

Opinion – The momentum swing towards Yes



At the outset of this campaign people were commenting that they did not know who to believe. Now the point more often commented on is that they know who they cannot believe, and that is in my view a key factor in the momentum swing to Yes.

As the weekend of the third Yes Edinburgh Super Saturday takes place, much has changed in the last month. Much of the fear-factor spell that is being cast over voters has been blown away in a cruel wind for the Better Together campaign.

For so long we have heard what a phenomenal asset the North Sea oil is for the UK yet it somehow seems to be a weight around the neck of an independent Scotland. Oil is still in plentiful supply despite belief that it will run out soon. It will run out one day but if the revenues are invested and not squandered there is enough to secure funds for Scotland for generations to come. There is also the not-so-small matter of development of fields up the west coast. These of course are off limits currently due to the weapons of mass destruction housed at Faslane and permission is refused on the MOD's advice. As technology advances and fields previously inaccessible become realistic more licenses will be bought, more exploration carried out and more oil will be reached.

Additionally this week saw the announcement there are new coal and gas sites being accessed and even a tiny percentage of them would fuel the UK for generations. There is no shortage of energy to access without the need for the Westminster fracking projects – and this does not begin to cover the benefits of the renewables sector in Scotland where we are a world leader and the most energy rich country in the EU, thus

becoming a net exporter. Scotland will benefit from the revenues and spend the money in the best interests of Scotland, houses and hospitals versus Trident and weapons of mass destruction – it's not a difficult choice really. Feed our vulnerable or wage illegal wars? Regeneration of the construction industry with our own money or pay for PFI projects lumbering generations to come with debts due to interest rates that would even make Wonga blush.

The currency scare stories have been a long time in the news but of late there is a more open dialogue happening. We now know that Better Together came up with a strategy of simply misleading the public and keeping their fingers crossed they do not get sussed. They adopt a bullying stance of "it's ma baw an ahm goin' hame wi it if ye dinnae play ma rools". It is long since established in respected financial quarters that there will be a currency union despite the bullying threats to the contrary. Only this week we heard from a UK Minister that Westminster know there will be. When asked, more than half the respondents in Scotland stated they did not believe George Osborne and thought he was lying. That is a really damning indictment on the man supposedly in charge of the purse strings. Strangely the same man blames Alistair Darling saying he told him to publicly rule out a currency agreement! This has left AD standing alone and isolated. When BT felt they were on the front foot there was simply no currency union and Scotland could lump it – even though it is as much our pound. Now that they are backtracking suddenly there could be a currency union if the 'English' voted to share the pound in another referendum – no mention from Alistair Darling initially for the thoughts of the Welsh or those from Northern Ireland. Even this rapidly peddled yarn of another referendum was immediately distanced by Westminster.

A few months back a posse of Westminster MPs, fronted by MPs Alistair Carmichael (Lib Dem) and Ian Davidson (Labour), took great pride in telling Govan dockyard workers that they would

be out of work if there was a Yes vote, thrown on the scrap heap, with no chance of Scottish yards carrying on building warships. This week we heard from the MOD that Scotland would continue building the ships as we have the only workforce skilled in these tasks and assembly.

Angus Robertson, the SNP's leader in Westminster and defence spokesman, said: "These are welcome comments, and put to bed the scaremongering from the No campaign about Rosyth."

However, Alistair Carmichael, the Secretary of State for Scotland, said that he would check the terms of the aircraft carrier contracts. "Check the terms"? In what sense? To see if he could stop it happening? This is the man whose remit is supposed to be defending Scotland's best interests at cabinet level in Westminster. What will Ian Davidson, Labour MP, be thinking now? After all, he was the most disparaging about the Govan work force not deserving their jobs if we vote Yes and that he thought to work should move south. And yes, this does apply to part of his constituency!

