

New government

Pain of deficit reduction is still hidden



Chris Giles

"Deficit reduction and continuing to ensure economic recovery is the most urgent issue facing Britain," states the coalition agreement between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The rest of the document does not live up to the billing.

Compared with budget

plans the government has inherited from its Labour predecessor, the agreement included no specific new spending cuts, lots of public spending pledges, copious tax cuts and a commitment to faster deficit reduction.

Unless there are huge spending cuts or tax increases planned but not yet announced, the deficit, far from contracting, is about to deepen.

It is not that the Conservatives and Lib Dems are deliberately misleading the public by saying they want "a significantly accelerated reduction in

the structural deficit". Rather, their plans for specific – and uncontested – spending increases and tax cuts are well defined, while the broader objective of large net spending cuts and tax increases remains cloaked in secrecy.

Day one for George Osborne consisted of phone calls to foreign finance ministers and British business groups. The chancellor also rammed home to officials, who clapped him into the building, the importance of David Laws, a Liberal Democrat and chief secretary to the Treasury.

This was intended to send a message: that the coalition is real and Mr Laws is locked into the deficit-reduction plan, Treasury insiders said.

But Treasury officials, whose job it is "to speak truth to power", did not say whether the induction of Mr Osborne and Mr Laws had included an outline of the full implications of the government's aim to reduce the budget deficit faster – at the same time as offering new spending pledges and tax cuts.

First, the Treasury's existing plans for public

spending already imply cuts to government departments of £37bn (2.5 per cent of national income) a year by 2013-14.

Added to this, the coalition agreement is committed to increases in spending on overseas aid with an annual cost of £4bn; fresh income tax cuts with a price tag of about £5bn, as a downpayment on the Lib Dem plan to raise income tax thresholds; £3bn a year for avoiding some Labour tax increases; faster deficit reduction, which implies additional spending reductions of about a

further £8bn; a jobs package at £600m; more funding for poor school pupils at £2.5bn; and higher old-age pensions costing about £2bn.

Set against this are near-term plans to raise taxes on aviation of £3bn and capital gains tax of about £2bn. Put this together and Mr Osborne will have to announce public spending cuts of £57bn a year by 2013-14 from a non-protected budget of about £260bn – cuts of about 22 per cent. It goes without saying that this will prove a sharp test of political will.

The next few months will see the government progressively coming clean on these figures, blaming its predecessor for the mess it has inherited, and softening up the public for the brutal cuts to come.

First, a newly created Office for Budget Responsibility will present fresh forecasts for growth and borrowing, which are likely to show that the underlying problem is worse than thought. Then an emergency Budget by the end of June will set out the government's ambitions for faster deficit reduction. And in the

autumn, detailed spending cuts will be outlined in a spending review covering the next three years.

This will be the defining moment of the new parliament. Britain's public sector will face similar austerity measures to those seen in Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain.

It is only when the chancellor announces the pain, rather than the gain, from the new government, that we will know whether this coalition will stick.

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Class of 2010: most of the 232 new MPs pose for a photograph in Westminster Hall yesterday. There is agreement that borrowing must be brought down quickly to avoid a British sovereign debt crisis

Getty

Just the facts the new politics

	The deficit	Tax	Banking	Political reform	Pensions	Europe
What has been announced	The Con-Lib coalition agreement announces "a significantly accelerated reduction in the structural deficit", much the same language as in the Conservative manifesto. In 2010-11 spending budgets will be cut by £6bn although the specifics of these cuts have not been announced. There will be an emergency Budget within 50 days and "the parties note that the credibility of a plan on deficit reduction depends on its long-term deliverability, not just the depth of immediate cuts".	Help for low and middle-earners will come from a "substantial increase" in the income tax threshold next April, to be funded by a rise in capital gains tax along with dropping the Conservatives' planned rise in employee national insurance thresholds. Further increases in the income tax threshold will partly be funded by some of the revenues from a per-aircraft rather than per-passenger duty on air travel. The Tories' planned rise in employer NI thresholds will go ahead.	Reform of the banking system. Key planks include a levy on the banking industry, a tougher stance on City bonuses, boosting lending to small businesses and forming an independent commission to investigate whether big banks should be forced to separate their riskier investment banking activities from their more pedestrian retail banking operations. The coalition has pledged to bring forward proposals to give the Bank of England full control of maintaining the system's overall stability.	Legislation to establish fixed five-year terms in parliament. A binding motion will be passed setting the date of the next election for May 2015. A later bill will introduce five-year terms into law. It will require a 55 per cent Commons vote to dissolve parliament early, giving a measure of security to the junior partner of a minority or coalition government. The reform will end the right of a prime minister to call an early election without consultation.	Pensions will rise in line with the higher of earnings, prices or 2.5 per cent a year starting in April next year. The policy is partly a compromise between the Liberal Democrats' desire to restore the earnings link immediately and the Conservatives' promise to do it from 2012. Maintaining the value of the basic state pension reduces means-testing and provides a platform on which to save. But the "triple guarantee" that pensioners will not lose out is pure Liberal Democrat policy.	The Conservatives have dropped some of their proposals on the EU. Their manifesto said the UK should demand a "full opt-out" from the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which gives guarantees to employees. All mention of the charter has been left out. The manifesto also said a Tory government would seek to "restore national control over those parts of social and employment legislation which have proved most damaging to our businesses and public services". This is now modified.
What critics say	The Labour party spent the election campaign warning that the Conservative plan to cut £6bn from spending this year would risk derailing the recovery. The Liberal Democrat manifesto said that it was dangerous to cut spending before 2011-12. Everyone agrees, however, that borrowing must be brought down quickly to avoid a British sovereign debt crisis.	Lack of detail over the capital gains tax changes will trigger a rush to sell. Growing businesses will be hit if the exemptions for entrepreneurs are not extended to employees owning shares in their company. The planned change to aviation tax could prove tricky. Accepting the Liberal Democrats' plan to increase income tax thresholds will make it harder to balance the books.	The coalition's plans are thin on detail, particularly on their proposal for some yet-to-be-determined levy and on what taking "robust action to tackle unacceptable bonuses" will mean in practice. Bankers in the City claim that any unilateral move to separate investment banking from retail banking would spell disaster for the UK economy, as big universal banks would move their headquarters elsewhere.	The exact wording of the bill will be crucial. The 55 per cent level is an arbitrary figure that merely reflects the present breakdown of the Con-Lib majority in the Commons. It also breaks the principle of a simple majority being sufficient to pass legislation. It is likely to be strongly opposed in the Lords. The measure will also give no protection to the Conservative government.	Critics will note that the triple guarantee produces a "ratchet effect" – not only do pensioners not lose out, on the state pension they do better in the long run than those in work. Their pension matches earnings growth when earnings rise, but they do better if price rises outstrip earnings. The guaranteed 2.5 per cent, if both prices and earnings are lower, only compounds that.	These concessions gloss over fundamental differences between David Cameron and Nick Clegg. During an April 22 televised debate, Mr Clegg expressed fury over Mr Cameron's decision to pull the Conservatives out of the main centre-right alliance in the European parliament. He called Mr Cameron's new allies "a bunch of nutters". Yet the withdrawal will not be reversed.
FT verdict	The new government will reassure markets that borrowing will fall faster than previously planned and it now has the support of the Bank of England. There are risks to this strategy, but the biggest danger is political. So far, the new coalition has avoided taking any of the difficult decisions to cut the deficit. Commitments without policies will not reassure markets for very long.	Big questions are left unanswered by this carefully worded document. The initial horse-trading has blunted the more controversial aspects of both parties' programmes but maintained the air of unreality that surrounded the election debate on deficit reduction. The new government must now get down to creating a credible plan in which hefty increases in taxation will be hard to avoid.	A politically savvy plan that appears to be taking a tough line on "fat cat" bankers, while giving the new government plenty of room to manoeuvre on the most important structural reforms. Both parties appear to have softened their stance on splitting up the big banks. Ensuring the Bank of England has full control of "macro-prudential" supervision plugs the biggest gap in Labour's system of financial regulation.	A degree of trust between partners is essential to sustaining a coalition government, particularly given the political strains of imposing severe public spending cuts. But if poorly drafted, the changes run the risk of distorting the sound principle of a simple majority in the Commons.	Potentially a hugely expensive policy if serious inflation returns or there is a prolonged spell of deflation. The cost of simply restoring the earnings link depends on earnings growth but could exceed £2bn a year by 2015. The last time pensioners enjoyed "the better of earnings or prices", the policy lasted six years. It will be interesting to see how long it survives this time.	Mr Cameron wants to minimise any rifts over the EU and was already sounding pragmatic on Europe before the coalition was formed. However, rightwing Conservatives will be anxious that the new Tory position surrenders ground to the UK Independence party. Differences on Europe are likely to be driven by events.

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Old pledges end up on bonfire

Policies

By Alex Barker,
Political Correspondent

A bonfire of overambitious pledges amassed through long years in opposition has helped to forge an ambitious Con-Lib policy programme, according to negotiators involved.

Faced with the challenge of shaping a policy programme with "common purpose", both Conservative and Liberal Democrats finessed, quietly dropped or completely recast a host of old proposals.

Some changes are genuine policy concessions, not least dropping the Lib Dem "mansion tax", agreeing to impose a limit on immigration or toning down a Tory pledge to repatriate powers from Brussels.

But both party leaders have also found the need for "compromise" to be a convenient reason to lighten the load of policy pledges that are often more cherished by party activists than the nation at large.

"It was a fantastic moderating influence on us all," said one moderniser.

The amendments gave negotiators space to push through a raft of tax changes akin to a mini-Budget, including plans to increase capital gains tax, raise income tax allowances, and reform air passenger duty.

More imprecise language in the coalition agreement has also given George Osborne, the new chancellor, some more room for manoeuvre on tax and spending. The Tories, for instance, did not reiterate a promise to reduce 80 per cent of the structural deficit through spending restraint or protect benefits spending.

Robert Chote of the Institute for Fiscal Studies said: "It... leaves open the option of tougher action to cut social security spending and does not rule out the possibility of significant net tax increases in the forthcoming Budget."

One of the most obvious sacrifices was a pledge to cut inheritance tax – a

totemic proposal made in 2009, which helped the Tories to stave off an early election in 2007.

While the tax break was seen as too high profile to drop, senior Conservatives were convinced long ago it was proving more of a burden than a vote winner.

Similarly, Nick Clegg has shelved a pledge to offer some illegal immigrants a route to "earned citizen-

ship" – a policy that turned off many potential supporters during the election campaign.

Other concessions were readily made in areas where policy pledges in opposition may have outstripped what is feasible in government. This particularly applies

to the promise to water down plans that would have scrapped the Financial Services Authority as part of a drive to hand over banking supervision to the Bank of England.

The compromise, which gives the Bank macro-prudential control while sparing it from regulating individual banks, significantly reduces the risks of a time-consuming bureaucratic upheaval.

"We were a good influence on each other," said one person involved in the talks. "It involved getting across the purpose of a policy without being tied to the practical difficulties of a statement in opposition."

Careful compromises have been agreed on some policies dear to party activists. The Lib Dems have won the right to abstain in any votes on Tory plans for nuclear power and a marriage tax break. But this symbolic move is still likely to permit the measures to be passed. A further agreement is expected in coming days on the detail of less controversial policy areas.

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New government

Cameron risks his career, Clegg his party

**Philip Stephens**

David Cameron has taken a gamble. Nick Clegg has bet the ranch. The Conservative and Liberal Democrat leaders both deserve plaudits for their audacity. The advantages, however, are asymmetric; and so are the risks. If it all ends in tears, two political careers will be on the line; but so too may be the future of the Liberal Democrats.

There was nothing of such scepticism, of course, as the prime minister assembled his government by offering five cabinet seats to his new allies.

Instead, amid surreal scenes in Downing Street, one could have been forgiven for forgetting that this was a marriage of necessity. When the two men spoke in the No 10 Rose Garden – a seismic shift in the political landscape, Mr Cameron called it – the thought occurred that perhaps all this had been part of a grand plan.

Even as they had slogged it out in the campaign debates, Messrs Cameron and Clegg had known that the national interest would demand they join forces after polling day. The tortuous post-election negotiations, the wheeling, dealing and double-dealing



Political dance: Lib Dem Vince Cable (left) meets his Tory cabinet colleague Andrew Lansley in Downing Street

also as welcome brake on the instinctive Euroscepticism of Mr Cameron's party.

The big prize for the Lib Dems, though, is the promised plebiscite on limited voting reform. The problem is that the Conservatives will campaign against change. Mr Clegg judged he would not get a better offer. At some point, he has always said, the third party had "to get serious".

The danger is that, like the junior partner in most all coalitions, the Lib Dems will be squeezed once the first flush of enthusiasm fades and airy talk of a new politics gives way to unpalatable choices. Mr Clegg's party will share the blame for searing cuts in public spending; it may not get the credit for any successes.

So the risks are uneven. The many, albeit for now quiescent, Tory critics of the coalition say the deal with the Lib Dems has pushed them into the mushy centre.

The doubters on Mr Clegg's side have graver fears: the arrangement may allow Labour to reclaim a monopoly on the centre-left. As one Lib Dem grandee put it, the danger is of being left with responsibility without power.

Perhaps the two leaders will be repaid for their audacity. But even amid the Rose Garden euphoria, plenty of people at Westminster were betting against them.

Key moments

09.34 Nick Clegg arrives at Downing Street and is greeted by David Cameron, marking their first day running the country as a team

10.41 Alistair Carmichael, the Liberal Democrats' election campaign manager, says the new government would transfer more powers to the devolved Scottish parliament

11.45 Cabinet announcements continue: Theresa May is to become home secretary and minister for women and equality, Ken Clarke will become justice secretary and lord chancellor, Michael Gove is schools secretary and Vince Cable will be business secretary

13.06 David Laws will become chief secretary to the Treasury

13.16 Former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith is the new work and pensions secretary

13.27 Mr Clarke says he thinks Mr Cable will "slot in well"

14.15 The full text of the coalition agreement is released. Highlights include no third runway at Heathrow and that the UK will not join the euro. Mr Cameron and Mr Clegg also begin a joint press conference in Downing Street's Rose Garden. Mr Cameron says the new government will be united

17.14 Baroness Warsi is to become Conservative party chairman. She will be the first Muslim woman to hold a cabinet position

17.27 David Miliband announces that he will stand in Labour's leadership contest

Stability lies in mutual policing, not fine print

Protocol

By Nicholas Timmins, Alex Barker and Andrew Bolger

The agreement between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats is likely to prove tougher and more binding than a traditional manifesto, leading constitutional experts said yesterday.

