when counter-terrorism had become a permanent feature of politics, there seems now to be a growing awareness about the unconstructive long-term effects of the "emergency rhetoric". An emergency cannot continue forever. So now people are instead being asked to go about their daily business as if nothing had happened.

As Jacqui Smith stated in her speech after the terror plots: "The fact that people have been prepared to go about their lives as normally as possible this weekend sends the strongest message to those who wish to destroy our way of life and our freedoms that we will not be intimidated by terror". Sean Curran, a BBC political correspondent, has pointed out that the political leaders now seem to interpret the situation more in terms of a "cold war"; a long haul involving a battle of ideas. But the question is: Does this rhetorical shift represent a water-change in British counter-terrorism policy? To shed light on this issue it is necessary to look back on some of Blair's initiatives.

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Even though the UK had implemented a new Terrorism Act in 2000, Tony Blair rushed new legislation through parliament shortly after the September 11 attacks in 2001 (the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act). One of the most controversial features was that foreigners suspected of terrorism could be detained without trial. Several legal challenges culminated in the ruling of the Law Lords in December 2004 which held that the powers of detention conferred were incompatible with the UK's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. In March 2005 Parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act which included the required changes.

The counter-terrorism issue came to the fore once again after the 7th July bombing in London in 2005 where 56 people were killed and over 700 injured. Following the London bombings new measures

were launched, including a power to make it illegal to publish statements which "glorifies, exalts or celebrates the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism". Another contentious issue concerned an extension of how long people arrested under suspicion of having conducted, or planning terrorist crimes could be held before being charged.

This is an issue which now has been taken up again by Gordon Brown as a part of his new counter-terrorism consultation paper. Originally, the Blair government wanted the period extended from 14 to 90

"Originally, the Blair government wanted the [detention] period extended from 14 to 90 days, but was met with strong opposition. Many critics compared the new proposal to the policy of internment in Northern Ireland [where] it was argued that internment had only served to antagonise the republican community."

days, but was met with strong opposition. Many critics compared the new proposal to the policy of internment in Northern Ireland and it was argued that internment in Northern Ireland had only served to antagonise the republican community. It was feared that the same could happen with the Muslim community in Britain. After a long debate there was a compromise on 28 days, but Gordon Brown has now launched a new compromise of 56 days.

Brown has argued that the complexity of the recent terror plots means that more time is needed before charges can be made. The leader of the Conservative party, David Cameron, however, still seems to insist that there is no new evidence to support an extension.

Other measures include allowing post-charge questioning of suspects and the use of intercept evidence such as phone taps. In contrast to the controversial extension of the detention period, both these measures have the support of the Conservative party as well as the civil rights group Liberty. The Government consultation paper also includes proposals for a unified border force, the monitoring of convicted terrorists after release, as well as enhanced sentences for those convicted of ordinary criminal offences, but which are linked to terrorism. Brown has emphasized that all the proposals will go through a lengthy consultation period, thus stressing the importance of cross-party consensus.

Comparing Brown and Blair, Martin Kettle argued in *the Guardian* on 7 July that what we are witnessing is not so much a change of counter-terrorism *policy* as a change of the *context* in which that policy is discussed. The next months will reveal whether this thesis holds water. The rhetoric and style has certainly changed, but from what we have seen so far, change does not necessarily imply a major shift in policy.

Gordon Brown: at the mercy of American politics?

By Richard Gowan

Anglo-American strain.

As I write, it is still less than two weeks since Gordon Brown replaced Tony Blair, but there is already a growing sense of unease in the British media. Why? Because the new regime in London seems surprisingly, well, restrained. As leader-in-waiting, Brown filled headlines with bouts of frustration over just how long he had to wait. In office, he has already faced terrorist attacks, announced a package of constitutional reforms and promised twenty-seven new bills for the next parliament. But it has all been very low-key. There is has not been much razzmatazz, or even post-Blair political blood-letting.

So the press has had to work hard to keep the Brown transition story going. But all is not lost. Denied high drama, commentators have begun to observe a more subtle "strategic shift" in British policy - a shift away from the United States. While one may assume that there is much private briefing on the subject, the public signals of this move have been of the distinctly obtuse variety treasured by political junkies (and no-one else).

Piece of evidence number one: Brown appointed a Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, who is said to have had (admittedly muted) doubts over the Iraq war. Two: he ennobled Mark Malloch Brown, formerly Kofi Annan's deputy at the UN and a genuinely forthright critic of the war, to work under Miliband as a Minister of State. Three: Brown also selected a close ally, Douglas Alexander, to take over an expanded Department for International Development. Mr. Alexander thereupon hastened to Washington to make a speech emphasizing that "interdependence" is a fact of global life that necessitates "an internationalist approach - seeking shared solutions to the problems we face." With even greater haste, commentators jumped on this speech as a coded rebuff to President Bush.

Is it really? If this is a strategic shift, it is hardly on a par with the great changes in strategic direction of British political history - Churchill's replacement of Chamberlain in 1940, for example, or Harold Macmillan's quiet coup against Anthony Eden after the Suez crisis. The sense that Anglo-



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American relations could now somehow reach a crisis is largely confined to the leader columns of the traditionally Tory Times and Daily Telegraph (both have descended to crass attacks on Lord Malloch Brown in particular). Had Brown proved more controversial on domestic policy in his early days, the make-up and early statements of his foreign policy team would have gone largely un-remarked.