Further controversy was caused by Bill Munro, founder and director of Barrhead Travel. Mr Munro chose to email every member of staff with what amounted to an instruction to vote 'no'. This was sent using the company system, to company emails on the staff work emails – it was not simply a personal email and for Barrhead to pass it off as such, saying that so many staff wanted to know Mr Munro's opinion on the referendum, is laughable. His instruction on how to vote in itself is undemocratic, but to compound the error it was based upon an out of date and dispelled report. Not dispelled by the Yes campaign, but by the Westminster Government. Even more ridiculous was the claim that they could not trade with England for three years after independence. Now there is the very real chance that the people who suffer are the staff given the rumblings of boycotts against the company for the conduct of someone who is now simply a non-executive Director. These are intelligent people so I find it hard to believe they

have simply misunderstood how independence will work.

Most disappointingly for the voters this week, and I base this on the communications I personally have had, was the decision of 30 Scottish Labour MPs to vote with the Conservatives to introduce a welfare cap. If a welfare cap policy is in a manifesto and people vote for them at the election then fair enough, but for the Labour Party to vote this way on welfare issues is unimaginable to many and quite galling as to how far removed they are from being the party of the people, and from being the party many people wrongly presume they still are. That is changing one the doors though. In the week when a Labour Lord is proposing 10gbp/month NHS fee to access services and additional 20gbp/night for overnight stay we find a poll showing that huge numbers of historically Labour voting people will vote Yes.

We saw the LibDem conference where their hierarchy criticised Better Together demanding a more positive campaign. Indeed, much the way Labour has gone some of their stalwarts and elder statesmen have declared their intention to vote Yes. Unfortunately the day after the conference closed Alistair Carmichael MP was back to peddling negative myths at the behest of the London paymasters – the positive change didn't last long.

This has left Better Together somewhat bereft of ideas to scare with and so the EU question came out again. But it was only recently that the Danes said they would warmly welcome Scotland and we would be of great benefit. Indeed, Mr Jens Nymand Christensen, Director of the Secretariat-General of the European Commission and Mr Romero Requena, Director General of the Legal Service in the European Commission went to lengths to confirm the EU have no view nor will they speculate. Even Sr Barrosa has gone rather quiet since he was not given the NATO job he coveted, despite the UK keeping their promise to stand in his corner – who knows, maybe it was because the UK were proposing him. Who did get that job? Jens Stoltenberg,

former Premier of Norway. But how can this be? A small nation like Norway at the 'top table' of NATO? But we have been told such things are simply not possible and that Scotland would never be allowed to access such dizzy heights outwith the UK set up.

Again, for some time now we have been told that the referendum is causing business uncertainty and holding Scotland back. That does not stack up either given that the latest figures show a 15 year high for inwards investment.

Lastly, remember when NO were telling us our mobile bills would rocket as call roaming charges would apply? Well, as was already known would happen, the EU have passed the legislation banning any such charges across Europe. Another fear shot down.

I could go on.....

As I always try to do, I will post up the events both Yes and No have running in the near future.

There is one of particular note in that Jim Eadie MSP and Alistair Darling MSP will speak at Craiglockhart Parish Church on May 8th (the details are in the Yes events link)

Yes have talks from cabinet ministers, business leaders, the launch of Scots Asians For Yes – Edinburgh, speakers from the arts, from sport and from various political parties and none. Also Stalls, canvassing, leafleting, door to door surveys.

This weekend is the third Edinburgh Super Saturday and focusses on Wester Hailes and Sighthill area.

Edinburgh Southern Yes activity & Edinburgh-wide.

<http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=21ed0fd903266f1bb83ce0e63&id=669f0784ae&e=3682918c65>

http://yesscotland.nationbuilder.com/join_an_event?address_changedistance=5&address_changesubmitted_address=eh2+2er&commit=S

[earch&email_address=&page=1](#)

Link here for some No events – Better Together events Inc Door knocking and Blether Together

http://bettertogether.net/page/event/search_results?orderby=zip_radius&zip_radius0=EH104df&zip_radius1=5&country=GB&radius_unit=mi

Hopefully Better Together will offer up some speakers as to date they are not forthcoming, sadly. I have asked on a few occasions, by various mediums, but to date I have no volunteers from them. The 'undecideds' events are provoking good open debate but it really would be good to have main speakers to represent No too.

So after all that, did you actually fall for an April Fools joke this week? No? Well don't fall for the scare stories that are being spread to try to mislead you.

Submitted by [Neil Hay](#)