"This is a programme for government agreed between two parties, not a promissory note issued to the electorate in an attempt to persuade it to vote for you," said John Curtice, professor of politics at Strathclyde University.

While elements of manifestos can often be quietly forgotten, or even broken, "you have your coalition partner watching over you and able to cause considerable discomfort if the agreement is breached".

The two parties appear to have learnt at least some of the lessons from elsewhere for forming a lasting coalition, said Robert Hazell, director of the constitution unit at University College London. That applied particularly to the Lib Dems, who have experience of negotiating two coalitions with Labour in Scotland in 1999 and 2003, as well as a negotiation in Wales.

"One important lesson is that the deputy prime minister should not take a departmental brief, however attractive," Prof Hazell said. Unlike for previous deputy prime ministers at Westminster – John Prescott and Michael Heseltine, for example, where the title was more or less honorific – "the job of a deputy prime minister in a coalition is a real, real job".

"The human factor, whether people get on, is enormously important"

Robert Hazell
University College London

"The burden is immense," he said, "because the job involves ensuring that information flows, that people are properly consulted and that the coalition is held together. A key question to watch will be which cabinet committees Nick Clegg gets to chair."

The parties have already set out areas – on Trident, campaigning on the alternative vote, and nuclear power, for example – where they can "agree to disagree", Prof Hazell said. While that has not been a feature of the Scots and Welsh coalitions, "it hap-

pens fairly often elsewhere and is an important safety valve".

One key issue, he said, will be how much further the parties go in agreeing a more detailed programme. The half-dozen pages so far published compare with 20 pages and 80 points of policy for the first Lib-Lab coalition in Scotland, and 50 pages and more than 400 points for the second.

"Scottish officials say the latter was too detailed and too inflexible, making it difficult to respond to events," Prof Hazell said, "and that's a risk to be avoided."

There are no details yet on information sharing and dispute resolution. "That is fundamental to making it work. It is very difficult to get the balance right. The risk is that all disputes get referred to the centre, rather as they did under Gordon Brown, when nothing came back out again."

But while protocols matter, "everyone will tell you that the human factor – whether people get on – is enormously important", he said.

Associates of Donald Dewar and Jim Wallace, the Labour and Lib Dem leaders of Scotland's first coalition, say problems were often solved over "whisky and late-night chats" rather than by the fine print.

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Q&A

How the pact will work at Westminster

Will there be a joint whips' office?

No. Each party will keep its own whips and was keen to stress yesterday that the two parties will remain separate. But there will be one chief whip in the cabinet: the Conservative MP, Patrick McLoughlin.

Will the parties run against each other in by-elections?

Yes, and soon. The by-election in Thirsk and Malton, delayed when the Ukip candidate died, will be contested on May 27 by both Tory and Lib Dem candidates. David Cameron and Nick Clegg were keen to make light of the contest yesterday, with Mr Cameron joking that it would be an "intensely reasonable campaign". The fact that it is a safe Tory seat might lessen the sting.

But it is difficult to imagine that local candidates and activists will be happy to pull punches against another party – even though each may struggle to distinguish itself

from its coalition partner if each will not oppose each other in the Commons.**What about Mr Clegg's role at prime minister's questions?**

As normal with the deputy prime minister, Mr Clegg will answer questions when Mr Cameron is away. That is not necessarily a gain for Mr Clegg, who loses his voice at PMQs weekly, although Mr Cameron joked: "I'm looking forward to a lot of foreign travel."

Where will Mr Clegg sit?

Mr Clegg will be based in the deputy prime minister's office in the Cabinet Office but will be connected to Mr Cameron's office in Number 10 by a corridor. Mr Cameron said: "This isn't the kind of administration where Nick will need to phone to book an appointment."

Can Mr Cameron sack Lib Dem ministers?

This was the first mix-up of the coalition. The Lib Dems briefed that, since Mr Clegg

was in charge of Lib Dem appointments to the cabinet, he alone would have the power to sack his own people. However, later

Number 10 made clear that was not the case. To deny Mr Cameron that authority would have opened up the possibility of two power bases within the administration.

Will MPs from both sides take collective responsibility for decisions?

Yes, except for those on which the Lib Dems have achieved an opt-out, allowing them to abstain in the Commons. Those include nuclear power, the replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons system, Conservative tax breaks for married couples and possibly the decision reached by Lord Browne on tuition fees. But it is unclear how Lib Dems will respond when challenged on those issues by the media or wider public.

Kiran Stacey

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New government

Gasps at speed of strangers' embrace

Political marriage

The ardour of the Tory leader for his new partners has brought surprise and alarm, writes George Parker

David Cameron was once asked what his favourite joke was. He replied: "Nick Clegg."

Yesterday the joke was on the new prime minister, standing alongside the same Mr Clegg – now his partner in a daring five-year experiment in British politics.

"Did you really say that?" asked Mr Clegg, when the Conservative prime minis-

ter was reminded of his quip by a reporter in the Downing Street garden.

"Yes, I did," a beaming Mr Cameron admitted.

Last week's election has thrown together in government two virtual strangers. "They don't know each other at all socially," admitted one Tory official.

Yet upon this relationship rests the future of Britain's first coalition government for 65 years and the stability of an administration facing a £163bn deficit.

British coalitions are so rare that Mr Cameron revealed yesterday that he had sought advice on tactics from Angela Merkel – although the German chancellor's experience of working with liberals in government is hardly a happy one.

On a personal level, it is easy to see that senior fig-

ures from the two parties might be natural partners in a progressive and "liberal" government.

Of the five Lib Dems in the cabinet, four have City or business backgrounds – Mr Clegg, Vince Cable, Chris Huhne and David Laws. Working with the Conservatives, the self-styled party of business, is not an alien concept.

While coalition agreements in some European countries can take months to hammer out, Mr Cameron has managed to assemble a joint programme for government and a cabinet in six days. The apparent ease of this process – from a standing start – has prompted speculation that this could be the beginning of a lasting re-alignment of British politics that could outlast the planned five-year term of the coalition.

Some on the right fear Cameron may see the deal as a way to anchor the Tories in the centre

right on economics, the socially liberal Mr Cameron has led his party towards traditional Lib Dem territory on causes such as civil liberties, equal rights and the environment.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have enjoyed working together," said William Hague, the new Tory foreign secretary, with a note of surprise.

The ardour with which Mr Cameron has embraced his new partners has aroused suspicion among some on the right of his party, who fear he may see the coalition deal as a way of anchoring his party in the political centre.

Rather than being a partnership of necessity, the 43-year-old prime minister said, the coalition would be

"a new progressive partnership", based on free enterprise, curbing the power of the state, civil liberties and the environment.

Mr Cameron's refusal during the election to campaign on issues beloved of the Tory right – Europe, immigration and crime – fuelled antipathy among some in his party. If the coalition hits trouble, they could become vocal critics.

The Lib Dems, for their part, were amazed at the extent to which Mr Cameron was prepared to co-opt large parts of their manifesto, abandoning policies that appealed to the Tory right, such as the promised cut in death duties for millionaires.

In the tearoom of the House of Commons, some

Miliband throws hat into ring for leader

Labour succession

By Jim Pickard,
Political Correspondent

David Miliband broke cover and declared that he would stand for the leadership of the Labour party less than 24 hours after Gordon Brown stepped down from the role.

Support has been growing across the parliamentary Labour party for Mr Miliband, former foreign secretary, who is widely seen as a telegenic and intelligent politician, able to reach out beyond the core vote.

By pre-empting other figures who may stand, Mr Miliband's allies believe he can gain unstoppable momentum ahead of a leadership contest that may still be months away. Labour's national executive committee is meeting next Tuesday to set out a time frame for the race.

Flanked by 14 MPs, Mr Miliband said the Lib Dem coalition with the Tories had given Labour an opportunity to dominate the left and centre-left. Announcing that his formal launch would be in his north-east constituency of South Shields on Monday, he said he would first travel around the country to find out why some voters had abandoned Labour.

The former cabinet minister had been under pressure to show decisiveness after having previously agonised over whether to join rebellions against Mr Brown last summer and a year earlier. Those involved in his camp are understood to include Bob Ainsworth, former defence secretary, Alan Johnson, former home secretary, James Purnell, who stepped down as an MP last summer, and D.J. Collins, a Labour fixer who now works for Google.

Mr Johnson had been touted by many in his party as a future leader, but had previously denied he was interested in the job.

While Mr Miliband is the bookies' favourite, some Labour insiders believe they could yet be proved wrong. Surprise contestants such as Andy Burnham may still emerge.

Ed Balls, one of Mr Brown's closest confidants, is bidding his time before he throws his hat into the ring, saying it would not be "seemly" to demonstrate leadership ambitions at the moment. His friends have laughed off the idea that the former schools secretary could struggle to get the necessary 32 names for the ballot.

Meanwhile, speculation grows that David Miliband's younger brother Ed is poised to mount a bid of his own. The prospect of a "Kane and Abel" clash between the two metropolitan centre-left brothers has delighted the media. Yet Harriet Harman, deputy leader, told a private gathering of Labour MPs in the House of Commons yesterday that she wanted the race to be a dignified "contest within a team".

David Miliband, echoing that sentiment, said he wanted a "warm, generous, comradely" contest.

Memories still linger of the left-right schism of the early 1980s and, in more recent years, the bad blood that followed the Brown-Blair "Granite pact", when Mr Brown stepped aside for his friend but expected to succeed him within years.

The new cabinet

Home secretary

Theresa May, 53

Her promotion was one of the biggest shocks yesterday. With a brief to sort out a shambolic immigration system and probably slash police numbers, she will have a hard job keeping the party faithful happy. Has displayed some Lib Dem-friendly tendencies by calling the old Tories the 'nasty party' but opposed all-women shortlists. A loyalist who has avoided retaliating against hostile anonymous briefings by colleagues

Chancellor of the exchequer

George Osborne, 38

David Cameron's closest political ally, his remit in opposition extended beyond his Treasury post to overseeing the election campaign and strategy. His tenure at Number 11 will be judged on his success in cutting the deficit without provoking social unrest or costing his party the next election. He is a pragmatic Eurosceptic.

Totally committed to the success of the new alliance

Foreign secretary

William Hague, 49

The former party leader is a strong Eurosceptic who lost the 2001 election after campaigning on a platform to 'save the pound'. Quick-witted and a gifted orator, he is respected by the party leader and admired by its rank-and-file. Priorities in his new role include setting a foreign policy framework for the strategic defence review. To the right of the Cameron modernisers, but a party loyalist

Prime minister

David Cameron, 43

Has gone from MP to PM in the space of three elections. Elected Conservative party leader on a modernising platform in December 2005, he made his party electable by moving it to the centre-ground. But his failure to win a working majority and decision to cede policy ground to usher in the coalition could fuel revolt on the right of his party. His political future rests on making the deal work

Defence secretary

Liam Fox, 48

An authentic voice of the Tory right in the new cabinet, he is a hardline Eurosceptic. As shadow defence secretary, attacked the government over inadequate funding of troops.

Now needs to oversee a strategic defence review that will be the precursor to inevitable spending cuts. Potential channel for dissent from the Tory right

Chief whip

Patrick McLoughlin, 52

An MP for 24 years, and in the whips' office since 1995, his encyclopedic knowledge of the Conservative party should prove invaluable in his new role of imposing discipline in the unknown terrain of a coalition government.

An ultra-loyalist

Lord chancellor and secretary of state for justice

Ken Clarke, 69

A political heavyweight who has served in most of the important roles in government. His appointment will provide a powerful counterfoil to Nick Clegg in the drive to reform Britain's constitution.

Remains to be seen whether he will share the liberal instincts of some of his Tory colleagues on slashing prisoner numbers, but his love of Europe will please Lib Dems

Culture, Olympics, media and sport secretary

Jeremy Hunt, 43

Health secretary

Andrew Lansley, 53

Has travelled from the Tory right to modernising centrist. As shadow health secretary, he argued successfully for the NHS budget to be ring-fenced from spending cuts. Will now seek to deepen the internal market in the NHS.

A social liberal who abstained on the Iraq war vote, he is fully signed up to the Cameron modernising project

Deputy prime minister

Nick Clegg, 43

Public school educated, born into a City family, has a similar background to David Cameron and shares his easy self-confidence. A social and economic liberal with a pro-European outlook, he turned down various approaches to join the Tories. Elected as an MP in 2005 after a stint in Brussels as a trade negotiator and MEP.

The fate of his party could rest on the coalition being a success

Chief secretary to the Treasury

David Laws, 44

A former high-flying fixed-income banker. He will now oversee the details of most fierce spending consolidation in 30 years.

A true economic liberal and fiscal hawk

Business secretary

Vince Cable, 67

A former Shell chief economist. Priorities in his new job include boosting bank lending and the green economy.

Mr Cable speaks for the Lib Dem wing that is instinctively uncomfortable with the Tories

Energy and climate change secretary

Chris Huhne, 55

A classic economic liberal who courted the Lib Dem centre-left in the leadership race against Nick Clegg. Likely to take a hard-nosed but pragmatic approach to reform. **Seen as likely successor to Mr Clegg if Con-Lib pact turns sour**

Scottish secretary

Danny Alexander, 37

Stands on the centre-right of the Lib Dems. A canny political fixer who is Mr Clegg's closest political adviser. Will be keeping an eye on the forthcoming Scottish executive elections, in which the Lib Dems fear being punished for their association with the Tories.