The reality is that the Blair-Brown transition has come at a time when London is poorly placed to redefine its relationship with Washington - and Washington isn't really that bothered. Blair's basic gamble that British military and political support for the Iraq war would ensure its relevance to the United States has been undermined by two factors.

"The reality is that the Blair-Brown transition has come at a time when London is poorly placed to redefine its relationship with Washington - and Washington isn't really that bothered."

First, as the situation in the Middle East has worsened, it has become clear that Washington needs its regional allies such as Saudi Arabia far more than Britain. Second, the role of Iraq in American political debate has been transformed in the last eighteen months. Until 2006, the situation there was still broadly treated as the centerpiece of America's international profile, and support from other powers like the UK was still politically advantageous. Today, bringing the troops home has become a domestic US political issue - a bone of contention between presidential candidates as well as the White House and Congress. The cacophony of American voices across the political spectrum on Iraq has reached such a volume the statements of British leaders cannot be heard.

The problem that faces Gordon Brown is that this will continue to be the case, and will in all likelihood get worse, until George Bush's successor is inaugurated in 2009. A military confrontation between the US and Iran could completely alter the transatlantic calculus, but if this is avoided, the first phase of Brown's premiership may be defined by waiting to see where the US electoral process leads. In the aftermath of his entry into 10 Downing Street, commentators predicted that British-American diplomacy might now concentrate as much on Congress as the White House. There is a new British ambassador to Washington - Sir Nigel Sheinwald, a former special adviser to Tony Blair - and cultivating the potential

big players in the post-Bush world will be central to his brief.

As the implosion of John McCain's campaign has shown, it is very unlikely that the next US administration will want to dwell on Iraq. In this context, Mr. Brown probably sees little to lose in withdrawing the remaining British troops from Iraq, a process that Tony Blair set in train. Conversely, the UK is likely to concentrate on preserving NATO force in Afghanistan - and promote UN peacekeeping in Africa, especially Darfur. Most serious contenders for the US presidency have emphasized the need to rebuild the international alliances harmed by Bush, but London recognizes that set-backs for NATO and the UN between now and 2009 would make that an even harder task than it is today.

Indeed, the Brown team's early emphasis on "interdependence" (and the selection of a UN veteran like Lord Malloch Brown) confirms that reinforcing international institutions will be a British priority in the years ahead. While that may irritate some officials in the current White House, it may well please whoever succeeds them. There is currently muttering in the UN that a US withdrawal from Iraq would require a greater UN humanitarian and political presence there. If the main theme of the US elections is to be pulling back from Iraq, a supplementary issue will be how Washington can persuade international institutions to take on burdens in America's place. The UK wants to help.

Of course, Britain's "internationalist approach" won't just be about security matters - Brown and his inner circle are more comfortable with trade and aid cooperation, and the environment is now indelibly part of British debate on international affairs. But if any US administration is to be persuaded of the virtues of internationalism, it will want to see the benefits on security issues. Mr Brown has until early 2009 to put together that case.

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At which point, of course, he may be facing another problem: elections of his own. Although the British could go to the polls as early as next spring, the likeliest time for them to do so remains early 2009, just after the new US President is sworn in. If Mr. Brown were to win an election then, he would be well-placed to revitalize relations with Washington. If he loses, the Blair-Brown transition will be recalled as no more than a historical footnote, peripheral to a far more significant shift in leadership in the US.

David Miliband and British foreign policy revised

By Kristin M. Haugevik

Brown's presumed heir. When Gordon Brown presented his long-awaited first Cabinet last June, few political commentators and analysts were surprised that David Miliband was on the exclusive list. Long since declared one of the rising stars in British politics, the question asked by most political commentators and analysts in advance was rather which ministerial office 41-year-old Miliband would be allotted.



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As it turned out, he was given the perhaps most prestigious post of them all, succeeding the relatively anonymous Margaret Beckett as Foreign Secretary. Yet, only weeks before, Miliband actually had an even more superior position within sight. Reportedly, senior figures inside the Labour party were ready to support Miliband had he decided to take on Brown for the party leadership. Whether it was timing, tactics, realism, or even lack of ambitions that was behind his decision "not to be seduced" into a duel with Brown shall be left unsaid. In any case, Miliband seems to have made a wise decision, as remaining loyal to Brown has so far proved very favourable for his career. The political weight he most certainly will gain as Head of the Foreign Office will only strengthen his candidacy should he decide to run for the leadership sometime in the future. Conversely, that is, had he been tempted to challenge Brown and failed, things could have developed in a very different and far less pleasant direction for young Miliband.

"As a politician, he shares traits with both Blair and Brown... Similar to Brown, he is often described as a hard-working intellectual. At the same time, he possesses the youth, refreshment, and charisma that once took Blair to the top, and that Brown - to the point of nausea - has been accused of lacking."

One of the new Foreign Secretary's strongest cards as a Labour politician is that he has avoided being labelled as either a "Blairite" or a "Brownite". While he was first engaged by Tony Blair as a chief policy adviser back in 1994, and worked closely with the former Prime Minister up until his departure, Miliband has at the same time managed to maintain good relations with the so-called "Brown-camp". As a politician, he shares traits with both Blair and Brown. Like the two stablemates, he is considered a Labour heavyweight, and is believed to have had a key impact on shaping the ideological platform of New Labour. Similar to Brown, he is often described as a hard-working intellectual. At the same time, he possesses the youth and charisma that once took Blair to the top, and that Brown - to the point of nausea - has been accused of lacking.

