

Funding the Future

On Friday morning Labour has to announce a government i.

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I have already suggested that I think come Friday morning that if election results are anything like those predicted by all opinion polls the Conservatives will, with active LibDem support, try to form a government.

I stress, they have a right to do so.

I also expect that this government will fail when it tries to present a Queen's Speech at the end of May.

Given that this failure is foreseeable what should Labour do? It seems to me that it has only one real option. What it cannot do is accept opposition: that would be fatal. What it should do instead is prepare a government in waiting. After all, given the conditions laid down by the Fixed Term Parliaments Act and the foreseeable failure of the attempt to form a government by the existing Coalition I think it has no choice but do otherwise.

By definition the LibDems will rule themselves out of this new coalition. I cannot see how including them would be possible if they decide to back the Conservatives.

That though will still leave a rainbow coalition from which to draw to form a government.

I am aware that the SNP are very unlikely to want office, but let's wait and see. I am surprised.

The SDLP, Plaid and the Greens may all prefer to not be neutered in debate by being in office because of their limited number of MPs.

But Labour has to, surely, negotiate with all those parties on how it might form a government, what it might seek to achieve, and each must make clear on what issues they would not support Labour if it runs a minority administration.

Would anything else be responsible? After all, if the Coalition this likely to try to rule until late May collapses then Labour has to hit the ground running.

And in my opinion it has to start the public preparation for that possibility so that people know that an alternative is possible well before the Coalition fails, if it does.

I sincerely hope the preparations for stating this are in place for Friday morning, because they certainly need to be.

Or to put it another way, whatever David Cameron says on Friday Ed Miliband has to make clear he is waiting to get the keys to Number 10, and is preparing for Cameron to hand them over. If democracy is to be seen to work that has to happen.