A bellwether for the mood of Mr Clegg

Northern Ireland secretary

Owen Paterson, 53

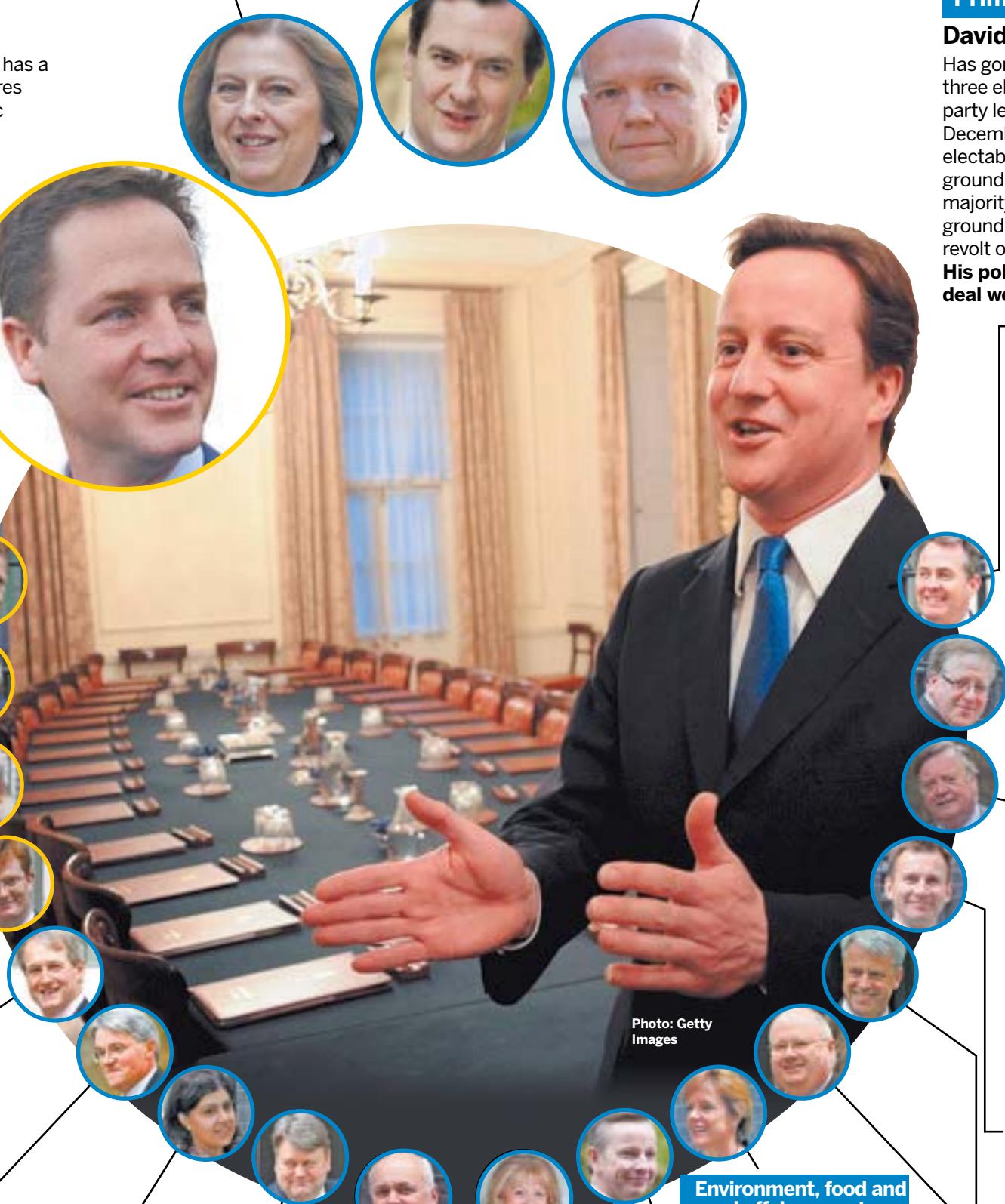
Transport secretary

Philip Hammond, 54

International development secretary

Andrew Mitchell, 54

A former minister under Margaret Thatcher with substantial City experience, one of his priorities will be to increase private sector involvement in overseas aid. **A moderate Eurosceptic, not expected to be a source of coalition tension**



Delicate team-building task seeks to offer reassurance to party sceptics

Appointments

By Jean Eagleham, Chief Political Correspondent

The new cabinet represents a delicate balancing act by David Cameron and Nick Clegg.

The two leaders have sought to reassure the Tory right and Liberal Democrat activist base while assembling a competent team that can work together.

The resulting line-up – 18 Tories and five Lib Dems, with only four of the 23 women – emerged slowly yesterday as MPs trooped in

the black front door of 10 Downing Street to be told their new jobs by Mr Cameron.

The Conservative leader handled the new appointments, including roles for his coalition allies, and will have the right to sack Mr Clegg's four Lib Dem cabinet colleagues.

The potential for policy ruptures within the coalition was immediately apparent with the decision to appoint a Lib Dem, Chris Huhne, as energy and climate change secretary.

Despite his power base in his party's centre left, he will be charged with build-

ing new nuclear power stations – a policy the Lib Dems have vociferously opposed.

The formulation adopted yesterday to try to bypass this ideological clash – allowing Lib Dem MPs to attack government policy and abstain from the Commons vote required to approve new power stations – may not prove adequate to protect Mr Huhne from accusations of political expediency.

Other Lib Dem posts appear to be a more comfortable fit for the party, although they will lock the Lib Dems into the looming

multibillion-pound spending cuts.

The choice of David Laws as chief secretary to the Treasury – dividing the two Number 11 cabinet jobs between the two parties – will make it impossible for the Lib Dems to avoid any political fallout from the finance minister.

The potential for policy ruptures within the coalition was immediately apparent

Vince Cable's new job as business secretary will have as its "core priority" the increasing of lending to small and medium-sized enterprises, officials said – a shared Lib Dem policy.

Mr Cameron has largely stuck by his pledge to avoid undue ministerial churn by keeping people in jobs at which they are experienced. It is a promise set to be tested by the pressures of government.

But the need to squeeze two front-bench teams into one cabinet has given the leadership duo the latitude to discard some people who

were out of political favour or simply seen as below-par performers.

Theresa Villiers, the former shadow transport secretary, is missing from the new cabinet. The demotion of Chris Grayling, perceived as a hapless shadow home secretary, was widely expected. But the decision to fill his Home Office post with Theresa May took Westminster by surprise.

Mrs May's promotion dashed the hopes of David Davis, who resigned as shadow home secretary to fight for civil liberties, that he would be recalled to the post.

However,

the Tory right has other champions in the new cabinet.

Iain Duncan Smith's appointment as work and pensions secretary completes the political rehabilitation from his disastrous spell as Tory leader that he has achieved through his work on poverty and welfare reform.

The decision to keep two leading Eurosceptics, William Hague and Liam Fox, in their foreign and defence roles respectively should also help to assuage fears on the party's right that the tie-up with the Lib Dems might presage concessions to Brussels.

New government

Coalition softens stance on banks

Finance sector

Measured approach to reforms indicated
Business secretary is fat cats' scourge

By Megan Murphy and Sharlene Goff

Bankers uneasy at the prospect of the relatively untested George Osborne becoming chancellor must have shuddered yesterday afternoon at the news that Vince Cable, chief scourge of City "fat cats", was taking up Lord Mandelson's mantle as business secretary.

The former Liberal Democrat spokesman for the Treasury has been one of the Square Mile's fiercest critics after the financial crisis, calling for a break-up of big banks such as Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland and virtual elimination of bankers' bonuses.

But the proposals for banking reform announced by the new coalition government appear to take a much more measured approach to the task of reshaping Britain's bloated banking sector.

Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have softened their stance on the issues that will have a lasting impact on Britain's competitiveness as an international financial centre: first, the imposition of some sort of levy on the banking industry, and, second, whether the big banks should be broken up.

While the coalition agreement paves the way for introduction of a bank tax, the lack of detail offered suggests a final proposal is likely to take into account the continuing international dialogue on the ideal form for any such levy.

That is good news for a sector that is desperate to avoid so-called regulatory arbitrage across different



Holding the keys to the Treasury: David Laws (left), the new chief secretary to the Treasury, with George Osborne, the incoming chancellor

Jobs recovery remains fragile, 'dire' data show

Unemployment

By Brian Groom, Business and Employment Editor

The new government was faced with stark evidence of the labour market's fragility yesterday after unemployment rose by 53,000 to 2.51m in the three months to March, the highest for more than 15 years.

In a gloomy set of figures, there were fewer people in work, an increase in redundancies, a fall in job vacancies, a rise in youth and long-term unemployment and a record number of economically inactive people.

The only bright spot was a fall of 27,100 last month in the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance to 1.52m, the lowest since April last year. The claimant count has now fallen in five of the past six months.

The figures are a problem for Iain Duncan Smith, the new work and pensions secretary, and show a jobs recovery has yet to begin, even though some economists think unemployment may be nearing its peak. They also suggest the jobless total is being held down by workers leaving the workforce or taking part-time jobs instead of full-time ones.

John Philpott, chief economist at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, said the figures were "dire" and a "sober reality check" for the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government, which faces the task of trying to stimulate growth while cutting the fiscal deficit.

Average weekly earnings, including bonuses, rose by 4 per cent compared with last year in the three months to March, up from 2.5 per cent in the three months to Feb-

ruary, as workers caught up from very low bonus levels in the depths of the recession.

Excluding bonuses, earnings were up by a more modest 1.9 per cent, up from 1.7 per cent, suggesting the underlying trend remained subdued.

Unemployment was 8 per cent of the workforce, up 0.2 points on the previous quarter, compared with 9.9 per cent in the US and 10 per cent in the eurozone.

Later, Mervyn King, the Bank of England governor, unveiled little-changed economic forecasts for the UK economy as he published the Bank's quarterly inflation report.

The main forecast for The figures are a problem for Iain Duncan Smith, the new work and pensions secretary

growth this year is still about 1.3 per cent – and 3.3 per cent in 2011 – as loose monetary policy, a global recovery and a weak pound all boost the economy in the coming quarters.

"The recovery is likely to gather pace over the next year," said Mr King.

But that forecast is mitigated by a greater risk of sub-par growth because of the rumbling crisis in the eurozone and because it does not take into account the Con-Lib coalition's plans for faster fiscal consolidation.

Inflation is now seen rising even more from its current rate of 3.4 per cent because oil prices have increased since the previous forecast and sterling has fallen further.

jurisdictions, with the UK's big groups disadvantaged compared with its European or US rivals, or vice versa.

On the potentially explosive issue of breaking up the banks, and forcing them to separate their riskier investment banking activities from their more pedestrian retail banking operations, there now appears to be much less urgency to the parties' manifesto pledges.

While both the Tories and the Lib Dems initially supported a full-scale break-up of the big universal banks, the coalition government has instead agreed to establish an independent commission, which will be given a year to investigate

how banks could be broken up in a "sustainable way".

Industry analysts have long warned that pressing ahead with a large restructuring of big diversified banks such as Barclays, HSBC and RBS without international agreement would carry significant risks for the industry.

"There is enormous tension between the interest in London having world-leading banks that can play in the international field versus all of the arguments for splitting casino banks from deposits takers," said Jonathan Herbst, head of financial services law at Norton Rose.

"It is difficult to believe a

Conservative-led government that wishes to be credible in the City and retain a thriving financial services sector would do this."

Perhaps more of a surprise was the unexpected

£2,000

Cash bonus limit apparently sacrificed by the Lib Dems

reprieve granted to the much-maligned Financial Services Authority, which the Tories had threatened to scrap as part of a radical overhaul of regulation.

By retaining the City watchdog while bringing forward proposals to give

the Bank of England full control of overall financial stability as well as greater oversight of day-to-day issues confronting individual banks, the coalition appears to have addressed one of the biggest criticisms of Labour's tripartite system of regulation: that there was no single body in charge of protecting the integrity of the system when the crisis unfolded.

Little detail was provided in the coalition agreement regarding a possible inquiry into competition in the retail banking sector – one of the Conservatives' core campaign pledges – or the party's plans to sell off stakes in the two part-nationalised banks, RBS and Lloyds Banking Group.

There is no question, however, that a new government with Mr Cable in a prominent role is still likely to hit bankers where it hurts most – in their wallets.

The Lib Dems may appear to have sacrificed their most extreme pledges on bonuses, such as limiting cash bonuses to £2,000, but the agreement retains ominous language on taking "robust action to tackle unacceptable bonuses".

There are likely to be far fewer champagne corks popping next bonus season.

Lombard, Page 18



but more about the future.

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business friendly BAHRAIN

New government

Air tax angst mars business delight

Protests from aviation industry

Employer groups positive on pact

By Pilita Clark and Brian Groom

Outcry over airline policy marred what was otherwise a warm welcome from business for the coalition deal between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, particularly its emphasis on accelerated reduction in the fiscal deficit.

The coalition's aircraft tax plans provoked protests in the aviation industry, while business groups criticised a ban on new runways at the country's three big-

gest airports: Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

Virgin Atlantic branded the tax "unworkable" while British Airways said there was no guarantee it would be used to benefit the environment.

FlyBe, one of the largest regional carriers, branded it "illogical" and unfair.

Business jet and air freight operators were critical of the government's adoption of the Lib Dems' pre-election pledge to replace air passenger duty with a "per-plane" duty, which the party said would ensure "pollution is properly taxed". Aircraft flown by these groups do not pay the existing air passenger duty.

"It's colossal from our

perspective," said Anne de Courcy, secretary-general of the Association of International Courier and Express Services, which represents air freight operators in the UK such as FedEx and DHL.

Business jet operators warned the move could have a heavy impact on UK corporate work. "It's always tempting to see this kind of aviation as toys for the rich," said Guy Lachlan, chief executive of the British Business and General Aviation Association. "But in fact it's an enabler for business, and if those enablers fly somewhere else the business migrates as well."

However, low-cost airlines such as EasyJet, which have modern, fuel-efficient

aircraft they aim to keep full at all times, welcomed the move. Abta, the travel trade association, also backed the shift.

Some tax experts predicted the change might not have as big an impact on passenger airlines as feared, but said there were questions about whether other Lib Dem election promises would also be implemented, such as a tax on short

'We welcome the emphasis on accelerated deficit reduction'

Richard Lambert
CBI director-general

domestic flights where a land-based alternative taking less than six hours was readily available.

Jim French, chief executive of FlyBe, said the new tax "will particularly hurt the regions, where aviation is already playing a vital role in dragging the UK out of recession".

London First, representing big business in the capital, said the government must come up with a "plan B" if it were ruling out expansion of London's three airports, and insisted high-speed rail was no substitute for international air links.

However, Paul Kehoe, chief executive of Birmingham airport, said scrapping proposals for Heathrow's third runway "will mean a

more equitable solution for the country as a whole, and more jobs and prosperity in the regions".

Overall, business response to the Con-Lib agreement was positive. "We welcome the emphasis on accelerated deficit reduction and also the idea that the emphasis should be on reduced spending rather than increased taxes," said Richard Lambert, director-general of the CBI employers' group.

