Poll surge as Brown unveils policy blitz.

Internacional | 13-05-2007 | 08:12

Gordon Brown is to set out a wide-ranging blueprint for a new Britain as he attempts to prove that he will be a Prime Minister for the whole country rather than sectional interests.
As a new poll shows Labour has gained a bounce in the polls, the Chancellor is set to unveil a host of new policies on the environment, the treatment the public can expect from doctors and fundamental changes to the constitution designed to show the broadness of his political vision and that he can outmanoeuvre David Cameron on the key issues.

A Brown-led government would:

· Build 100,000 new eco-homes in specially designed 'green towns' so the public can buy affordable homes that have a low impact on the environment.

· Have doctors' surgeries open at the weekend and GPs on call in the evenings so that patients to not have to wait for appointments during working hours. Doctors were given the right of opting out of out-of-hours care two years ago, under a controversial pay deal, signed by the then Health Secretary, John Reid, that awarded them a 22 per cent pay rise last year.

· Strip Number 10 of some of the powers conferred on it by 'royal prerogative' - particularly the ability to declare war should only be done with the approval of Parliament. William Hague, the shadow Foreign Secretary, will push the issue in a debate in the Commons on Tuesday.

The Chancellor, who will be delighted that Labour has put on three points in today's YouGov poll for the Sunday Times, will this morning take the fight to the Tories when he uses an appearance on BBC1's AM programmes to announce the eco-towns plans.

The proposal, designed to steal a march on the green-friendly Tory leader, is the most substantial of a series of initiatives announced or floated by the Brown team since he launched his campaign last Thursday. But Cameron is still ahead in the polls, according to YouGov. The Tories lead on 38 per cent, down one, while Labour has climbed three to 34 per cent. The Liberal Democrats are down one to 15 per cent. Brown will also attempt to show his softer side today when he is questioned by the film director Anthony Minghella at the Brighton festival. Every ticket has been sold for the event where Brown will talk about his book on courageous historical figures and

answer questions about the arts and literature.

After a brief barbecue with party workers in Brighton, Brown will travel back to London where he will appear alongside Michael Meacher and John McDonnell, the two left-wingers vying to mount a hopeless challenge for the leadership. Brown will demonstrate his break with the Blair era by guaranteeing Parliament the right to approve war. This will involve removing symbolic 'royal prerogative' powers from the Prime Minister and handing them to Parliament.

The Chancellor has long made it clear that he would like to build on the precedent set in 2003, when Britain's involvement in the invasion of Iraq was launched only after a vote in Parliament.

The Observer now understands that the Chancellor intends to go much further, possibly giving Parliament the right not just to approve war, but also a key role in declaring armed action. Brown is believed to be in favour of transferring key royal prerogatives to Parliament. These are ancient monarchical powers, including the right to declare war and sign international treaties. They are exercised by the Prime Minister in the name of the monarch, under Britain's constitutional monarchy.

Handing elements of the royal prerogative to Parliament would represent a direct break from Blair. In 2004, Downing Street flatly rejected such a proposal by the Commons Public Administration Select Committee, on the grounds that it was 'not persuaded that the proposal would improve the present position'.

A source in the Brown camp said: 'Gordon is looking at transferring powers from the royal prerogative to Parliament. These are not changes that will be handed down: they will be subject to discussion.' The source made clear that there would be protection in the parliamentary legislation that would enshrine the reforms. 'There would be safeguards to allow the executive to act immediately in emergencies where it is necessary to safeguard the lives of British forces.'

Brown, who is convinced that Labour will win an unprecedented fourth consecutive term only if it embarks on the most fundamental reforms, believes enhancing the role of Parliament is the best way to demonstrate that the government has abandoned its old ways.

Blair was often accused of politicising Downing Street - and downgrading Parliament - by packing No 10 with political advisers who were seen as more powerful than ministers.

The Chancellor accepts that Blair broke new ground when he allowed MPs to vote on a substantive motion on the eve of the Iraq war. By convention, pre-war votes are only ever held on a motion to 'adjourn the house' if opponents can muster enough support.

But Brown believes that this did not go far enough, because many people believe the war was a fait accompli by the time of the vote.'

Fuente: Loste
Autor: Loste