

CCNet - 24 February 2012

The Climate Policy Network

Green Chaos Down Under

Battle Over Climate Policy May Bring Down Aussie Government

Kevin Rudd has declared he will challenge Australia's prime minister Julia Gillard as leader of the Labor party on Monday, saying he wants to "finish the job" he began before she ousted him. Mr Rudd, dumped as leader in 2010, attacked Ms Gillard as treacherous and untrustworthy and insisted she would not be able to win the next election. Mr Rudd attacked Ms Gillard's political record, saying she urged him to dump his carbon pricing scheme as prime minister – a move that is credited as initiating his decline. --Jonathan Pearlman, [The Daily Telegraph, 24 February 2012](#)

KEVIN RUDD commissioned advice on "repositioning" his ill-fated climate change policy, including scrapping it, two months before he dumped it, leaked documents show. Mr Rudd yesterday placed the blame squarely on Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan for forcing him to drop the policy but the Herald has obtained a departmental briefing commissioned by Mr Rudd showing he began the process that led to the policy being deferred indefinitely. -- Phillip Coorey, [The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

The bloodletting inside the Labor Party is nothing short of animalistic. This week, many of the parliamentarians of the federal ALP have cast aside any semblance of unity and torn at each other in unrestrained frenzy. Australian Labor makes the US Republicans look almost charitable to each other by comparison. Labor, at its lowest standing in the public eye in the 40-year history of the Nielsen poll, does not seem well-placed to afford the luxury. -- Peter Hartcher and Phillip Coorey, [The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

Labor'S chances of salvaging anything from the current leadership debacle are receding as fast as you can say "disunity is death". This is not garden-variety disunity, it is a full-scale nuclear war that, almost uniquely, is taking place within the party of government. It is as crazy as the military acronym suggests - MAD, or "mutually assured destruction". --Mark Kenny, [Adelaide Advertiser, 25 February 2012](#)

1) Kevin Rudd announces leadership challenge against Australian prime minister Julia Gillard - [The Daily Telegraph, 24 February 2012](#)

2) Rudd sought option to kill climate plan - [The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

3) 'Animalistic' Battle Over Climate Policy Tearing Labor Party Apart - [The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

4) Kevin Rudd reveals why he shelved the carbon emissions trading scheme - [Daily Telegraph, 24 February 2012](#)

5) Mark Kenny: Labor on grim road to self-destruction - [Adelaide Advertiser, 25 February 2012](#)

1) Kevin Rudd announces leadership challenge against Australian prime minister Julia Gillard

[The Daily Telegraph, 24 February 2012](#)

Jonathan Pearlman

Kevin Rudd has declared he will challenge Australia's prime minister Julia Gillard as leader of the Labor party on Monday, saying he wants to "finish the job" he began before she ousted him.

Mr Rudd, dumped as leader in 2010, attacked Ms Gillard as treacherous and untrustworthy and insisted she would not be able to win the next election.

"I want to finish the job the Australian people elected me to do," he said.

"Rightly or wrongly Julia has lost the trust of the Australian people, and starting on Monday I want to start restoring that trust."

Mr Rudd, who has higher approval ratings than Ms Gillard, targeted his pitch carefully at his fellow party members, saying that the Opposition leader, Tony Abbott, was "beatable".

"If we don't change the Labor Party is going to end up in opposition. We will all end up on the backbench. It is time for a reality check for everybody."

Mr Rudd resigned as foreign minister in Washington DC on Wednesday and announced his candidacy after returning to Australia this morning. He had been widely expected to

challenge Ms Gillard and the looming leadership battle has led to bitter internal party warfare.

Mr Rudd attacked Ms Gillard's political record, saying she urged him to dump his carbon pricing scheme as prime minister – a move that is credited as initiating his decline.

"The Government's problems have been of its own making. If I didn't exist, people would have cast around for an alternative leader for the Labor Party," he said.

Ms Gillard has yet to respond to Mr Rudd's challenge but earlier today declared the ballot is not an episode of "Celebrity Big Brother".

[Full story](#)

2) Rudd sought option to kill climate plan

[The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

Phillip Coorey

KEVIN RUDD commissioned advice on "repositioning" his ill-fated climate change policy, including scrapping it, two months before he dumped it, leaked documents show.