UK bond markets strengthened, although sterling fell against the dollar as worries about growth in the quarterly inflation report undermined the currency.

Business fears on nuclear power plans were partly

assuaged, in spite of a clause allowing Lib Dem MPs to abstain on plans for new stations. Business leaders calculated the plans would be backed by Labour.

Miles Templeman, director-general of the Institute of Directors, said the commitment on deficit reduction was "just what the economy needs", but insisted this should mean the four-to-one ratio of cuts to tax rises proposed in the Tory manifesto.

The British Chambers of Commerce warned that Vince Cable, the business secretary, must ensure that reforms of the banking system "do not lead to an upheaval for businesses".

Additional reporting: Ed Crooks and David Oakley

Goodwill faces test as hedge fund law looms

Europe

By Joshua Chaffin in Brussels, Ben Hall in Paris and Quentin Peel in Berlin

European leaders publicly embraced David Cameron yesterday as France and Germany headed for a showdown with the prime minister over hedge fund legislation opposed by the City of London.

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, and Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, both joined a chorus of well-wishers following Mr Cameron's victory, expressing a desire to work closely with him in spite of his party's traditional hostility to the European Union.

But that early goodwill could be tested as soon as Tuesday, when European finance ministers are set to consider a draft directive that would require greater transparency from hedge funds and private equity groups. The directive is highly unpopular in the UK, home to 80 per cent of Europe's hedge funds.

Officials in Paris said that the French and German governments were determined to push the issue to a vote, which Britain is almost certain to lose.

"No one is giving any quarter to a new government," said one official.

Mr Sarkozy and Ms Merkel have in recent weeks vowed to step up their drive to tighten financial market regulation in Europe and clamp down on speculators. They are also keen to show that Paris and Berlin can work together following tensions over the Greek and eurozone rescue plans.

For Mr Cameron, repairing personal relations with the leaders of the EU's two biggest member states ranks as one of his most pressing European tasks. He alienated both following his decision last June to remove Tory MEPs from the European parliament's dominant group, the European People's party, to forge his own anti-federalist coalition.

Europe's fears about the new prime minister have been tempered by his subsequent promise to take a "pragmatic" approach to the EU as well, as his move to form a coalition with the ardently pro-European Liberal Democrats.

Under terms of the deal, the UK will not seek to join the euro, nor will it sign up to any fresh European treaty without a referendum.

At the same time, the incoming government will drop Mr Cameron's campaign promise to try to "repatriate" powers over social, employment and home affairs policy already ceded to Brussels.

The prevailing view in Brussels was that Mr Cameron's desire to remain prime minister would trump the demands of his party's most strident anti-European elements.

Change likely to spur flood of asset sales

Capital gains tax

By Vanessa Houlder, Matthew Vincent and Alice Ross

Private investors are expected to start selling shares and second homes in the coming days to escape an increase in capital gains tax that could come as early as next month.

Tax advisers said the rise for non-business assets from 18 per cent to rates "similar or close to those applied to income", as signalled by the Con-Lib coalition yesterday, was likely to be introduced at the start of the next tax year.

But it could be introduced immediately after the emergency Budget expected next month.

Investors would probably

18%

Current CGT rate for non-business assets

£1.9bn

Sum the Lib Dems say changes will raise

try to lock in gains at current tax rates, advisers said. "We are likely to see people scramble to take gains, prompting a rush of sales of second homes and share portfolios," said Ronnie Ludwig, a partner at chartered accountants Saffery Champness.

Jason Hollands, of fund manager F&C, predicted a flurry of investors" cashing

Key CGT facts

Non-business capital gains will be taxed "at rates similar or close to those applied to income", writes Vanessa Houlder.

This implies variable rates of up to 50 per cent, but it would mean taxing capital gains more heavily than income unless there had been a tax credit for the corporation tax already paid.

Entrepreneurial business activities will benefit from "generous exemptions".

This could involve a return to the pre-2008 taper relief system, which gave a preferential capital gains tax rate to business assets. It could mean the retention or extension of the existing entrepreneur's relief, under which a 10 per cent tax rate is applied to the first £2m of lifetime gains.

There have been no details about whether the capital gains tax allowance would be controversially reduced from £10,100 to £1,000, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, which critics say would create a big administrative burden.

Rathbones said it was revising private client portfolios to suggest taking profits and crystallising capital gains at the current rate, while Deloitte said it expected "lots of clients" to seek to lock in the gains by selling assets.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, an independent think-tank, said it was unclear whether the tax changes outlined in the coalition agreement would raise the £1.9bn a year claimed by the Liberal Democrats, because they made no mention of a cut in capital gains tax allowances or reintroducing indexation for inflation, which had been proposed in the manifesto. Bill Dodwell, of Deloitte, said the changes were unlikely to raise more than £1bn.

Advisers said the main revenue-raising impact of the capital gains tax rise might be on income tax, because the move would hinder tax-planning aimed at reclassifying income as capital. They warned that the Lib Dems' proposal to reduce to £1,000 the annual capital gains tax allowance – currently £10,100 – would increase Revenue & Customs' administrative burden by requiring many basic rate taxpayers who do not currently pay the tax to file returns.

Advisers expressed concern at how the business assets in line for "generous exemptions" would be defined. Mr Dodwell urged the government to extend them to include employees. "Employee tax breaks help to make a big contribution towards getting good people to take reasonable risks with growing businesses."

Chris Sanger, of Ernst & Young, said the government should consider allowing the existing entrepreneurs' relief, which taxes the first £2m of lifetime gains at 10 per cent, to apply to each investment rather than over a lifetime, to avoid damaging investment and encourage entrepreneurs to stay in Britain.

Bradley Phillips, of law firm Herbert Smith, said: "The proposals to broadly align the capital gains tax rates with income tax rates will be of real concern to entrepreneurs, other individuals and investors in funds. The key issue will be how 'business assets' are defined in the legislation."

Alex Thomas, head of tax at Denton Wilde Sapte, said entrepreneurs would be relieved that sales of business assets would be taxed at the higher rate, he warned.

But property entrepreneurs would be adversely affected because sales of property investment companies were likely to be taxed at the higher rate, he warned.

"It's another hit for an industry trying to get back on its feet," he said.

National council

By James Blitz, Defence and Diplomatic Editor

David Cameron has appointed Sir Peter Ricketts, a leading diplomat, as the government's national security adviser, a powerful post that will cover defence, foreign affairs and counter-terrorism issues.

On his first day in office, Mr Cameron announced the appointment of Sir Peter, the former permanent undersecretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He also convened the first meeting of what he is calling the national security council, a body that will meet regularly to take decisions on policy in Afghanistan and other military and diplomatic issues.

The appointment of the national security adviser is seen by Whitehall officials as a more significant move than the creation of the national security council. The NSC appears to be little different to a cabinet com-

focused on a few stray lines in Mr Obama's autobiography, *Dreams from My Father*, in which he depicts a snotty-nosed British schoolboy who he sat next to on a flight, or makes reference to British colonial officers in Kenya called the US president's Kenyan grandfather "boy".

Yet, shortly after Mr Cameron moved into Downing Street on Tuesday evening, Mr Obama telephoned the new prime minister with precisely the words he was seeking.

I reiterated my deep and personal commitment to the special relationship between our two countries – a bond that has endured for generations and across party lines," said the president in a statement.

Analysts point out Mr Obama is the first US president whose world view naturally looks across the

Pacific rather than the Atlantic – partly because he was born and brought up in the Pacific state of Hawaii. Many US conservative critics have argued that Mr Obama, who has shown great interest in dealing with the rise of the new great powers in the east, particularly China and India, has a tendency to "make nice" with America's enemies while abjuring traditional friends, such as the UK, Japan and Israel.

There is little evidence to justify such assertions.

Among the hyper-sensitive

'The media in its febrile way focuses way too much on personal chemistry'

UK diplomat

the main diplomatic issues. The appointment of Sir Peter was made as the Conservatives conceded a modest change to their position on the nuclear deterrent as part of their agreement with the Lib Dems.

The Conservatives have always been committed to a like-for-like replacement of the four submarines that would launch the Trident D5 missile and have said they would exclude any

of the US, however, the UK may be particularly alert to any suggestions it has been downgraded.

For example, the UK media focused on an alleged

snub when Mr Obama chose to return to the UK embassy a bust of Sir Winston Churchill, which had been sitting in the Oval Office since September 11 2001. White House officials insist Mr Obama had no such intention.

"I think there is a feeling in Europe, including Britain, that President Obama doesn't have much cultural affinity with Europe or any deep ties of affection," says Reginald Dale, a senior Europe fellow at the Center for International Strategic Studies in Washington.

There is little evidence to justify such assertions.

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China reaches out

Beijing deepens South Africa ties

Groups to invest in \$200m plant

Deal comes ahead of leaders' meeting

By Richard Lapper
in Johannesburg

China will today announce its largest investment in South Africa for two years, entrenching its position as the continent's most important economic and commercial partner.

The China Africa Development Fund and Jidong Development Group will help build a cement plant worth R1.5bn (£136m), the Financial Times has learnt. The announcement lays

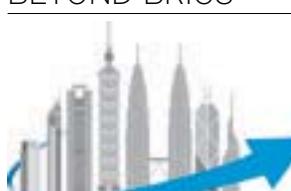
the ground for an August visit to Beijing by Jacob Zuma, South African president, who has made deepening economic and political ties with China a foreign policy priority.

China emerged as South Africa's largest trading partner last year, partly owing to a large rise in iron ore exports, mirroring a trend in other countries on the continent, which have been courted by Beijing for their resources and growing markets.

The latest agreement will see the two Chinese development groups working with Continental Cement, a local enterprise, and Women Investment Portfolio Holdings, a South Afri-

can company dedicated to empowering black women. They will build the plant in Gauteng province, outside Johannesburg.

The plant is designed to make up a recent shortfall of domestic building products, such as cement, much

Beyond BRICS


For more on the rise of emerging economies, go to www.ft.com/bb

of it caused by the infrastructure programme from construction for the football World Cup.

Congested roads and railways make it relatively costly for South Africa to import cement, so investment in local production is more attractive.

Stronger economic ties with China and other big emerging markets have paved the way for closer political ties, especially since Mr Zuma took over from former president Thabo Mbeki last May.

A \$5.5bn (£3.7bn) investment by Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in South Africa's Standard Bank, agreed in October 2007, remains by far the

largest Chinese investment in Africa to date, accounting for about a quarter of the funds Beijing has dedicated to the continent.

Much of that investment has concentrated on roads, power plants and other infrastructure, but analysts say more Chinese companies are beginning to buy building and other materials locally.

They are also eyeing Africa's fast-growing consumer markets.

For example, FAW, a Chinese carmaker, last month announced a \$100m investment in South Africa.

"Chinese companies are coming to the party," said Martyn Davies, chief executive of Frontier Advisory Services, a Johannesburg-based consultancy.

"They have a high level of confidence in the continent and see South Africa as a springboard for expansion elsewhere."

Mr Davies predicted that the China African Development Fund would probably provide the backing for much of this investment.

CADF, which eventually expects to have \$5bn available, established an office in South Africa in March last year.

"They have a lot more deals in the pipeline," Mr Davies said.

For more reports and analysis of the relationship: www.ft.com/chinafrica

The National Association of Realtors opposed the change on the grounds it would choke a housing market recovery. "Realtors are cognisant that lax underwriting standards brought us to this point, and must be curtailed," the trade association wrote to senators. "However, we caution that swinging the pendulum too far in the opposite direction may reverse our fragile recovery."

The US Senate is in the final stages of modifying the financial regulation bill, with a final vote expected

The amendment to require income documentation was passed with some Republican support

next week. Mr Merkley said there was "momentum building" for an amendment to prevent speculative behaviour by banks, which could come to a vote later this week.

"We need to make sure that when people go hog wild in high-risk investing they don't damage our economy," he said.

In other changes, the Federal Reserve won its attempt to retain supervision of small and medium-sized banks with an amendment to remove a provision that would have stripped its oversight of banks with less than \$50bn (£40bn, £34bn) in assets. Presidents of the regional Fed banks had lobbied heavily for the change.

Senators also rejected an amendment that would have changed a new rule that would force most over-the-counter derivatives to pass through clearing houses and to be traded on electronic exchanges.

Consumers in Asia start to open their wallets

News analysis

Rising domestic demand is driving the recovery but, asks Kevin Brown, is this a temporary phenomenon?

In a glamorous television advertisement made for the Chinese market, Lin Chiling, a Taiwanese supermodel, is shown delivering books to the rural poor in a swish Mercedes-Benz GLK.

The advert captures China's stark mix of urban sophistication and widespread poverty. But it also illustrates the emergence of the world's biggest exporter as a consumer.

Private consumption accounts for only 37 per cent of gross domestic product in China, compared with 71 per cent in the US before the world financial crisis, according to McKinsey Global Institute. But with Ms Lin's help, Mercedes more than doubled car sales in China in the first quarter, compared with a year ago.

The German car company is not alone. A 66 per cent imports surge in March led to China's first monthly trade deficit for six years.

Other Asian countries are also reporting big rises in domestic consumption. The Asian Development Bank says domestic demand has been behind a regional economic recovery that it expects to deliver 7.5 per cent growth this year.

Economists differ on whether this marks a shift from Asia's reliance on exports to the US and Europe, or just a temporary response to the depressed state of western demand.

David Carbon, chief economist of DBS, south-east Asia's biggest bank, says the increase in consumption is a long-term change, driven by a surge in sustainable and self-generating domestic demand on the back of economic growth.

"Two big misconceptions about Asia's recovery are

that it has been driven by inventories [restocking by businesses] and that consumption continues to lag [behind]," said Mr Carbon. "In fact, consumption has played the major role in Asia's recovery, both directly and indirectly via its impact on inventories."

The effect is most pronounced in China, where domestic demand increased \$180bn (£142bn, £122bn) in 2009, compared with about \$90bn in the US, according to DBS estimates.

The picture is similar in the rest of Asia, with private consumption in its 10 biggest nations, excluding Japan, more than 7 per cent above September 2008 levels.

"In sharp contrast to all the analysis claiming that Asia does not consume enough, it is buying up a storm," said Mr Carbon.

The ADB says it expects Asia's trade surplus to continue to narrow in the next two years, as US households save more – leading to a fall in consumption and lower demand for Asian exports. But Jong-Wah Lee, chief economist, says he is sceptical about the sustainability of Asian consumer demand once the benefit of emergency monetary and fiscal measures begins to dissipate.

