

# UK coalition government sets out 'radical programme'

COALITION CONTINUED FROM P1

"My government's legislative programme will be based upon the principles of freedom, fairness, and responsibility," the Queen said.

The reining in of state powers is a common thread running through the programme, appearing in various guises in many bills.

ID cards are to be scrapped along with the next generation of biometric passports, and a Freedom (Great Repeal) Bill will regulate the retention of DNA by police and the use of closed-circuit TV cameras.

The prime minister will lose the power to call elections at his whim with the introduction of fixed-term parliaments, and MPs will be subject to "recall" by voters should they be guilty of major wrongdoing.

Education is also a key priority and the Queen's Speech includes plans to extend the academy school programme and to make it easier for parents and others to eschew the constraints of the state and set up "free schools."

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr. Cameron highlighted the fact it was the first Queen's Speech in 65 years from a coalition government. "It is a government not driven by party interest but by the national interest, with clear values at its heart," he said.

He then rounded on Labour leader Harriet Harmon, following her response to the Queen's Speech.

Mr. Cameron said there was "something missing" from Ms. Harmon's speech.

"Not one word of apology for the appalling mess that has been left in this country. Nothing to say about leaving Britain with a deficit that is bigger than Greece's. Not a single idea for getting to grips with it," he said.

"Until they learn what they got so badly wrong I'm not sure people are going to listen to them again."

## KEY POINTS OF QUEEN'S SPEECH

### BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

The deficit and the economy are the first priority of the government's legislative programme. A new Office for Budget Responsibility will take financial forecasting away from the chancellor.

The Bank of England will be granted new powers, with control over macro-prudential regulation in the city, in a Financial Reform Bill.

The British Airways Authority may be broken up, as a new bill promotes competition in the airport market.

Part of the Royal Mail would be sold, as set out by Lord Mandelson, while retaining the network of post offices in public ownership. The exact proportion is not specified.

### WELFARE

The welfare and benefits system are to be simplified and working incentives improved. The planned rise in state pension age to 66—currently planned for 2024—will be brought forward. The pensions earnings link, which was broken under Thatcher, will be restored.

### EDUCATION

Changes to education have been hailed as flagship reforms for the coalition government. More schools will be able to become academies, and schools will have more say over the curriculum and management of pupil behaviour.

Downing Street also said it would contain measures to give parents the right to set up their own schools. Plans also include a "pupil premium," which was one of the Lib Dems' key policies, to raise the standard of schooling for children from the most deprived backgrounds.

### REFORM OF GOVERNMENT

A parliamentary reform bill will introduce fixed-term Parliament and give the electorate the right to recall MPs guilty of serious wrongdoing with a petition signed by 10 percent of electors in a constituency.

The bill also contains the coalition deal-maker of a referendum on the Alternative Vote system, which David Cameron has said will happen in 2011. Parliamentary constituency maps will be redrawn to reduce numbers of MPs and make seats a similar size.

Councils and neighbourhoods will be granted more power through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill, which also gives residents the ability to instigate referendums and veto excessive council tax increases.

The process of Scottish devolution is to continue, with the implementation of the final report of the Calman commission.

### HOME AFFAIRS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Police forces will be more directly accountable, through "directly elected individuals" in areas of key responsibility, through the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. The bill will also create a dedicated border police force, and prevent health and safety legislation from getting in the way of "common sense policing" and overhaul the Licensing Act.

Authorities' use of CCTV cameras and the police DNA database will come under new restrictions. There will be a ban on the storage of Internet and e-mail records without good reason.

The ID card system—still in the early stages of being rolled out—will be abolished, together with the national identity register.

New powers will be granted to allow authorities to seize assets from terrorists.

# Accountability, legislation sought over oil leak

By JIM FOGARTY  
Epoch Times Staff

As British Petroleum (BP) attempts a risky "top kill" procedure to plug the leaking Deepwater Horizon well in the Gulf of Mexico, the impact of the oil spill is still unfolding as government officials seek accountability and propose legislation to prevent future disasters.

At a White House briefing this week, National Incident Commander Adm. Thad Allen faced questions over government supervision and actions during the ongoing efforts to stop the leak and clean up coastal areas.

Amidst a tone from the press seeking accountability from government authorities and BP, Adm. Allen stated that he knew the spill is "of concern to everybody" and added that "nothing is more disturbing than oil on any water in our country."

Elaborating on remarks from Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar who said that if BP is "not doing what they're supposed to be doing, we'll push them out of the way," Adm. Allen explained that BP's role during efforts to stop the leak and clean up the damage are specified under federal law.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990, enacted after Alaska's Exxon-Valdez oil spill of 1989, mandated that the responsible party—in this instance British Petroleum—is held accountable for the cost and cleanup of such spills. The law also stated that cleanup efforts be coordinated by federal agencies, most notably the Environmental Protection Agency on land and Coast Guard in coastal areas.

In Congress, Democratic Sens. Barbara Boxer, Maria Cantwell, Ron Wyden, and Jeff Merkley are seeking to restore a ban on offshore drilling in the Northwest coastal region.