Mr Rudd yesterday placed the blame squarely on Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan for forcing him to drop the policy but the Herald has obtained a departmental briefing commissioned by Mr Rudd showing he began the process that led to the policy being deferred indefinitely. In April 2010 the Herald revealed Mr Rudd had abandoned the carbon pollution reduction scheme after talks with senior colleagues. It sent the government into a tailspin and two months later, on June 24, Mr Rudd was dumped as prime minister.

When Mr Rudd declared officially yesterday that he would challenge Ms Gillard for his old job, he said Ms Gillard and Mr Swan had pressed him to drop the policy. "They took a view, very bluntly and very directly, that we should not proceed with the carbon pollution reduction scheme."

He said Ms Gillard recommended the Labor Party not put a price on carbon until there was bipartisan support. "That's the unvarnished record of what occurred."

The leaked briefing is dated February 16, 2010. Mr Rudd commissioned it after rejecting advice to fight for the scheme by holding a double dissolution election. The briefing's "purpose" was "to outline approaches to repositioning climate change policy" and it presented the government with three broad options.

The first was to pursue the existing policy and take it to the election. The second recommended the government "defer consideration" of the carbon price indefinitely. The third was to delay it for four years but legislate a firm starting date.

Mr Rudd has said in the past he tried to steer a middle course through the views of ministers who wanted to pursue the policy, and Ms Gillard and Mr Swan, who wanted to abandon it. He said he was trying to "preserve the unity of the government".

But Ms Gillard's supporters are likely to seize on the leaked briefing to claim Mr Rudd set in train the process to scrap the policy and it was wrong to sheet all the blame home to Ms

Gillard.

Mr Rudd confirmed yesterday that if he became leader, he would implement the carbon price scheme Ms Gillard had shepherded through the hung parliament. He hinted at moving to a floating price per tonne of carbon sooner than 2015. Under the current scheme the price is fixed at \$23 until then, which industry says is too high. A floating price would be much lower.

Ms Gillard attacked Mr Rudd for claiming the moral high ground on climate change, saying in the end it was she, not he, who delivered the policy, and in much more difficult circumstances.

She noted she had managed to pass legislation through a hung parliament with a hostile opposition while Mr Rudd failed with a parliamentary majority and a willing opposition leader

3) 'Animalistic' Battle Over Climate Policy Tearing Labor Party Apart

[The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 2012](#)

Peter Hartcher and Phillip Coorey

The bloodletting inside the Labor Party is nothing short of animalistic, write Peter Hartcher and Phillip Coorey.

Until now, American presidential candidates have set the standard for bare-knuckle attacks on other members of their own party.

In a striking statistic, Republicans spent 5 per cent of all their ad budgets attacking each other in the election four years ago; so far this time, it's running at 51 per cent, according to The Washington Post.

But the American standard for negativity appears to have been overtaken by an abrupt new Australian outburst. This week, many of the parliamentarians of the federal ALP have cast aside any semblance of unity and torn at each other in unrestrained frenzy.

It became "animalistic", said the federal Labor MP from Queensland Graham Perrett. Two of the most seasoned factional warriors from both sides of Labor, Graham Richardson from the NSW Right faction and Doug Cameron from the NSW Left, have declared it to be the most extreme they have seen.

And the percentage of negative statements this week? An analysis for the Herald by Sentia Media, formerly Media Monitors, puts it at 58 per cent.

"The comments have been more internally damaging to Labor than ever before," is the assessment of a non-partisan professional observer, Sentia's Patrick Baume. Australian Labor makes the US Republicans look almost charitable to each other by comparison.

On Thursday alone, 18 of the 30 ministers of the Gillard government went public and, to varying degrees, excoriated their former leader, Kevin Rudd, as a chaotic, dysfunctional, ill-tempered, overbearing and, ultimately, an opinion poll- and headline-driven populist who

lacked the substance and wherewithal to withstand the rigours of being prime minister. One remarkable feature of the angry outburst is that it started at the most senior level of the Labor Party. [...]

The Labor leadership contest has generated a level of open anger so great that it is confounding observers, rebounding on the Gillard supporters who are deploying it, and, perhaps, inflicting damage on Labor overall. And Labor, at its lowest standing in the public eye in the 40-year history of the Nielsen poll, does not seem well-placed to afford the luxury.

