

## One nation government

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### Very good news

We have reached a critical turning point. The patient at last recognises that only massive intervention and treatment will work.

David Cameron tells us what we have known but have waited so long to hear - " Britain may not be in the future what it has been in the past....we are in a global race today and that means an hour of reckoning....sink or swim, do or decline". Ed Milliband's unexpected peroration to one nation was his way of saying the same.

Link this to equally dramatic statements from banking and business leaders falling over themselves with statements about the return to values, integrity, trust, and putting the common good first and we have cause to hope. This is potentially a very big moment. Which way will we turn? Will we divide and try out different paths or will we pull together -and in a decade or two look each other in the eye and say we did what previous generations had done and the next expected of us - in the nick of time?

Thankfully, we are approaching the end of the phoney war. Now for the Battle of Britain! Victory requires 3 things above all else: a brutally honest picture of today's multi-dimensional battlefield, the right leadership and command, and a 'we are all in this together' mobilisation of effort. Over-dramatic? Nope - we must see the world as it really is and not how we wish it to be. The big take away from the Major-Blair-Brown-Cameron (so far) years - and from the euro zone, banking and various business crises - has been the serial failure to see reality and to be bold enough.

In this ever faster, more convergent, more complex world we are witnessing the most profound combined political, social, and economic transformation - across the globe at precisely the same time. Returning to a military analogy, it is as if gunpowder has just been invented and simultaneously we have reached the horse and tank moment. The problem is that the enemy is not a Napoleon or a Hitler, so few see that the cumulative threat posed by big global developments and internal economic and social challenges require an equivalent one nation response.

Our 'Battle of Britain' is about education, research, innovation, jobs, infrastructure, transport, energy, and narrowing inequalities and social divides. Winning this campaign convincingly is the essential qualifying round for the global challenges swimming race. We are in a long struggle. We need one nation government to get us through the next ten years.

There are two choices: a Mrs Thatcher-type leader and cabinet or grand coalition government. Current politics and time rule out the former, and critics have a point when they say that the 1930s coalition government was a disastrous peacetime precedent. Yet the situation is vastly different today, and now everyone agrees that we are at a one nation moment.

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Any grand coalition requires agreement on approach, top priorities, and means of delivery. We are not there yet because the political classes have yet to put the national interest and the common good above their own self-interests. Most of the rest of us would prefer to have the Milliband brothers, the Balls couple and various others join a one nation cabinet - right now and get on with the job. The present model - short term-driven 'same old' single party and mini coalition government - does not have the essential authority and buy-in to crack today's massive challenges.

It will take another shock and jolt of pain before the patient starts to get some of the correct treatment. We still have the spectre of 1931 hanging over us. The latest IMF report and other data describing increasing debt and widening deficits stand alongside the 17th consecutive month of falling UK industrial production. Together they tell us that the 'urgent' trend lines are still going the wrong way - not to mention some critically 'important' global issues and others within and bordering Europe that could become urgent at any moment.

These challenges together represent an insidious - relatively slow-burn - threat of historical national emergency proportion. Before we hit a tipping point, we need a proportionate emergency-level response.

Plea to 'same old' single party leaders: we are up for 'one nation' effort, just give us the one nation leadership and command. We need you to work together. Present arrangements are self-indulgent and a diversion and an obstacle to getting on with the job.