According to ADB research, central banks in the 10 biggest Asian developing states slashed an average of 234 basis points from policy interest rates from the third

quarter of 2008 onwards, injecting massive liquidity into their economies.

Governments, meanwhile, introduced fiscal stimulus packages.

This "fiscal experiment" was important in stimulating domestic consumption, says Mr Lee. But it remains unclear whether it signals a decisive shift from the export model.

For this to happen, governments would have to make strategic efforts to cut Asia's high savings rates – the cause of low consumer spending – and find sustainable ways to stimulate private investment.

In some countries, there are signs of this happening. Xi Jinping, China's vice-president, said recently China "must develop the economy mainly by relying on the domestic market and attach great importance to

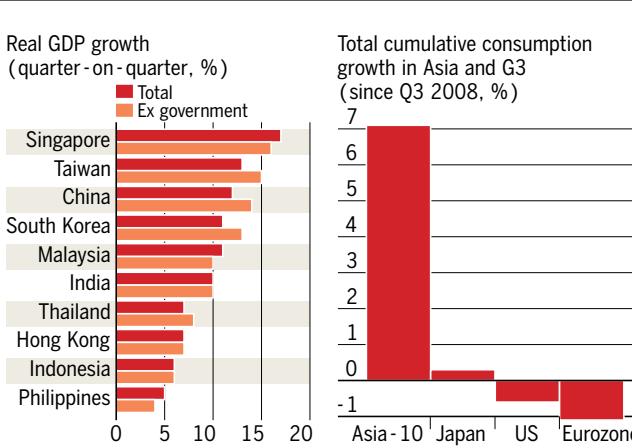
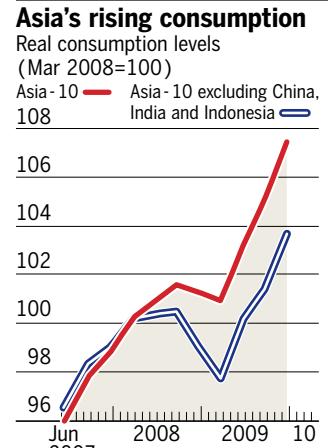
domestic demand, especially consumption demand".

Yukio Hatoyama, Japan's prime minister, has also set out a growth strategy shifting economic policy emphasis from output to welfare and new sources of domestic demand such as health services and tourism.

However, doubts about the extent of government commitment remain in both cases.

"The question is whether these structural issues have been handled appropriately by ... governments," said Mr Lee. "The answer is: not really. There are some temporary measures developed to mitigate the collapse in demand for exports, but I think once the crisis is over there is a risk they will go back to the old ways."

David Pilling, Page 13

Asia's rising consumption

Pressure increases on Thai protesters

By Tim Johnston
in Bangkok

The Thai military tightened the noose around thousands of anti-government protesters camped out in central Bangkok yesterday, building up checkpoints designed to prevent supplies and reinforcements reaching the demonstrators.

The government has been raising the pressure on the demonstrators to leave their sprawling encampment in the heart of Bangkok's commercial district since attempts to reach a negotiated agreement stalled this week.

"If the protest does not end, we have to fully enforce the law, which may involve using force to reclaim the area," said

Colonel Sansern Kaewkamnerd, the army spokesman.

The protesters rejected the ultimatum, saying they would remain behind their stockades of tyres and sharpened bamboo staves until the government bowed to their demands.

The military has threatened to cut off water and electricity, although it appeared to back away from this last night.

The increased tension has

If the protest does not end, we have to fully enforce the law, which may involve using force

dented hopes that the eight-week protest, which has led to 29 deaths and paralysed Bangkok's shopping and hotel district, might be drawing to an end.

Abhisit Vejjajiva, the prime minister, last week went some way towards meeting protesters' demand for his immediate resignation by offering to hold a general election on November 14, more than a year before his mandate ends.

Although it initially welcomed the offer, the amorphous leadership of the protesters seems to have sunk into confusion, issuing a cascade of "final" demands and qualifications that have fed suspicion among some analysts that hardliners among the leadership are seeking confrontation.

Korbsak Sabhavasu, the secretary-general of the prime minister's office, said yesterday that Mr Abhisit had withdrawn his election offer, but Panitan Wattanayagorn, Mr Abhisit's spokesman, declined to confirm the claim.

However, Mr Panitan did say that the sooner the protesters joined the prime minister's reconciliation plan, the sooner elections could be held.

Denying the protesters the ability to resupply themselves will increase the hardship in the camp, but is likely to compound disruption to traffic and business in the city.

It is not clear how much difference it would make should the army cut off water and power.

US Senate eyes ban on housing 'liar loans'

By Tom Braithwaite
in Washington

The US Senate yesterday approved an amendment to ban "liar loans", mortgages that allowed borrowers to overstate their incomes, as debate on the financial regulation bill targeted one of the causes of the crisis.

Mr Davies predicted that the China African Development Fund would probably provide the backing for much of this investment.

CADF, which eventually expects to have \$5bn available, established an office in South Africa in March last year.

"They have a lot more deals in the pipeline," Mr Davies said.

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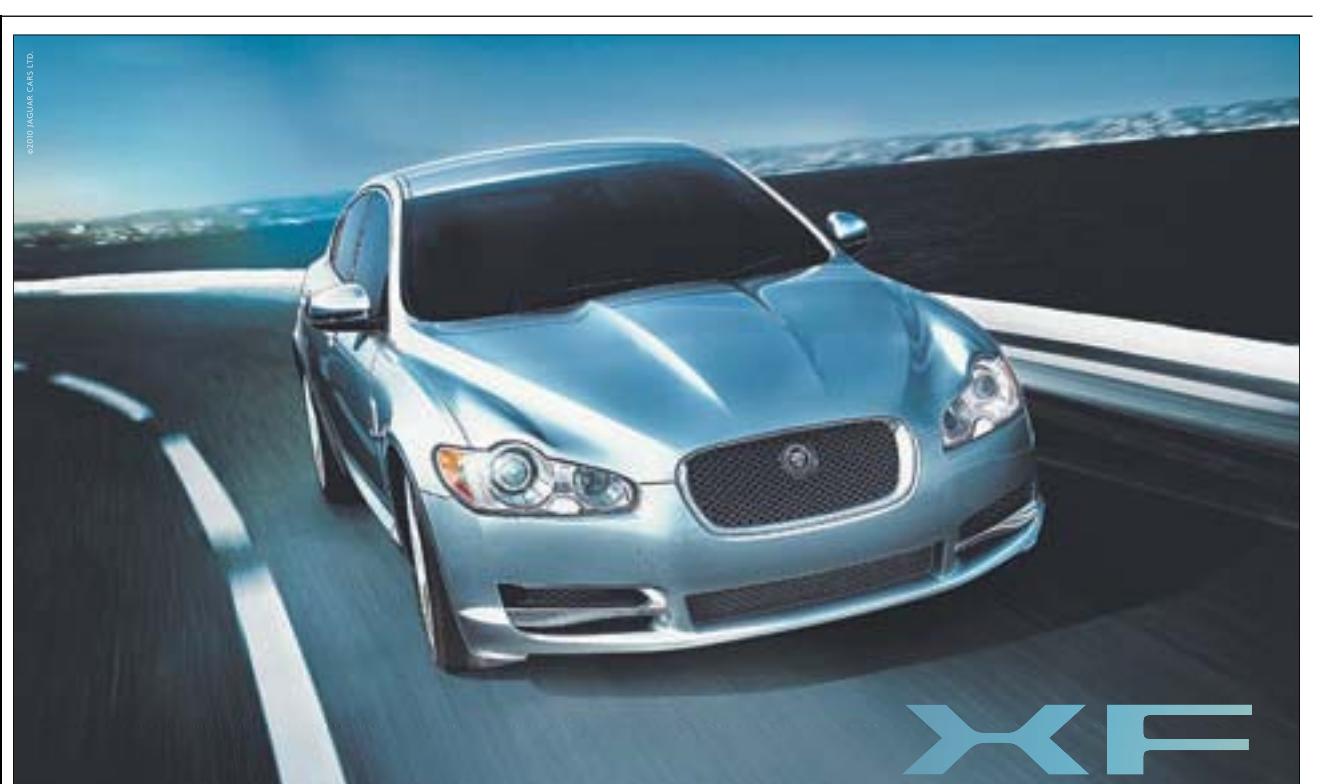
"We need to make sure that when people go hog wild in high-risk investing they don't damage our economy," he said.

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Senators also rejected an amendment that would have changed a new rule that would force most over-the-counter derivatives to pass through clearing houses and to be traded on electronic exchanges.



Reuters



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Eurozone debt crisis

Backlash stirs in Frankfurt



A banner in Athens reading 'Stop them!' pictures, from right, Jean-Claude Trichet, ECB chief, Germany's Angela Merkel, and Greece's George Papandreou and George Papaconstantinou epa

The ECB

As Trichet nears his final year, German alarm over bank's action is widening EU divisions, writes Ralph Atkins

Germans are clear about the job of a central banker: to fight inflation, and nothing else. So the backlash in Europe's largest economy against the European Central Bank's decision this week to buy government bonds as part of a eurozone rescue plan has been severe.

Capturing the national alarm, Tuesday evening's ZDF news showed film of Germany during the hyper-inflation of the 1920s, and interviews with Germans convinced that prices will

soar again soon. And their fears appeared to have official backing.

Axel Weber, the Bundesbank president, has taken the rare step of criticising publicly a decision by the ECB's 22-strong governing council, on which he sits. Buying government bonds posed "significant" risks to price-stability policies, Mr Weber told the Börsen Zeitung newspaper on Tuesday.

The German reaction shows that these are revolutionary times in Frankfurt, the ECB's home town. The bank's actions this week have not only altered its relationship with the German public. They have also widened the divisions in the contest to succeed Jean-Claude Trichet, ECB president, whose non-renewable eight-year term ends in October next year.

With the race informally under way, Mr Weber – backed strongly by Angela Merkel, German chancellor – had appeared the frontrunner. But his comments are likely to have alienated Paris. Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, argued forcefully for bold ECB intervention at the Brussels eurozone leaders' summit at the weekend. Support could build in France and other eurozone countries for Mario Draghi, Italy's central bank governor, and Mr Weber's rival for the ECB presidency.

What is certain is that the German backlash presages a bumpy final year in office for Mr Trichet. On ZDF, he explained how intervention in government bond markets was restoring their proper functioning after investor panic levels last Friday approached those seen after the collapse of Lehman Brothers in late 2008. The ECB's focus on price stability was undiminished, Mr Trichet insisted.

But no amount of French charm could hide the scale of the ECB's policy U-turn. In the past, it has fiercely resisted any move that risks its independence by blurring fiscal and monetary policies. Only last Thursday, Mr Trichet said ECB purchases of government bonds had not been discussed by the governing council.

The conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung described the turnaround – announced at 3.15am on Monday after a late-night meeting of European finance ministers – as the

Eurozone gross domestic product expanded by just 0.2 per cent compared with the previous three months, said Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office. Germany surprised by also reporting a 0.2 per cent increase, in spite of fears the exceptionally cold weather had stalled its recovery. Italy's economy also fared better than expected, expanding by 0.5 per cent. But France and Spain reported rises of only 0.1 per cent – although that at least marked the end of Spain's recession. Greece's economy contracted by 0.8 per cent – the

"Americanisation of monetary policy". Mr Trichet would prefer to describe it as confirming the ECB's ability to react swiftly.

After becoming ECB president in November 2003, Mr Trichet, a former Banque de France governor, cultivated a reputation for Bundesbank-style conservatism and independence.

The ECB's actions became highly predictable.

The past few weeks have highlighted Mr Trichet's passionate support for the

That image changed on August 9 2007. Spotting the severity of erupting financial market tensions before other global authorities did, the ECB pumped €95bn in emergency overnight funds into the financial system. The move revealed another side of Mr Trichet – crisis manager.

The ECB's actions have

highlighted Mr Trichet's

passionate support for the

European project – economic integration – and for better economic management of Europe's 11-year-old monetary union. Back in the late 1980s, when preparations for the euro's launch picked up and Mr Trichet was at the French Treasury, the country's civil servants believed strongly in public action – a trait that may have resurfaced at the ECB.

If there is an existential

crisis, he is willing to accept the primacy of the political will as being stronger than the sheer technocratic will of an independent, non-elected central bank," says David Marsh, author of *The Euro*, a history of the currency.

The ECB's actions nevertheless entail risks. It has promised that government bond purchases would be "sterilised" by operations to remove inflation risks. "We are not running money printing presses," Mr Trichet told French radio yesterday. But details have yet to be announced. Nor in the rush of decision-making has the ECB decided what details it will publish of the programme.

The ECB's hard-won credibility will be at stake if the eurozone crisis flares up again or if its actions have to be stepped up once more. Germans will watch carefully for any slip.

For the full story,

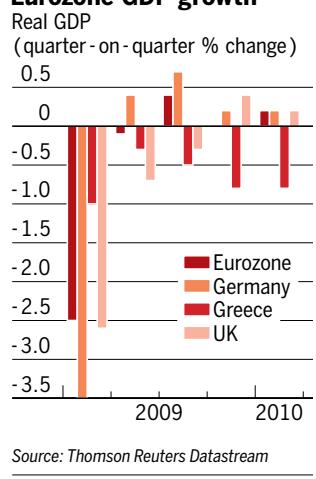
www.ft.com/europe

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European power, Page 13

www.ft.com/lex

Eurozone GDP growth



Axel Weber:
sees risks to
ECB inflation
policy

Bitter winter chills output

The eurozone managed only modest economic growth in the first quarter this year, with Germany's performance held back by the bitter winter, failing to drive a wider recovery in the 16-country region, writes Ralph Atkins in Frankfurt.

Eurozone gross domestic product expanded by just 0.2 per cent compared with the previous three months, said Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office. Germany surprised by also reporting a 0.2 per cent increase, in spite of fears the exceptionally cold weather had stalled its recovery. Italy's economy also fared better than expected, expanding by 0.5 per cent. But France and Spain reported rises of only 0.1 per cent – although that at least marked the end of Spain's recession. Greece's economy contracted by 0.8 per cent – the

same pace as at the end of 2009, suggesting its recession remained intense.

The data highlight how Europe's largest economies are struggling after the worst downturn since the second world war, with prospects clouded by the crisis over public finances and dependent on growth elsewhere in the world. In contrast, the US reported a 0.8 per cent rise in first-quarter GDP.