As Foreign Secretary, Miliband puts a face to Brown's vow that he has established "a new government with new priorities". Indeed, soon after the appointment of Miliband was made public, speculations about an upcoming shift in British foreign policy began to flourish in the national as well as the international media. Above all, Miliband's alleged dissatisfaction with the Blair government's policies in Iraq and in Lebanon invoked much debate. Furthermore, the appointment of his ministerial team, and particularly of former UN deputy secretary-general and US critic Mark Malloch Brown as Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN, has been met with great interest.

Such issues have in turn led to a questioning of the mere nature of Britain's relationship with the United States, including by reputable British news agents such as the BBC, the Economist, and the Financial Times. Shortly after the new government's takeover, the abovementioned Malloch Brown created furore when he said that it was "very unlikely" that the United States and Britain would continue to "be joined together at the hip" under Brown. Similarly, a British foreign policy adviser's reported talks with US officials on effects of a British pull-out from Iraq have not gone unnoticed.

At the same time, Miliband himself uses every occasion to reassure the British people and the international community that Britain is by no means discarding its special relationship with the United States.

In an interview with the Financial Times following his first two weeks as Foreign Secretary, Miliband asserted that "anyone who thinks they can do good by being anti-American isn't really serious about tackling [issues]". Furthermore, in his very first speech as foreign secretary, he stressed that the relationship with the United States remains Britain's "single most important bilateral partnership because of shared values but also because of political reality".

Yet, such statements do not mean that the debate has come to an end. Commentators in the Economist and the Guardian point out that while Miliband and Brown recently paid their first official visit to the United States, the pair nevertheless chose to have their very first official meetings with French and German colleagues. Reportedly,

Brown got along unusually well with both new French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Similarly, following Miliband's visit to his French counterpart Bernard Kouchner, a French official described the meeting as "the warmest between a British and French foreign minister for many years".

"[T]he foreign policy rhetoric seems to be shifting back to the way it emerged during the first years of the Blair government. Above all, this means not putting all one's eggs in one basket, by making sure to maintain good and solid relationships with both the United States and Europe."

A very preliminary conclusion on foreign policy under the Brown government in general, and under Miliband in particular, is therefore that the foreign policy rhetoric seems to be shifting back to the way it emerged during the first years of the Blair government. Above all, this means not putting all one's eggs in one basket, by making sure to maintain good and solid relationships with both the United States and Europe.

So far, Miliband has certainly had his hands full as Head of the Foreign Office. In addition to the larger debates about the future course of British foreign policy, he has had to deal with several specific and inflamed issues. One is the killing of more British soldiers in Iraq, altogether ten between Miliband's takeover and the end of July. Another issue is the always imminent threat of international terrorism on British soil, recently manifested by the discovery of two car bombs in the centre of London and the driving of a burning car into Glasgow airport (while this was primarily the responsibility of the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary also attended the meetings of the Cobra, the civil emergencies committee).

Yet, Miliband's biggest daring deed so far was undoubtedly the decision to expel four Russian diplomats from London, following Russia's refusal to extradite Andrei Lugovoi, the main suspect for the murder of ex-Russian security officer Alexander Litvinenko. While Russian President Vladimir Putin eventually said he thought both countries would overcome the "mini-crisis" that followed the expulsion, the incident served as a demonstration that the Brown government has teeth in foreign policy - and is not afraid to bare them.

At this stage, it is of course far too early to say anything definite about the long-term perspectives on British foreign policy under Miliband's control. What does seem indisputable, however, is that if Miliband continues to play his cards right, he will be an extremely hot candidate for the Labour leadership when Brown sometime in the future decides to step down.

The Scotsman Gordon Brown

By Atle L. Wold

Nationality: the awkward debate. Now that Gordon Brown has finally reached his goal of becoming the First – not merely the Second – Lord of the Treasury (as are the formal titles of the British Prime Minister and Chancellor respectively), Britain once more has a Scotsman at the head of the government.



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Tony Blair may well have been born in Edinburgh and educated at the prestigious Fettes College in the same city, but his English accent and the fact that he has since lived in England, meant that he never came across as a Scot. Brown on the other hand, is Scottish through-and-through. For his position as Prime Minister, this has certain important implications.

While there have not – historically – been many Scots to reach the absolute peak of political power in Britain, the Scots have, ever since the Union of 1707, nearly always been well represented within the political elite in Westminster. Equally consistently, the scores of Scotsmen streaming into the capital in search of a political career were traditionally a cause for concern and suspicion in England, where some of the more paranoid politicians in the eighteenth century in particular, feared the take-over of their Merry and Liberal England by the “Scottish Mafia” from the north.

For a long time there was an unspoken view in England that the First, or Prime, Minister ought to come from the largest and dominating country within the Union. When the young King George III appointed the first ever Scot – the Earl of Bute – as his First Minister in 1760, for example, it sparked a wave of protests from the English political elite.

In the current situation, following the granting of legislative devolution to Scotland, some have argued that it is yet again problematic for a Scot to be at the head of government.