On May 13, the group introduced a bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and prohibit drilling off the coast of the Western United States in an effort to protect coastal economies and resources.

"We simply cannot afford the risk posed by oil drilling off our magnificent coast. Nearly 570,000 jobs and our vital coastal economy would not survive an environmental disaster like the one we're seeing now along the Gulf Coast," Sen. Barbara Boxer stated during a recent press conference introducing the legislation.



OIL SPILL: U.S. President Barack Obama speaks in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington on May 14, flanked by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar (L) and Energy Secretary Steven Chu (R), after a meeting to discuss efforts to stop the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A 20-year moratorium on offshore drilling in the area expired in 2008 during the Bush administration, and was not renewed. The proposed amendment, in part, seeks to restore the ban on drilling. Sen. Cantwell stated that given the scope of the Gulf spill, "it is all too clear that the majority of our constituents were right all along in opposing offshore drilling."

### CRIMINAL CHARGES?

Some members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works have gone further, asking the Justice Department to initiate an inquiry into statements made in a BP document submitted to the Department of the Interior's Mineral Management Service (MMS).

The document, titled "Initial Exploration Plan Mississippi Canyon Block 252," stated that in the event of a blowout

resulting in an oil spill, the spill "is unlikely to have an impact [on fish habitat] based on the industry-wide standards for using proven equipment and technology for such responses, implementation of BP's Regional Oil Spill Response Plan, which address available equipment and personnel, techniques for containment, and recovery and removal of the oil spill."

But the committee letter proposes that in light of the present Gulf spill, "it does not in any way appear that there was 'proven equipment and technology' to respond to the spill." The senators point to a statement made by BP on May 10 as a possible contradiction to the report.

"All of the techniques being attempted or evaluated to contain the flow of oil on the seabed involve significant uncertainties because they have not been tested in these

conditions before," BP said in a statement released May 10.

The investigation, if conducted, could result in both civil and criminal charges.

The oil spill in the Gulf occurred after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, burned, and eventually sank on April 22.

The apparent challenge to plugging the well is that the leak is approximately 1.5 kilometres (about 5,000 feet) below the surface on the sea bed.

The permanent solution for stopping the leak is to drill a relief well nearby to relieve pressure, allowing BP engineers to cap the existing well; this is not expected to occur until sometime in August.

President Obama is expected to travel to Louisiana and the region on Friday to review ongoing efforts to halt the oil flow and contain the spill.

# Detroit ex-mayor sentenced to prison

MAYOR CONTINUED FROM P1

Judge David Groner ruled last month that Kilpatrick failed to report all of his assets, violating the conditions of his probation.

"Frankly, your continued attempt to cast yourself as the victim, your lack of forthrightness, your lack of contriteness and your lack of humility serve to affirm that you have not learned your lesson," Groner said.

The case has created controversy in Detroit with supporters suggesting racial profiling swayed the judge's decision. A representative for Kilpatrick also claimed that the sentencing

was unjust and based on racial discrimination.

"Equal protection under the law is a constitutional right. Look for Judge Groner's own words to come back to bite him in an appeal. With this sentence, former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick was clearly not treated equal to all citizens under the law. As a result, treating him differently is unconstitutional," said Kilpatrick's spokesperson Mike Paul.

Kilpatrick was elected as the youngest mayor in Detroit history at 31, and early in his career was the darling of the Democratic Party.

# North Korea cuts ties with the South

KOREA CONTINUED FROM P1

In a teleconference from the Korean Peninsula Tuesday, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon condemned the sinking of the Cheonan and threatened sanctions.

"We are sending a clear message to North Korea's regime: There will be consequences," he said.

"The Government of Canada will take steps to impose enhanced restrictions on trade, investments and other bilateral relations with North Korea, including the addition of North Korea to the area control list. We will also move to suspend high-level visits between Canadian and North Korean officials."

Cannon said Canada would work closely with South Korea and its allies.

"Canada is now committed to a coordinated

'We are sending a clear message to North Korea's regime: There will be consequences.'  
— Lawrence Cannon

international response—including through the United Nations Security Council—as a result of this act."  
"We will continue to support South Korea in the best way forward to take North Korea to task."

# Subscribe to

## The Epoch Times today!

Did you know that you can receive The Epoch Times anywhere in British Columbia delivered to your mailbox?

Subscribe today, and don't miss a single edition.

The Epoch Times is an independent newspaper. Your subscriptions will help us to expand our resources and bring you more of the kind of non-sensational, quality news that you have come to expect from us!

## Subscription Rates 2010

### Call Now! 604-439-9777

Name _____	13 weeks \$20.80
Address _____	26 weeks \$39.00
Phone _____	52 weeks \$72.80
<b>Payment Options</b> <input type="checkbox"/> VISA/Mastercard (over the phone) <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque	
(Payable to The Epoch Times / \$20 charge for NSF cheques) Mailing Address: 210 - 5481 Kingsway, Burnaby BC V5H 2G1	