"The eurozone is being left behind by the US, which is experiencing a strong V-shaped recovery," said Nick Kounis, an economist at Fortis Bank in Amsterdam. The US fiscal stimulus would be bigger this year than in 2009 but aggressive controls on public finances as a result of the Greek crisis would hit eurozone growth, he said.

The ECB's hard-won credibility will be at stake if the eurozone crisis flares up again or if its actions have to be stepped up once more. Germans will watch carefully for any slip.

For the full story,

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European power, Page 13

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Contracts & Tenders

HELENNIC PETROLEUM
INVITATION

OF THE SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMPANY
HELENNIC PETROLEUM SA
(S.A.REG. No. 2443/06/B/86/23)
TO THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
(FISCAL YEAR 1.1.2009-31.12.2009)

Pursuant to the Law and the company's Articles of Association and, following the Board of Directors' decision no 1150 taken during its meeting as of 27.4.2009, the Shareholders of the Societe Anonyme under the name HELLENIC PETROLEUM SA are invited to attend the company's Annual Ordinary General Shareholders Meeting to be held at 89-93, Syggrou Avenue, "INTERCONTINENTAL" Hotel on Wednesday 2nd of June 2010, at 12.00 am in order to discuss and decide upon the following items of the Agenda:

- Management review of the 34th corporate fiscal year (1.1.2009 - 31.12.2009) and submission of the Board of Directors' management report as well as the Certified Auditors' report for the annual financial statements in accordance with the international accounting standards, for fiscal year 2009, including the Group's consolidated financial statements.
- Approval of the company's financial statements and the Group's consolidated financial statements, in accordance with the international accounting standards, the relevant reports for fiscal year 2009.
- Profit allocation approval.
- Release of the Board of Directors members and Auditors from any liability for compensation for fiscal year 2009, pursuant to article 35 of Codified Law 2190/1920.
- Approval of paid compensation and fees to the members of the Board of Directors for 2009 and determination of corresponding remuneration and fees for 2010.
- Approval of fees to the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Managing Director for 2009 and determination of their fees for 2010.
- Appointment of Certified Auditors for fiscal year 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the company's Corporate Charter and determination of their fees.
- Approval of a BoD decision regarding non-granting stock options for 2010 pursuant to article 2 of the applicable Plan.
- Extension/amendment of the applicable stock option plan of HELLENIC PETROLEUM S.A., pursuant to article 13, par. 9 of Codified Law 2190/1920, as applicable.
- Approval for blocking and non-distributing of taxed reserves of an amount of 8,610,751.84 euro, which pertain to covering own participation, pursuant to the provisions of Development Law 3299/2004, for subsidizing a company project.
- Modification of Article 2, par. 1 of the Company's Articles of Association - change of the company's registered seat.

Shareholders who have had their shares dematerialized in accordance with the Law are entitled to participate in the General Meeting.

Shareholders entitled according to the above and wishing to participate in the aforementioned General Meeting shall be required:

- If their shares are not registered in the Discretionary Account kept in Hellenic Exchanges SA (HELEX), to make a statement that they block all or part of their shares, via their operator, and receive the relevant blocking certificate, which must be deposited together with any representation documents at the company's Registry (199 Kifissias Ave., Maroussi) at least five (5) days before the date set for the General Meeting, i.e. by 28.5.2010.

- If their shares are held in the Special Account maintained with Hellenic Exchange S.A., to pledge all or a part of their shares and receive from HELEX (110 Athinon Avenue) the related certificate of pledged shares, which they must submit, together with any representation documents to the company's Shareholders Department (199 Kifissias Avenue, Maroussi) at least five (5) days before the General Meeting, namely by 28.5.2010.

The company's Shareholders' Department offices (tel: 210 - 8767.860, 8767.862, 8767.863, 8767.864, 8767.865 - Fax: 210 - 8767.993, 210 - 8767.994) will be open daily from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm.

Athens, 27 April 2010
By order of the Board of Directors

AN. GIANNITIS
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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3	Video Surveillance Race Track Camera	10	Fault Indication System
4	Digital Video Storage	11	VOIP (Telecommunication System)
5	Media Distribution System	12	Data Network
6	Signaling & Digi Flags	13	Martial Intercom
7	Info Displays (Out-door LED Video Walls)	14	Technical furniture
		15	Cabling & Installation
		16	Radio Communication
		17	Public Surveillance & Access Control

JPSK Sports Pvt. Ltd. invites Expression of Interest from capable, experienced and financially sound parties having executed similar works as main contractor on any of the motor racing track across the world in recent past. Details of such projects carried out, works presently in hand, skilled manpower establishment details, etc and balance sheet for last 3 years should be sent with the expression of interest.

Expression of interest should be sent in the name of Mr. Boris Lazaric, COO, within 10 (ten) days from the date of this publication at the following address:

JPSK SPORTS
PRIVATE LIMITED

Sector-128, Noida - 201 304, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.), India

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History has warned about slippery slope of monetisation



Wolfgang Münchau

The total amount of central bank money should be thus unaffected. However, we should not for a minute be fooled into thinking that such sterilisation is really neutral. If the ECB buys Greek bonds, which it did last week, and if, as seems likely, Greece will eventually default on part of its obligations, the ECB will take a very large loss.

This shortfall would either have to be financed through fiscal measures – a big increase in the debt of the ECB's shareholders, notably Germany – or through the printing presses.

Most likely is some combination of the two, but that would mean inflationary pressures are likely to increase. The history of monetary unions has taught us that once you get on to the slippery slope of debt monetisation the monetary union is starting to unravel. Remember the hostile German reaction to what was then a puny

We should not be fooled for a minute that the ECB's bond purchases can be neutral

€5bn (\$6.4bn, £4.3bn) package of loan guarantees to Greece? Imagine what would happen if the German taxpayer had to bail out the ECB. While it is not very common, central banks can indeed go bust. Or, imagine what would happen if inflation were to go up. Very quickly, pressure would grow inside Germany for them to leave the eurozone.

In view of this risk, my sense is that the ECB will be even more vigilant about inflationary pressures than usual. Like so many observers, I was a little surprised last Thursday to hear Jean-Claude Trichet, president of the ECB, talk about rising commodity prices as a potential threat to price stability. Surely he did not indicate an imminent shift in ECB monetary policy; or did he?

I would not be surprised if the ECB's badly bruised governing council were to conclude that the blend of a strong recovery, rising commodity prices and a weakening euro would indeed justify a rate rise, not now, but perhaps much earlier than the consensus presently believes to be the case.

And the more people believe monetisation of debt leads to inflation, the earlier that moment may arrive.

Portugal has strongest EU growth

Portugal recorded the strongest economic growth in the European Union in the first quarter of this year, lifting the prospects of recovery in a country struggling to control gaping public deficits, writes Peter Wise in Lisbon.

Gross domestic product expanded by 1 per cent compared with the previous three months, the National Institute of Statistics reported. It was Portugal's highest quarterly growth since 2005 and compared with an EU average of 0.2 per cent this year.

Eurozone debt crisis

Spain deepens its austerity drive

Surprise 5% cut in civil service pay

Obama urges 'resolute action'

By Victor Mallet in Madrid

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Spain's prime minister, angered his trade union allies but cheered financial markets yesterday when he announced a surprise 5 per cent cut in civil service pay to accelerate cuts to the country's budget deficit.

The new austerity drive – echoing moves by Ireland and Greece – followed intense pressure from Spain's European neighbours, the International Monetary Fund and the US for budget cuts to raise the credibility of a €750bn emergency plan to shore up the eurozone.

President Barack Obama had urged Mr Zapatero in a telephone call on Tuesday to take "resolute action".

In what he acknowledged was one of the hardest speeches of his life, Mr Zapatero told parliament how Spain planned to reduce its deficit by an extra 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product this year and 1 per cent of GDP in 2011, a total of €15bn.

The new measures should help bring the deficit down from 11.2 per cent of GDP in 2009 to just over 6 per cent of GDP in 2011.

His decision to cut civil service salaries by 5 per cent from June, and then freeze them next year, underlined the seriousness of the challenge facing Spain.

Analysts had said that such a move would be anathema to Mr Zapatero and his Socialist party. Ministers will take a 15 per cent pay cut.

Other measures included a €6bn cut in public sector investment, €1.2bn in savings by regional and local governments, a pension payments freeze, abolition of a €2,500 child birth allowance from next year, a



Serious measures: José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero addresses the Spanish parliament yesterday in one of the hardest speeches of his life

Brussels sets out tough rules to crack whip on borrowing

Measures

By Tony Barber in Brussels

The European Commission yesterday proposed tougher rules to enforce fiscal discipline in the eurozone and a permanent crisis management mechanism to prevent sovereign debt disasters.

The initiatives, if approved by national governments, would represent the most significant advance in eurozone economic governance since the euro's launch in 1999.

They were prompted by a debt crisis that erupted last October in Greece, spread across world financial markets and resulted on Monday in the creation of an emergency €750bn facility to protect eurozone governments in severe difficulties.

José Manuel Barroso, the Commission president, said: "We must show we are serious about the more fundamental reforms that are needed. We must now get to the root of the problem."

The €750bn facility is designed to last only three years, and Mr Barroso said the latest initiatives showed that the EU was moving beyond ad hoc solutions to the euro area's problems.

Among the key proposals is the idea that national governments assess each other's annual budgets in greater detail and much earlier. They would lack the power to force a country to rewrite its budget but could exert pressure to make assumptions about growth, inflation and interest rates as realistic as possible.

The stability and growth pact would be tightened so that countries failing to put their budgets in balance or

surplus when growth is healthy would have to place interest-bearing deposits with the Commission.

More emphasis would be placed on public debt. For example, any country with a debt of about 100 per cent of gross domestic product would be told to keep its annual budget deficit so far below 3 per cent of GDP that it produced a steady reduction in the debt level.

Greece and Italy have debts far above 100 per cent of GDP, and the 16-nation eurozone's average debt is expected to hit 88.5 per cent next year.

Olli Rehn, the EU's monetary affairs commissioner, acknowledged that the pact, drawn up at German insistence in the mid-1990s, had fallen short of expectations. "Peer pressure lacked teeth. Good times were not used for reducing debt," he said. However, the Commission opposed the idea, floated by Germany, of changing EU treaty law to permit the expulsion of countries that violate fiscal rules persistently.

The Commission's proposed mechanism would build on the emergency arrangements set up last weekend by including a provision that no country could draw loans from its partners unless it committed itself to cleaning up its public finances.

Details of the mechanism remain to be fleshed out, but Mr Rehn said it would be a "last-resort mechanism of... loans, with interest rates that would be so unattractive that no one would want to use it voluntarily".

The lesson from Greece was that "it's better to be safe than sorry and prepare for worst-case scenarios".

Asia jittery over western woes

Global impact

By Kevin Brown in Singapore and Geoff Dyer in Beijing

The European Union made a rare appearance on Asia's front pages this week, grabbing the headlines with its €750bn bail-out fund for Greece and other debt-burdened eurozone countries.

The sudden surge of interest did not last long – the story was back on the inside pages the following day, competing for space with Asia's dramatic economic recovery, forecast by the Asian Development Bank to deliver growth of 7.5 per cent this year.

Yet there are real grounds for concern about the impact of the European crisis in the region, especially if uncertainty is prolonged. Most dramatically, it could delay the expected revaluation of China's currency, the renminbi, against the US dollar.

There had been speculation that Beijing was on the verge of acting, but the crisis has given support to the commerce ministry and other parts of the government that oppose an appreciation because of its possible impact on exports.

Qian Wang, an economist at JPMorgan, says the

revaluation is likely to happen eventually. But the crisis in Europe "may cause the Chinese policymakers to wait a bit and watch for clearer signs of the fallout on the global economy".

There are concerns, too, about the impact on Asian exports to Europe. Sheng Laiyun, spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics, admitted on Tuesday the Greek crisis would hit exports, although the extent of the impact was unclear.

Suzlon Energy, India's largest wind-turbine maker, said yesterday that buyers in Europe were postponing orders because of the impact of the debt crisis on fundraising for renewable energy projects.

Asian monetary policy may already have been affected. The Bank of Korea yesterday held its base rate at 2 per cent, even though Kim Choong-soo, the governor, said the country's output gap had "almost closed" and forecast upward price pressures in the second half of the year.

This suggested that rates might have gone up but for the governor's observation that "downside risks are emerging" from Europe.

Malaysia's central bank, which meets today, may provide a further indication of how central bankers are viewing events.



Incheon in Korea: exporters fear hit in European markets

The crisis may also be having an impact on government fundraising.

Indonesia this week trimmed a planned bond issue from \$750m (£590m, £505m) to \$500m, suggesting that market volatility was the cause. Investors are carefully monitoring other planned sovereign issues, including a M\$3bn (\$935m, €734m, €627m) offer from Malaysia expected next month.

Officials are apt to dismiss suggestions that these could be harbingers of wider problems, arguing that the region will be protected by its enormous foreign currency reserves and substantial current account surpluses, combined with its generally low direct expo-

sure to southern Europe.

Amando Tetangco, governor of the Philippine central bank, told the Financial Times that Asian nations had learnt the lessons of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, setting up mechanisms such as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation agreement, a \$120bn network of bilateral currency swap deals.

Yang-Ming Hong, credit analyst at Nomura in Hong Kong, says one risk factor is the potential withdrawal of \$1,800bn of interbank claims held by European banks. Mr Hong says he thinks Asian banks have enough liquidity to offset such fund flows, pointing out that the system withstood the withdrawal of close to \$600bn by European banks in the two quarters to March 2009.

However, Viktor Hjort, credit analyst at Morgan Stanley in Hong Kong, has warned investors to steer clear of senior debt from Korean banks.

The bottom line for Asia is that rapid growth is not a complete defence against contagion. As Wayne Swan, Australia's treasurer, put it this week: "Greece is a really stunning reminder there are still risks in the global economy."

Additional reporting by Roel Landen and Peter Smith

Estonia set to join embattled currency

Monetary union

By Andrew Ward in Stockholm, Tony Barber in Brussels and Ralph Atkins in Frankfurt

Provisional approval for Estonia to enter the eurozone in 2011 was given yesterday, signalling a commitment to further expansion of the single currency in spite of the sovereign debt crisis roiling Europe.