Questions have been raised as to the suitability of a Scot leading the UK executive when most of the affairs of his homeland and, indeed, of his very own constituents, are handled by another political body – the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh. Particularly in the wake of the imposition of “top-up” fees at universities in England – carried through by the Westminster Parliament with a majority ensured by Labour’s *Scottish* MPs, and the refusal of Holyrood to do the same in Scotland – discontent with the influence of Scots at the national level has again been growing in England.

Why should a Scot, sitting for a Scottish constituency, be in charge of the government’s policies for England, now

that Scotland has its own parliament? While the Scots may counter such an argument by stating that being governed by the English majority against their will, was precisely what the Scots had to endure during the Thatcher years, and the reason why devolution was necessary in the first place; the question none the less points to the problems created by the asymmetrical devolution project of New Labour. As David J. Hutchinson points out elsewhere on these pages:

“Questions have been raised as to the suitability of a Scot leading the UK executive when most of the affairs of his homeland and, indeed, of his very own constituents, are handled by another political body – the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh.”

there is yet no English Parliament, and no solution has been found to the West-Lothian question which lies at the root of the matter.

These are issues which Gordon Brown – as a Scot – cannot ignore in the longer run. So far, his response to this particular challenge has been to

place a strong focus on Britishness, and to stress his own British identity (see, for example, his proposal for an all-British football side, addressed by Selliaas on page 12). Brown can sit at the head of government in the UK precisely because he is as much British as he is Scottish. His first move has thus been to play the all-inclusive-British-identity-card. Whether it will be sufficient on its own to console the English, without antagonising the Scots, remains to be seen, but is perhaps unlikely.

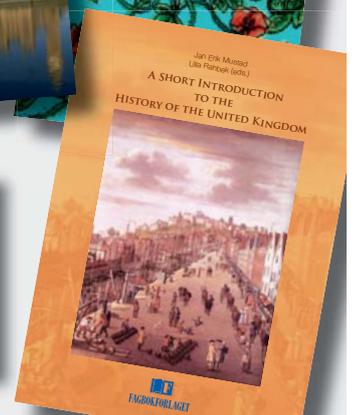
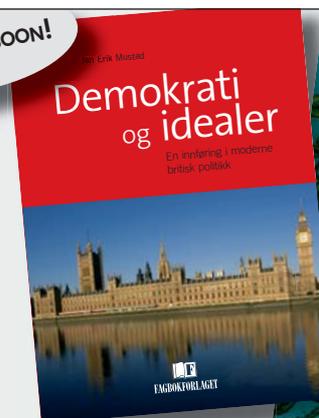


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Gordon Brown's agenda for constitutional reform

By David J. Hutchinson

A broad canvas for reform.

Gordon Brown's wilderness years ended abruptly on Wednesday 27 June 2007 when he finally achieved his ambition to succeed Tony Blair as British Prime Minister. A change of government, even from within the same party, inevitably gives a sense of renewal.



David J. Hutchinson is a former Senior Lecturer in English and British Civilization at the University of Portsmouth, and a member of the executive of the European Network for British Area Studies.

Brown's accession was marked by the usual suggestions both from opposition parties and from members of the public that he lacked a mandate and that a general election should be called forthwith. It is perhaps worth pointing out that the method of his succession was one that is well hallowed in British constitutional practice over the past half century. Whilst it is true that the transfer of power from Churchill to Eden in 1955 was closely followed by a general election in April 1955, later transfers of power both within the Conservative and Labour parties, Eden to Macmillan (1957), Macmillan to Douglas-Home (1963), Wilson to Callaghan (1976) and Thatcher to Major (1990) were not felt to necessitate general elections, given the parliamentary mandate already possessed by the respective parties.

In Brown's case there might indeed be a constitutional case for calling an immediate general election though not necessarily for the reasons advanced by the opposition leaders David Cameron and Menzies Campbell. In the general election of 2005 the Labour party secured 356 seats out of a total of 646 seats in the House of Commons thereby achieving a comfortable working majority. It was able to do this because of Britain's absurdly archaic and profoundly undemocratic system of electing Westminster MPs by the first-past-the-post method.

In 2005, Labour's overall majority was attained with the lowest percentage vote ever attained by a winning party

in UK electoral history. The turnout was estimated at 61.3% of whom 35.2% voted for Labour party candidates – a mere 22% of the electorate. For the first time since 1929 none of the major parties polled more than 10 million votes. This is indeed a Parliament elected by a minority. An earlier Labour leader and prime minister, Harold Wilson, was mocked in the early 1960s for daring to talk of Labour's "mandate to rule". Gordon Brown's mandate looks very much shakier!

It is perhaps a tribute to Brown's dynamism that within a week of becoming Prime Minister and with the added problems of having to deal with the security implications of the failed terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow, he was nevertheless in a position to outline to Parliament on Tuesday 3 July some proposals – a route map rather than a blueprint, we are told – for constitutional reforms. The object of this article is both to comment briefly on these proposals and their implications but also to draw attention to the apparently missed opportunities for the kind of radical reforms that might just render the government of the United Kingdom "fit for purpose" in the early 21st century.

Brown's proposals to surrender the prime minister's powers to declare war, to request dissolution and recall of Parliament, to ratify treaties without parliamentary decision and to make top public appointments including choosing bishops and assisting in the appointment of judges will probably command broad cross-party support as well as support in the wider electorate. Such reforms are long overdue.