[Full story](#)

4) Kevin Rudd reveals why he shelved the carbon emissions trading scheme

[Daily Telegraph, 24 February 2012](#)

Alison McMeekin

Kevin Rudd has revealed Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan convinced him to shelve the emissions trading scheme which his government developed when he was prime minister. The outgoing foreign minister – who announced this afternoon he would run in Monday's leadership ballot – said when he was PM it was his deputy Julia Gillard and his Treasurer Wayne Swan who convinced him to shelve the carbon pollution reduction scheme (CPRS). "They took a view, very bluntly and very directly, that we should not proceed with the carbon pollution reduction scheme and furthermore in the case of Julia that we should instead adopt what she called as a bipartisan solution," Mr Rudd said.

"What was that? That the Labor Party should not put a price on carbon until (Opposition Leader Tony) Abbott changed his position and returned to the Liberal Party's previous position.

"That's the unvarnished record of what occurred."

Mr Rudd said he accepted full responsibility for the decision.

He then took aim at the thesis that he was to blame for the Gillard Government's current problems and poor polling that shows Labor would be routed at an election.

"It's very easy to establish a frame whereby all of the government's problems are the result of one person called K Rudd," Mr Rudd said.

"It wasn't K Rudd who made a pre-election commitment on a carbon tax. It wasn't K Rudd who made a particular commitment to Mr Wilkie on the question of poker machines. It wasn't K Rudd who had anything to do with the East Timor solution or the Malaysia solution. These were initiatives and decisions taken uniquely by the prime minister.

"And I'm a bit tired and fed up of this general frame which says if the government has a problem and Prime Minister Gillard's leadership has a problem, ipso facto it's because of me."

Mr Rudd referred to last year when he had heart surgery and was out of action for two months.

He said people should look at how the government performed in that period.

"The government's problems as they've accumulated over time have been of its own making," Mr Rudd said.

"If I didn't exist people would have cast around for an alternative leader of the Australian Labor Party because of where we've got to in historically low polling numbers – not for one month, but for 12 months."

5) Labor on grim road to self-destruction

[Adelaide Advertiser, 25 February 2012](#)

Mark Kenny

LABOR'S chances of salvaging anything from the current leadership debacle are receding as fast as you can say "disunity is death".

This is not garden-variety disunity, it is a full-scale nuclear war that, almost uniquely, is taking place within the party of government.

It is as crazy as the military acronym suggests - MAD, or "mutually assured destruction".

For Julia Gillard, the risk is not defeat on Monday but that she will not crush her opponent unless she gets an absolutely overwhelming vote. Only that would ensure Kevin Rudd cannot launch a return tilt.

That said, Mr Rudd's push looks like topping out at 27 to 30 votes. Not enough to win but enough to fight on.

Yesterday, more cabinet ministers talked openly of Mr Rudd's idiosyncratic and disorganised management style. A couple revealed they simply would not put themselves through the experience again, joining a list of up to 10 senior ministers who would simply not be available for selection to a Rudd Cabinet.

Having both declared their candidacy, the two protagonists yesterday unleashed their attacks.

Each painted the other as fundamentally untrustworthy. Each branded the other a liar. And each gave Tony Abbott his best week yet without the Liberal even having to lift a finger.

Ms Gillard's pitch is all about her toughness, her discipline and her proven ability to work with people to get material things done. Her theme is character.

By its very statement, it presents a harsh critique of Mr Rudd's patchier record of big statements amounting to little outcomes.

It is a persuasive argument with the cognoscente and has already won the internal race.

But it is Mr Rudd's argument that resonates outside the Government - out where elections are decided.

Mr Rudd's appeal to MPs is all about this. His theme is a popular reckoning.

He emphasised his untimely demise at the hands of the unaccountable faction bosses and faceless men. Labor owed him and it owed the people. His was unfinished business.

Phones are ringing and arms are being twisted ahead of Monday's bloody showdown.

The Government's immediate interests are now secondary to Mr Rudd's primary aim, motivated by a righteous anger and an insatiable need for vindication. In any language, it all spells MAD.

The Global Warming Policy Foundation, 1 Carlton House, London SW1Y 5DB

Director: Dr Benny Peiser

<http://www.thegwpf.org>
Unsubscribe