The European Commission said Estonia, a former Soviet state of 1.4m people, was ready to become the 17th member of the currency bloc after fulfilling the Maastricht criteria for joining the euro.

Olli Rehn, the European Union commissioner for economic and monetary

affairs, said: "Estonia has achieved a high degree of sustainable economic convergence and is ready to adopt the euro on January 1 2011." The country's application, which needs final approval from the European Council this summer, is viewed as a test of the EU's appetite to expand the eurozone deeper into the former communist countries of central and eastern Europe.

There had been speculation Estonia's entry could be delayed as the EU battles to prevent the Greek debt crisis from spilling into other eurozone countries.

José Manuel Barroso, European Commission president, said the decision to admit Estonia "shows confidence in the future of the euro". He said: "Let's remember, nobody wants to

leave the euro. Others are seeking to join."

Estonia, which joined the EU in 2004, was the only country attempting to enter the euro next year. The Commission said other candidates – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Sweden – had made "uneven progress" towards convergence.

Mr Barroso said the approval for Estonia was based on objective economic criteria, not "political circumstances or other considerations". Mr Rehn said the country's exceptionally low level of public debt and its exchange rate stability over many years had been key factors in the Commission's decision.

But the ruling was tem-

pered by a more sceptical assessment of Estonia's readiness from the European Central Bank.

The ECB expressed "concerns regarding the sustainability of inflation convergence", warning that inflationary pressures could rise as the country's economy caught up with more affluent eurozone members.

Current low rates reflected temporary factors, it said.

The ECB does not make formal recommendations on whether countries should join the eurozone, but often sees its job as to warn of possible dangers.

Andrus Ansip, Estonian prime minister, told the Financial Times recently that euro membership would promote trade and increase financial stability.



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World news

Ex-Glitnir investor faces \$2bn action

Conspiracy alleged against shareholder

PwC accused of 'facilitating' fraud

By Andrew Ward
in Stockholm

One of the main figures behind Iceland's banking boom and bust has been hit by a \$2bn (£1.6bn, £1.3bn) US lawsuit that accuses him of a "sweeping conspiracy" that contributed to the collapse of Glitnir bank.

Jon Asgeir Johannesson, the former top shareholder in Glitnir and once a big

investor in the UK retail sector, is alleged in the lawsuit to have conspired with associates to "fraudulently drain over \$2bn out of the bank to fill their pockets and prop up their own failing companies".

The lawsuit, filed in New York by the winding-up board overseeing Glitnir's liquidation on behalf of creditors, also targets PwC, the bank's former accountant, for "facilitating" the fraud by overlooking "clear" violations of Icelandic law and bank policies.

"There is evidence supporting the allegation that Glitnir bank was robbed from the inside," said Steinnunn Guobjartsdottir, who chairs the Glitnir winding-up board.

Mr Johannesson has denied the allegations. "It's just politics," he told Bloomberg. "I have full proof that we were repaying loans that were maturing 20 to 40 days later. This was just the refinancing of older loans."

PwC said it stood by the opinions it gave on Glitnir's accounts "based on information and data the accountants had access to at that time".

The lawsuit adds to pressure on the so-called Viking

Raiders who controlled Iceland's three main banks – Glitnir, Kaupthing and Landsbanki – and a range of high-profile foreign assets until their empires crumbled in October 2008.

Icelandic authorities last week arrested Hreidar Mar Sigurdsson, former chief

executive of Kaupthing, on suspicion of offences including embezzlement, falsifying documents and stock and bond trading violations, in the most high-profile move so far by prosecutors investigating possible wrongdoing in Iceland's banks. An arrest warrant was this week issued for Sigríður Einarsson, Kaupthing's former chairman, and circulated by Interpol.

Glitnir said its lawsuit was based on a year-long probe by Kroll, the corporate intelligence company. It has passed on its findings to Icelandic prosecutors.

The lawsuit was filed in the Supreme Court of New York state, where Glitnir said many of its creditors were based. Central to the case is a \$1bn bond issue in 2007 in which US investors were allegedly misled over Glitnir's financial exposures.

Simultaneous legal actions were launched in the UK and Iceland, including a freezing order from the High Court in London against Mr Johannesson's worldwide assets. He had 48 hours to provide an exhaustive list of his assets or risk jail, Glitnir said.

Mr Johannesson was founder of the defunct Bau-

gur investment group, which once controlled parts of the UK retail sector including Hamleys toy store and the Iceland frozen food chain. He remains a non-executive director of House of Fraser, the clothes retailer, and is believed to be based in the UK.

The lawsuit claimed Mr Johannesson rode roughshod over Glitnir's risk control policies and filled the board with "willing accomplices".

The fraud occurred at the "worst possible time" by leaving the bank "heavily exposed to the global credit crunch".

Climate bill faces rough ride in Senate

By Anna Fifield and Kevin Sieff in Washington

A draft bill setting out sharp cuts in US greenhouse gas emissions was unveiled in the Senate yesterday, offering new incentives for nuclear power and offshore drilling at a time when the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico makes support for oil exploration politically difficult.

The draft, however, includes several new protections against spills, including one that allows states to veto drilling plans up to 75 miles from their shores or if they stand to suffer significant adverse impacts in the event of an accident.

The bill, presented by John Kerry, a Democrat, and Joe Lieberman, independent, aims to cut emissions by 17 per cent by 2020 and 83 per cent by 2050.

But Lindsey Graham, the Republican senator from South Carolina who had given a bipartisan sheen to the legislative effort, was conspicuously absent following a dispute about legislative priorities.

Mr Kerry remained optimistic the bill could pass. "This is a bill for energy independence after a devastating oil spill – a bill to hold polluters accountable, a bill for billions of dollars to create the next generation of jobs, and a bill to end America's addiction to foreign oil," he said.

The bill will face a difficult passage through the Senate, where it will require the support of some Republicans to make up for the anticipated opposition from Democrats from industrial or agricultural states opposed to what they see as a tax on local businesses.

The bill will need 60 votes to overcome any filibuster – the Democrats have 59.

The legislation creates a cap-and-trade system for power plants, and for large industrial facilities at a later date, but it does not cover transport emissions.

It also contains incentives for energy companies seeking to build nuclear plants, including \$54bn in loan guarantees for new plants. Several Republicans support nuclear power as an alternative energy source.

Climate change had been one of the top priorities of President Barack Obama's administration in its first year, but the legislation has stalled due to the difficult domestic environment and the lack of progress on the world stage. But Gary Locke, commerce secretary, will travel with 29 US energy companies to China and Indonesia next week in an effort to break into clean energy industries in Asia.

"Innovative companies like these, bringing emerging technologies to a dynamic new market, are going to play a big role in meeting President Obama's ambitious goals," Mr Locke said yesterday.

For more on climate change: www.ft.com/climate

Designer of clean-up ship rues missed opportunity

Oil spill

By Harvey Morris
in New Iberia, Louisiana

A project to build a rapid-response "oil spill battleship" that could have helped clean up the Deepwater Horizon leak was presented to US politicians and oil companies 20 years ago but rejected on cost grounds, according to the man who designed it.

Herman J Schellstede is an oil man's oil man. He assigns no blame for the potential pollution disaster threatening four US states. He says BP, which leased the rig, is "a first-class oil company" and Transocean, which built it, is among the best in the world.

He also has no truck with "those people in Washington who say 'stop drilling'". He added: "There's a lot of history here in the Gulf. You don't just eradicate it because BP had a bad day."

However, Mr Schellstede, 72, believes the industry and the inhabitants of the Gulf of Mexico coast would be facing less of a crisis today if the oil companies had taken him up on a proposal he believes would have limited the impact of a

deepwater blowout. As head of Herman J Schellstede and Associates, which he founded in the 1960s in the Louisiana town of New Iberia, he was called in after the Exxon Valdez spilled 10m gallons of crude off the Alaskan coast in 1989 in what was one of the biggest oil pollution disasters.

Mr Schellstede's task was to devise systems for incinerating oil-polluted waste. "I saw how inept we were at that time. I've never seen anything like it. They had housewives scooping up oil from small boats."

The Alaska disaster persuaded him and his design team to turn their attention to the problem of pollution from a deepwater leak, at a time when deepwater drilling was still in its infancy.

They drew up a plan and a prototype for a 275ft by 217ft, 33-storey-high vessel that could be deployed to a spill site within 18 hours, encircle the slick with 20ft-high booms as used in the turbulent North Sea, sweep and clean 20,000 barrels of oil every 24 hours via three circular sweepers 40ft in diameter, return the water to the sea and transfer the salvaged crude to barges moored alongside.

The prototype model,



Extra efforts: the national guard deploys a helicopter to help build a sandbank dam to protect the Louisiana coast from the approaching slick

AFP

housed in the gymnasium of the former New Iberia school where Mr Schellstede has his offices, resembles a semi-submersible oil rig, like the offshore fire ships that have been deployed in the North Sea since the 1980s.

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The detailed prospectus for the so-called Sea Clean project, a copy of which he provided to the Financial Times, was presented to some 300 government officials, industry leaders and the press at a meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1990.

It was also presented to congressmen in Washington, including Al Gore – then a senator – with whom Mr Schellstede had a two-hour meeting. "I don't think I ever got over to him what was wrong – that it was a deepwater problem. Deepwater was just starting. I

looked for government support to propose it to the oil companies. I told them, 'We've got a different frontier here. It's a different ball game and we need other tools.'

Exxon and other oil companies expressed enthusiasm for the project but turned it down on cost grounds, according to Mr Schellstede, and because it addressed a problem they did not believe existed.

"They concluded it was a wonderful design but they couldn't invest \$100m in it. They might have been

right. We went a long time without any problems."

He estimates that such a vessel would now cost \$220m to build.

In 1990, Lieutenant Commander P.A. Tebeau of the US Coast Guard wrote to the federal environment engineering office, saying of the Sea Clean project: "We believe this proposal shows technical merit and ingenuity but would require additional research and development."

As a project manager and designer in the oil industry for 43 years, Mr Schellstede believes companies have gone as far as they can in terms of safety. However, a standing fleet of rapid-deployment vessels would act as an insurance policy.

When his father, Herman "Blackie" Schellstede, worked on the first offshore rig in Louisiana's Ship Shoal Block 32 in 1947, there were no regulations governing the industry. That has changed, but the response to the latest crisis had still been piecemeal.

"Everything they've had to piece together, we would have had on site."

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For more on climate change: www.ft.com/climate

Oil imports and rising demand widen US trade deficit

Shortfall grows by 2.5% to \$40.4bn

By Alan Rapaport
in New York

The US trade gap grew to its highest level in more than a year in March, as rising consumer demand and higher oil prices fuelled imports, official figures showed yesterday.

The trade deficit grew by

2.5 per cent to \$40.4bn in March, according to the commerce department. That was in line with projections of Wall Street analysts and was the largest gap since December 2008.

America's trade gap has grown by 40 per cent in the past year as trade volumes accelerated and the global economy has emerged from recession. In March, volumes rose to their highest levels since October 2008.

The trade deficit has been edging higher since it bottomed last June at \$27bn. Although this reflects renewed strength in the glo-

bal economy and greater domestic demand in the US, the wider gap will provide less of a boost to gross domestic product.

Economists expect output to grow at an adjusted annual rate of 3.2 per cent in the second quarter. In the first quarter, consumer spending picked up the slack as the impact of trade and a cyclical boost from an inventory swing waned.

Export growth out-

stripped that of imports in March, rising 3.2 per cent to \$147.9bn. The US exported more industrial supplies, consumer goods and food.

Imports climbed by 3.1 per cent to \$188.3bn as Americans spent more on televisions, furniture, fruit juices and oil. Steven Ricchiuto, chief economist at Mizuho Securities, noted that when excluding petroleum imports, the US trade deficit fell by 1.1 per cent.

The cost of crude oil imports rose from \$20.1bn in February to \$23.7bn in March.

With final demand on the mend and most businesses consequently looking to stabilise or modestly boost inventories, underlying demand for imports has picked up substantially," said Joshua Shapiro, chief US economist at MFR.

Meanwhile, the US deficit with China, its biggest trad-

ing partner, expanded from \$16.5bn to \$16.9bn.

Last month, a US govern-

ment report accused China of using an array of dubious measures to prevent US companies from competing fairly in its market. However, the study acknowledged that China had reduced its official trade tariffs and quotas.

Trade deficits with the European Union, Japan and Mexico also widened.

News digest

Dutch shock as air crash kills 103

The crash of a Libyan airliner in Tripoli, killing all but one of the 104 people on board, put the Netherlands in shock yesterday as it emerged that 61 of the dead were Dutch tourists. The sole survivor was a young boy who suffered broken bones and other injuries that Libyan officials said were not life-threatening.

The cause of the crash was not known, although Libyan officials ruled out terrorism. The eight-month-old Airbus A330-200 ran by Afriqiyah Airways crashed 10 minutes before it was due to land on a flight from Johannesburg. Its final stop was London.

Michael Steen, Amsterdam
Heba Saleh, Cairo

carving out a bigger role in the renascent international market for nuclear energy. Energy cooperation is the core of a rapidly developing partnership between Moscow and Ankara, former cold war rivals.

Delphine Strauss, Ankara

ANC youth leader fined

The controversial leader of the governing African National Congress's Youth League has been fined and ordered to attend anger management classes after clashing repeatedly with senior party figures.

At an ANC disciplinary hearing Julius Malema pleaded guilty to "behaving in such a way as to provoke serious divisions or a breakdown of unity in the organisation". Mr Malema publicly supported Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, at a time when South Africa was seeking to negotiate an agreement between the factions of Zimbabwe's coalition government.

Richard Lapper,
Johannesburg

US politics

The wave engulfing even staunch conservatives

shows a uniform move to the right, says Edward Luce

Next Tuesday, Republican activists in Kentucky look set to deliver the latest in a series of shocks to their party's establishment when they select Rand Paul, a darling of the Tea Party movement, as their Senate candidate.

A victory for Mr Paul, whose father, Ron Paul, leads the libertarian wing of the Republican party, would be a slap in the face to Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, who has endorsed the candidacy of Trey Grayson, Kentucky's secretary of state.

The former vice-president, is one measure of how far to the right the Republican grassroots has shifted.

"In the current environment, if you're running as a Republican it helps if you're not an incumbent and if you are, it helps if you're to the right of Attila the Hun," says Mark McKinnon, a Republican consultant, who advised John McCain in his presidential bid. "The real casualty in this climate is compromise."