Any measures that restore sovereignty to an elected Parliament and reduce the power of the Executive will be welcomed by much of the electorate. They will also assist in avoiding some of the more contentious, previous, prime ministerial

decisions such as the decision to assist in the invasion of Iraq. Brown stops short naturally of proposing the more extensive use of the referendum in the treaty ratification process since it has become quite clear in recent years from public opinion surveys that referendums on further European political integration or on joining the Eurozone would certainly be lost. Public consultation is certainly not deemed appropriate in these sensitive areas, however much the opposition parties might clamour for it.

"Any measures that restore sovereignty to an elected Parliament and reduce the power of the Executive will be welcomed by much of the electorate. They will also assist in avoiding some of the more contentious, previous, prime ministerial decisions such as the decision to assist in the invasion of Iraq."

Downing Street's powers of patronage in the making of public appointments have attracted extensive criticism over the past decade and have undoubtedly led to a culture of cronyism resembling more the practices of enlightened – and sometimes not so enlightened – despotism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

than those of a modern parliamentary democracy. Members of the Church of England might well be puzzled at the historical anomaly which permits non-Anglican prime ministers to influence the appointment of bishops and archbishops within the Anglican Communion.

The passage of the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005 which aims to separate the functions of the judiciary and the legislature and to establish a Supreme Court by 2009 has already made Downing Street intervention superfluous in judicial appointments. It is also proposed that the Executive should surrender powers to direct prosecutors in certain criminal cases. Such measures, naturally, will not be retrospective and decisions over the cash for honours scandal and the BAE fraud inquiry will never be reversed. These are just two examples of why the proposal might be well received both nationally and internationally.

We are promised consultation on a bill of rights and a written constitution as well as a review of electoral systems before the end of the year. Completion of the reform of the House of Lords to remove the remaining hereditary peers and to introduce a largely elected house also merits a mention.

Continued: Gordon Brown's agenda for constitutional reform

By David J. Hutchinson

Would it be unreasonable to suggest that if the House of Lords is to be retained, particularly in a wholly elected form, its powers, together with those of the House of Commons, the government and the sovereign, must be spelled out in a written constitution? Would it also be unreasonable to suggest that there should be a referendum on such a constitution?

What are we to make of a "review" of electoral systems? After his election victory of May 1997, Tony Blair invited Roy Jenkins to chair a Commission on Electoral Reform. That Commission reported in October 1998 and recommended the introduction of a mixed system of proportionally elected MPs and constituency MPs. Such proposals, if implemented, would have made some contribution to redressing the balance of power in the House of Commons and to making its membership reflect more closely the voting behaviour of the British electorate.

Labour governments with good working majorities have totally ignored the Commission's recommendations. It will be interesting to see whether the present one has the courage to introduce a measure of modern democracy into the parliamentary system. What is appropriate for the devolved regional assemblies appears still to be inappropriate for Westminster and this is an anomaly which urgently needs addressing.

So does the English democratic deficit. We look in vain for any proposals from Gordon Brown to establish an English Assembly to balance those of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is true that the Labour party's record of attempting devolved regional government in England is not a happy one. In November 2004 the Government organised a referendum in the North East in which 78% of the voters expressed opposition to the idea of a regional tier of government which only 22% of those voting supported. Planned referendums in the North West and in Yorkshire and Humberside were hastily abandoned.

"Those political observers who have scanned the new faces in Brown's cabinet for clues as to the likely evolution of British policies may well be seeking in vain. British public policies are characterized chiefly by inertia and continuity rather than by radical change..."

"Would it be unreasonable to suggest that if the House of Lords is to be retained, particularly in a wholly elected form, its powers, together with those of the House of Commons, the government and the sovereign, must be spelled out in a written constitution?"

It is at least possible that the opposition to yet another tier of government mirrored widespread public concern about the existing multiplicity of local governments within the UK. Parish Councils, District and Borough Councils, Unitary Authorities and County Councils are merely part of the outdated paraphernalia of local government bodies which have to be supported out of the Council and Income Tax payments of the electorate.

The system is crying out for root and branch reform and for the wholesale abolition of some levels to produce a smaller number of levels with clearly defined responsibilities which avoid the overlapping nature of the present ones.

What of the Westminster Parliament itself? Is it possible that the government has not noticed how monstrous this *leviathan* has become? Do we really need two chambers the sizes of the present ones to represent the UK electorates, given the devolution of powers to regional assemblies and the upward transfer of powers to the European Commission? The unrepresentative House of Commons may well have plans to reform the unrepresentative House of Lords but it clearly has no plans to reform itself and indeed seems to lack all awareness of the necessity to do so.

Brown's proposal to establish a new National Security Committee parallels similar developments in the United States under Bush but there are no signs yet of proposals for a National Police Authority. Government suggestions during 2006 that some police authorities might merge were swiftly abandoned in the face of opposition from a handful of Chief Constables.

Britain is already marginalised within the Community by its lack of a centralized police authority. The multiplicity of police authorities is also an added burden to Council Tax



Planning for constitutional change. Gordon Brown has launched a series of initiatives to reform the way in which the British political system works. © Wikipedia

payers nationally. This is very clearly one area where there is considerable scope for economies of scale and for transferring cost to the national budget rather than having them borne by local authorities.

Those political observers who have scanned the new faces in Brown's Cabinet for clues as to the likely evolution of British policies may well be seeking in vain. British public policies are characterized chiefly by inertia and continuity rather than by radical change and this is a characteristic which transcends changes of Prime Minister and even changes of governing political parties.

Gordon Brown has enjoyed many years as the heir apparent in which to formulate a blueprint for the reform of the British political system in order to eradicate the unfairness of the electoral system, the cronyism, the corruption, the inconsistencies and the inefficiencies of British governance. Some of his proposals are admirable, despite their limitations.

Whether he can deliver, with or without the cross-party consensus that he seeks, remains open to question. And by the way, Prime Minister, has the time not come to abolish the whipping system in both Houses of Parliament which enables a minority elected government to effectively stifle any internal party opposition and thereby to impose its will on a long suffering electorate?

The first task for Brown is to look for Labour's roots

By Øivind Bratberg

Dedication in demand.

"This party is a moral crusade or it is nothing", Harold Wilson famously stated to the Labour conference in 1962. Today, in light of the outgoing prime minister's messianic foreign policy, the statement gives a disturbing echo. Viewed from inside the party, however, Wilson's reminder of the moral case for progressive ideas seems as pertinent to Labour as ever.



Øivind Bratberg is a PhD fellow at the Dept. of Political Science, University of Oslo and President of British Politics Society, Norway.

Ten years in government under Blairism – a story in which Gordon Brown, of course, played his part – has weakened the Labour Party. There are two distinct dimensions to the party's decline, one organisational and one ideological. Both should be addressed by Gordon Brown as he enters Number 10 Downing Street with an urge to reinvigorate his party.

Let us consider the *organisational* aspect first. Party activism has been a strange affair under New Labour. For all the spin that surrounded Tony Blair's rise to the premiership, his ascendancy was met with a fair deal of enthusiasm. This fervour may not have been very deep-felt, but in sheer numbers the effect was beneficial to the party. Individual membership rose from around 250,000 in 1994 to more than 400,000 in 1997. This propitious development was not to last, however: four years later membership numbers had sunk below 300,000, dropping further to less than 220,000 in 2003. Since then, new initiatives have been launched to re-generate local enthusiasm. The strong centralism of the Blair era has not been helpful to these efforts, neither has of course the war in Iraq. In 2005, the parliamentary election campaign witnessed a sharply declining, almost lethargic constituency activism.

Meanwhile, the organisational devices to ensure local influence on the party have quietly been put away or reformed. The impact of the annual national conference is to rubber-stamp rather than vote over policy issues. Input to the party leadership is restrained and controlled, a lesson learnt from the troublesome years of the early 1980s. If we add to this the reduced impact of the trade unions in the party, already established when Blair arrived as leader, it is easy enough to portray the Labour Party today as a centralised machinery. Decline in membership and constituency volunteering is a crude indicator of the disillusionment and ideological confusion that has crept in on Labour since 1997.

But the story should yet begin with the *ideological* dimension of Labour. In contrast to its Conservative counterpart, Labour has the roots of an ideological party, more prone to speak about values and the deeper aspirations of the people it represents. Values must not be confused with rigidity: socialist dogma has never dominated Labour. On the contrary, the party has been open to the whole spectrum of leftist influence, bringing trade unionists, ethical socialists, Fabians and the like under the same umbrella. These diverse traditions brought a range of intellectuals on the side of Labour, presenting with eloquence the case for *Equality* and lamenting *the Acquisitive Society* (R.H. Tawney), reflecting on *the Future of Socialism* (Anthony Crosland), seeking social democracy in *Place of Fear* (Aneurin Bevan) or, devising *Socialism for a Sceptical Age* (Ralph Miliband). The forward march of Labour was accompanied by a flourishing bibliography where the different strands of thinking were exposed.

The early 1980s represented an absolute trauma to Labour's ideological strength, the party first radicalised, then reduced to a minimum in opposition to the troublesome Margaret Thatcher. While Thatcherism ruled Britain's economic and ideological terrain, Labour was late to recover – and when it finally did, it came out as a different creature, with little left of its ideas. With Anthony Giddens' "third way" as a lodestar, Labour under Blair has been ahead of any other social democratic party in adapting to a supposedly new world – globalised and individualised, with the interventionist state now an actor of the past. On the way, much of the left's diverse intellectual tradition was swept aside by the third way paradigm, which was to prove so diffuse that few could pinpoint what it actually meant and how it should be read into the agenda of a party of the left.

"In contrast with its Conservative counterpart, Labour has the roots of an ideological party, more prone to speak about values and the deeper aspirations of the people it represents."

In parallel with new thinking came the famous triangulation strategy: the new regime supposedly went beyond the old left and right division by taking the best from both worlds – combining the market with fairness and rights with responsibilities, supporting public/private partnerships and educating its citizens to compete in an open economy. Triangulation implied opening a contrast to Labour's post-war policies, which were now caricatured as monolithic, old-fashioned and out-dated.

It should come as no surprise that after ten years in government the demand has been

raised for New Labour to renew again. The intellectual guidance is now far from obvious. While the third way remains poorly defined, left and right remain the essential signposts in British politics. By these standards, Labour is a centre-left party and should build on these foundations.

Communicating social democracy is, however, not a natural urge for the modernised party. Consequently, despite its long spell in government Labour still falls short of establishing the cultural shift one would expect to find under a new regime. Much still remains for Blair and Brown's Labour to reach comparison with Clement Atlee's post-war government (1945-51). Except for devolution at home and the tragic foreign policy adventure in Iraq, there is little for the history books in what Blair and Brown have accomplished – despite a modernised public sector, stable economic growth (helped by the decision to let Bank of England set interest rates) and a few distinct left-of-centre reforms, such as the minimum wage.

Perhaps it is exactly the lack of a linkage to history that has contributed to confusion and disenchantment at the level of party activists. While the first period in government was used to stabilise the economy and enhance Labour's reputation as competent, the 2001-05 parliament was supposed to be different. What followed was indeed somewhat different, but rarely explained: large increases in public sector funding; Brown's clever redistribution through taxes; and controversial reforms in the university and health sectors. Policies spoke to the left, centre and right concurrently. No coherent ideological framework guided Labour's approach to the state, no clear understanding was seen of the public service traditionally so endeared by the party. Supporting individual choice was easily seen as embracing consumerism. Labour's social solidarity disappeared behind timid business taxes and Blair's flirtation with the super-rich.

Revising ideology has been a recurring element in Labour's history. What all good revisionists should learn, however, is to keep sight of the essential values that the party was meant to serve. In this, there is still much to be learnt by New Labour. Where Labour under Brown will turn for ideological renewal will be one of the most fascinating aspects to study in the coming year. On 27 June, as he finally entered Number 10 as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown claimed to have "heard the need for change", mentioning the NHS, education and trust in government among his keywords. Britain – and Labour – is waiting attentively.

"Revising ideology has been a recurring element in Labour's history. What all good revisionists should learn, however, is to keep sight of the essential values that the party was meant to serve."

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister: a new dawn or the beginning of the end?

By Jan Erik Mustad

Time for political skills.

Britain is a very different country now from what it was ten years ago when Tony Blair came to power. How will Gordon Brown interpret the current mood of the nation?



Jan Erik Mustad is a publishing editor of *Fagbokforlaget*. He has taught and published extensively on British politics and is a regular commentator in the Norwegian media.

Gordon Brown has been a central participant in the Blair decade. As Chancellor since 1997, he was the main architect behind the Blair government's economic policies, which provided the basis for ten years of economic stability and prosperity in Britain. He was the only member of the Cabinet, in addition to Blair, who held the same post for the whole decade.

The Brown-Blair partnership was both explosive and fruitful, and much has been said and written about the relationship. There is, for example, no doubt that the maintained dynamic of the relationship brought Labour to the third election victory in 2005. The penetrating question is, however - as Brown begins his premiership -

"The penetrating question is [...] - as Brown begins his premiership - whether he will be able to continue Labour's row of election victories, or whether sacrificing Blair will be the beginning of the end both for Brown and for Labour."

whether he will be able to continue Labour's row of election victories, or whether sacrificing Blair will be the beginning of the end both for Brown and for Labour. The orderly transition so eagerly awaited by the Brown camp has after all meant ousting the most successful party leader Labour has had, if success is measured by winning elections.

The next parliamentary election, probably due in 2009, is likely to be a more closely fought contest than the previous three elections. For the first time, all the three major parties will have party-leaders fighting to inhabit 10 Downing Street. David Cameron, the young and fresh leader of the Conservatives, seeking to modernise the rather old-fashioned Tory Party; Menzies Campbell, widely respected as the Liberal Democrats' safe pair of hands; and Brown who, for the time being, has inherited the position as PM. With popular support now more evenly distributed between the three parties, there is a real possibility that we might end up with a "hung Parliament" where no party has an overall majority, a phenomenon which has not occurred since James Callaghan's interim government in 1976. Current opinion polls suggest a close race between the two biggest parties, with the Lib Dems potentially in

a government-maker role. It is therefore of prime importance for Brown, that he is on the offensive for the remaining time of this parliament.

Being in Brown's position is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, he holds a clear advantage being the frontrunner, as this provides him with the opportunity to carry out his policies in government. If the electorate like what they see, this will inevitably give him an edge when the election comes. On the other hand, if he squanders this opportunity, it will disadvantage him at the next crossroads. So, what does Brown need to do in order to stay on track for a victory at the next general election? In the following, a few humble pieces of advice are offered, based on the numerous articles and books that have addressed the subject thus far. One of the most influential writings is Anthony Giddens' book *Over to You, Mr.*

Brown. Giddens proposes yet again policy renewal in order for Brown to stay in power.

There should, according to Giddens' view, be no return to old Labour. Many believe that Brown leans more to the political left than does Blair, but the last couple of years do not give nourishment to such an argument. In his speeches and articles, Brown has

clearly given his support to Blair's line of policy. As one of the participants in the modernisation of Labour, Brown has for long been an advocate for the moderate centre-left. It would seem strange if he was to reverse all of this, now that he is in power.

The performance of the British economy has been the major stronghold for Labour's policies since 1997. As chancellor, Gordon Brown laid down the foundations on which it was possible for the governments to pursue public sector reform. Brown, like Blair, has acknowledged the need for progressive policies which are not dependent upon state intervention to maintain a healthy economy. The public-private "partnership" approach of New Labour does not equal neo-liberalism, but Brown recognises that markets do have a role to play in a modern economy.

A solid and sound economy should, in the view of Brown, be used to continue to invest in people. Areas such as education, health-care and lifting people out of poverty should be obvious priorities along with building a

fairer and more just society. One of Brown's slogans has been: "Building a fairer society for all, not just the few." Through redistribution and education, Brown can reach some of his goals, juxtaposing citizens' rights and freedom with responsibilities. "Equal opportunities" has been Brown's aim for the past decade, and he sees it as a governmental responsibility to intervene to oversee this taking place.

In addition to this, Brown ought to proceed with constitutional reform and open, accountable government including reform of the House of Lords which is still to be finally resolved. Brown has also hinted at a written constitution to replace the wide range of constitutional sources Britain has at present. Undoubtedly, these are ideas which could contribute to making the government more accountable, and understandable to the public.

The poor result in the election to the Scottish Parliament in May was a blow for both Labour and the Scot Gordon Brown. But Brown should carry on developing the devolution project which was started under Blair, and make the relationship between the local and national even more dynamic. He should settle the West-Lothian question which concerns Scottish representation in Westminster and Scottish influence over English matters (Scottish MPs can vote on strictly English legislation, while English MPs cannot vote on strictly Scottish legislation, as that has been devolved to

the Scottish Parliament). In other words, an English parliament may be called for to ensure that devolution works according to plan. Local and regional authorities are the safest deliverers of welfare and social services.

In his book, Giddens suggests that Labour should make a "Contract for the Future" with the electorate, mapping out a policy programme

containing both responsibilities and rights that can meet the challenges of the globalised community. On the foreign scene, Brown also has to make some hard choices - the question of USA and Europe, and indeed the question of staying or withdrawing troops from Iraq.

Presumably, Brown has two years to create a foundation until he is put to the test in an election. The overriding issue is whether he will be able to sparkle another period of Labour success, or whether he will remain the unelected Prime Minister who governed on his predecessor's mandate.

Brown, Britishness - and a British sports identity?

By Andreas Selliaas

Promoting Britishness through sports. Gordon Brown has frequently emphasised his belief in developing the concept of "Britishness", and in this concept, sports seems to be playing a key role. However, the new Prime Minister's habit of bringing in sports to preserve and promote British identity has angered some of his fellow Scotsmen.



Andreas Selliaas is a PhD fellow at NUPI, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. A specialist on nationalism and minority issues, he is also leading a project on the role of sports in conflict resolution.

Paradoxically, the English Prime Minister Tony Blair gave the Scots some hope in independence from British rule by transferring powers from London to Edinburgh. Now, the Scottish Prime Minister Brown is by some seen to be reversing this development. There are particularly two issues in which Brown has promoted British identity through sports: he supported the idea of fielding a British football team in the London Olympics in 2012 and he has supported the idea of England hosting the football World Cup in 2018.

First of all, Brown expects a unified football team to represent Britain in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, and has also claimed that there is popular support in Scotland for this idea. In a recent interview with *The Scotsman*, he stated that "Obviously we have Scottish national teams for the European and World Cups, but right from the start of the Olympics it's been a UK team. I would expect there to be a UK football team". The idea of a unified British team has always been fiercely resisted by the Scottish Football Association

(SFA), and parties like the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP), which fear that participation in a communal British Olympic side would represent an open goal for those who oppose the separate country status of Scotland and England under the world football governing body FIFA.

The Association of Tartan Army Clubs (ATAC), which is officially recognised by the SFA, is also uncomfortable with the idea, and has insisted that a British team would receive no backing from their members. ATAC also has backing from its counterparts in England (Football Supporters Federation), Wales (Football Supporters Federation Cymru) and Northern Ireland (Amalgamation of Official Northern Ireland Fan Clubs).

The spokesman of ATAC has illustrated the controversy by claiming that "if the GB team, with 11 Scots, were playing Brazil, then the Tartan Army would support Brazil. We are totally opposed to the idea and it is a view shared by our colleagues in England, Wales and Northern Ireland."

Secondly, Gordon Brown caused uproar last summer when he declared his support for the England team at the 2006 World Cup finals, claiming two-thirds of all Scots wanted England to win, and that he certainly was among those two-thirds. He also hailed Paul Gascoigne's goal for England against

Scotland at Wembley in Euro '96 as one of his favourite football memories. By further supporting England to bid for the football World Cup in 2018, Brown has made an almost complete confrontation with his fellow Scottish football enthusiasts. He is understood to perceive a successful World Cup bid as the sort of publicity coup which Blair enjoyed following London's success to land the 2012 Olympic Games. In fact, the euphoria of London attaining the Olympics spurred the only occasion after the launch of the Iraq war that popular support for Blair increased in British opinion polls.

When Brown's enthusiasm for the Union Jack was received with scepticism in Scotland, he told the press that his ideal scenario would be for Scotland to beat England in the 2018 World Cup final. However, he has also said that if Scotland - and in fact using the pronoun "we" - does not qualify, or goes out in an earlier round, he would turn his allegiance to his other home nation, England.

"Gordon Brown caused uproar last summer when he declared his support for the England team at the 2006 World Cup finals, claiming two-thirds of all Scots wanted England to win, and that he certainly was among those two-thirds. He also hailed Paul Gascoigne's goal for England against Scotland at Wembley in Euro '96 as one of his favourite football memories."

The cost of funding the 2012 London Olympics is already estimated to more than £9 billion, thus requiring a substantial government subsidy. The World Cup, it is believed, will be funded primarily by the English Football Association (FA). By comparison, the *political* costs of Brown's project on sports and Britishness have so far been hard to measure.

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