Yesterday, Lindsey Graham, the embattled Republican senator from South Carolina, provided the latest example of what the grassroots insurgency means for bipartisan cooperation in Washington –

A bigger bite

Insider trading The quest to restore faith in markets is leading to a more co-ordinated and increasingly aggressive approach by the world's leading watchdogs, write **Kate Burgess** and **Brooke Masters**

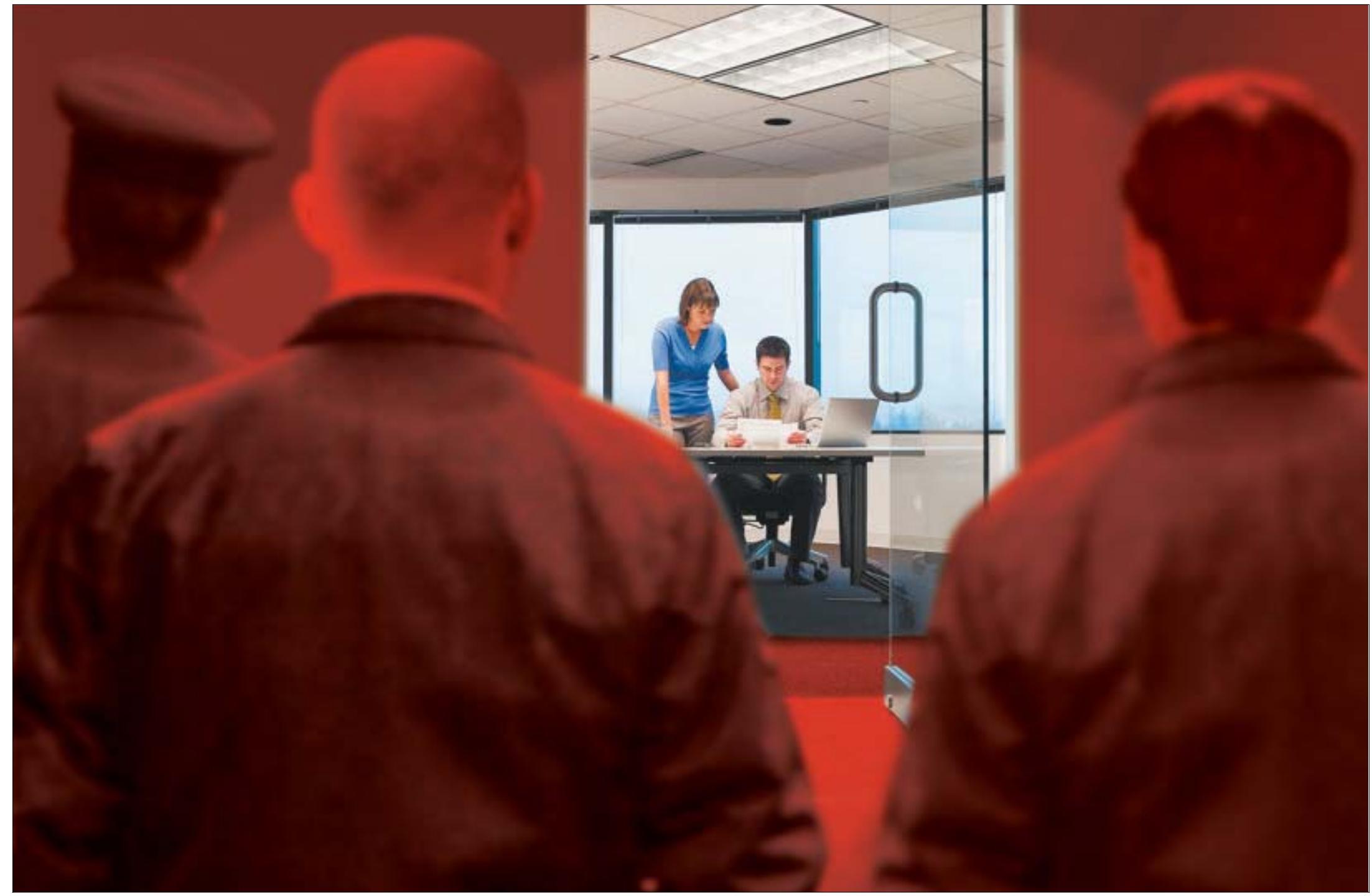
March 23 was Julian Rifat's birthday. At 5.30am he should have been in the car that took him every morning from Oxford to the offices in London's West End where he worked as a trader for Moore Capital, one of the world's biggest hedge funds. Instead he was trying on a dressing gown given to him by his wife and thus running late.

Ten minutes later the dawn silence was broken by yells and urgent thumping on his front door. When he opened it, a stream of unsmiling officers from the Serious Organised Crime Agency, two in uniform and the rest in jeans and leather jackets, burst in accusing Mr Rifat of insider dealing and demanding that he wake up his children and turn over their computers and iPhones. Within half an hour, about 20 officers, from both Soca and the Financial Services Authority, chief regulator for the City of London, were rummaging through his house.

At almost exactly the same time, more than 100 officers from both organisations bashed on the doors of 15 premises linked to nine individuals the regulator suspected of insider trading. By midday the FSA had issued a press release stating it had arrested six people – two from prominent City banks and one from a hedge fund – in its "largest ever operation against insider trading".

A day after the raids and arrests, including that of Mr Rifat, US authorities arrested Igor Poteroba, a UBS healthcare banker, charging him with leaking information about pending deals to two friends in a ring that allegedly netted \$1m over four years. Linking all these cases is the issue that concerns all regulators as they strive to maintain the integrity of

**'I give the FSA credit.
They've just discovered
that they can enforce
insider-trading laws if
they want to'**



Serious and organised: the UK City regulator is increasingly using US-style tactics such as raids against market abusers

financial markets: insider trading. Trading on the use of privileged, or not public, information is as old as any stock market. The battle to stamp it out has, however, in recent years become an important goal of regulators of major financial centres. Leading regulators believe that getting a grip on the problem is central to re-establish confidence in financial systems after the battering they took during the financial crisis.

However, the world's leading regulators – the Securities and Exchange Commission in New York and the FSA in London – have historically taken different approaches. In the US the emphasis has been enforcement. Wrongdoers are aggressively and swiftly pursued, using the full armoury of the law, and then hefty fines and prison sentences are used to make examples of them.

In London the approach used to be lighter touch and principles-led. The regulator largely relied on firms to police themselves and their staff according to generally accepted codes.

But recently the FSA has dramatically changed its approach, moving towards that of the US. It is now bent on setting examples to deter market abuse – deploying all available measures in the process, as Mr Rifat discovered. This has not been uncontroversial. Indeed, some critics describe it as a politically motivated last-ditch attempt – denied by the FSA – to save itself from being disbanded by a Conservative party that, in opposition, had promised to hand many of its powers to the Bank of England.

Now the FSA appears to have been given a reprieve. The new Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition of Prime Minister David Cameron signalled this week that the authority could yet survive. While it awaits the final decision on its future Hector Sants, its chief executive, says it is determined to continue the fight against insider trading, and as publicly as possible.

Mr Sants says: "We do want publicity. We do



The global approach

Regulators around the world take tougher action with mixed results

The US and the UK are not the only countries turning to tougher enforcement in an effort to deter insider dealing, writes Brooke Masters.

The Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission secured its first insider trading conviction in July 2008 and has notched up nearly a dozen more since then, including that of Du Jun, a former Morgan Stanley banker, who was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Canada also recently won its first criminal case, resulting in

a 39-month prison term for Stan Grmosek, who pleaded guilty last year to trading ahead of deals being worked on by a law-school classmate over a 14-year period. Saudi Arabian authorities, too, handed down their first prison sentence for insider trading last year. Najm-Eddine Ahmad Najm-Dhafer, chairman of Bishah Agricultural Development, was given a three-month term and a fine.

Crossborder co-operation is also at an all time high, reflecting the globalisation of financial markets

and the desire by regulators and prosecutors to follow the evidence wherever it leads.

"I've seen an increase in the number of regulators across Europe who say, 'I'd like to take a look at your records in London because something has happened in our exchange here,'" says Richard Frase, a UK-based lawyer with the international firm Dechert.

Twenty years ago, US authorities were virtually the only ones that routinely brought insider-trading cases. Now they have plenty of company and assistance.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission and the Hong Kong SFC worked together closely on the high-profile case against David Li, a Hong Kong-based director of Dow Jones who paid \$8.1m to settle SEC allegations that he leaked news of a secret bid for the US media group.

Regulators in more than 100 countries have signed up to share information about market abuse through the International Organisation of Securities Commissions. Information is now

flowing at a record rate. In 2008, the most recent year for which figures are available, securities enforcers made 867 requests for information from fellow Iosco members, up from just 307 in 2004.

French enforcers have had a tougher time putting together high-profile cases. In December, the enforcement committee of the Autorité des Marchés Financiers cleared 17 bosses and former bosses at aerospace group EADS of insider dealing. The ruling ended a three-year probe.

Historically it has been more reticent to use them. But the stakes have been rising. A recent FSA study of market cleanliness found that suspicious trading preceded 29 per cent of all announced takeover deals in 2008, up from 24 per cent in 2005.



Public pressure: the 1980s conviction of Ivan Boesky (above) for insider trading was an early high-profile success for US enforcers. Hector Sants (below left), head of the UK regulator, argues that his pursuit of publicity in similar cases will help deter market abuse

Lawyers have noticed the change in attitude at the UK regulator. They attribute it first to the financial crisis, which made clear that most markets are not self-policing. They also point to the leadership at the authority, particularly Margaret Cole, director of the enforcement division, and Mr Sants, who put elimination of insider trading at the top of his agenda when he joined in 2005. Both are strong proponents of using enforcement cases to deter market abuse.

"They have recognised that the US model is more effective in terms of deterrence and punishment," says Lord Goldsmith, a former UK attorney-general.

Under Mr Sants and Ms Cole, the FSA has restructured and expanded its enforcement division, increasing its budget and recruiting more staff with significant City experience. Ms Cole has also embarked on a multi-year campaign to improve the quantity and quality of cases brought by the watchdog, an effort that she says is now bearing fruit.

"I give them credit. They've just discovered that they can enforce insider-trading laws if they want to. It suggests that their prior lack of success had more to do with passivity and indifference than problems gathering evidence," says John Coffee, Columbia University law professor.

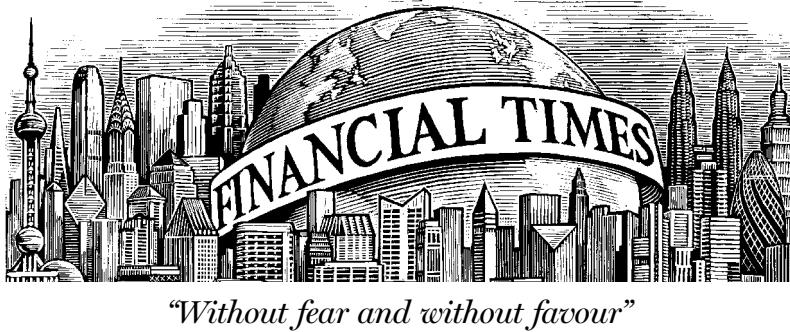
The FSA's tough new attitude coincides with an equally big push in the US, where the SEC and DoJ are both anxious to show they can be tough on Wall Street misbehaviour in the wake of the financial crisis.

Companies and lawyers on both sides of the Atlantic are seeing sharply increased regulatory activity and co-operation. The FSA recently went to court to defend its ability to gather information for the SEC; the two regulators now meet regularly to share information and ideas.

"We really have seen a shrinking of borders and regulators working together," says Bob Jossen, a US lawyer with the international firm Dechert.

This will provide small comfort for Mr Rifat. He and the others accused will spend the summer gathering evidence and information that they hope will counter whatever charges the FSA may eventually lay against them. All deny wrongdoing and some hope that, in the absence of concrete evidence, the regulator will drop its case. Meanwhile the legal bills are mounting and their futures look uncertain.

Mr Rifat might find some consolation in the knowledge that the UK regulator's future remains unclear, despite this week's news. A few doors down from him in Oxford, Mr Sants – who plans to step down from the FSA this summer – will also be contemplating his future.



"Without fear and without favour"

Thursday May 13 2010

Cameron changes the landscape

Con-Lib deal is courageous in scope, risky in execution

Having played it safe during the British election campaign, David Cameron has now revealed a truly audacious streak. The coalition deal the Conservative leader has finally struck with his Liberal Democrat opposite number, Nick Clegg, is more ambitious in scope than seemed possible even a few days ago. This really is an attempt to try a new style of collaborative politics.

It is far from being some minimalist pact. The deal is intended to last for a full parliament, brings five Lib Dems into the cabinet, and involves significant political reform – including a referendum on changing the voting system.

The political stakes are high for both leaders. Failure would wreck Mr Cameron's career, while Mr Clegg is gambling that a successful coalition could sell electoral reform to the British public.

The leaders have talked a lot about the national interest in recent days. But this is not some sort of starry-eyed union between Mr Cameron and Mr Clegg. The deal is the product of cold-eyed political calculation on both sides to gain power. That is all to the good. If it is to last, it must be built on realistic foundations.

On policy, understandably, there has been some give and take. This is on balance positive. The good bits of both parties' programmes have largely survived the process intact, while some more suspect ones have been jettisoned. The coalition's programme is strong on restoring civil liberties for instance. The Tories attractive plans to reform education remain in place, as do proposals to look at structural reform of the banking system.

Meanwhile, the Tories have neutered some of the Lib Dems' woolier pledges. The nuclear deterrent will be maintained, and Britain will continue to look to nuclear power for its civil energy. For their part, the Lib Dems have toned down some of the more anti-European aspects of the Tory programme. Plans to confront Brussels with demands to repatriate powers have been shelved.

The biggest challenge for the new government is, of course, to tackle Britain's yawning deficit. The five-year term of the deal, and the majority the new administration enjoys in the House of Commons, certainly makes tough action possible.

The coalition document does not explain how the deficit is to be closed. That will be set out when the government announces its emergency budget in the summer. This newspaper endorsed the Con-

servatives principally because we felt that they were most likely to trim back the bloated state bequeathed by Labour. They would place the burden of deficit reduction on spending cuts rather than tax rises. While we hope that the coalition will continue with this course, it is disappointing that the two parties did not take the opportunity to show more resolve to shrink the state. It would have been more encouraging had they not pledged to ring-fence NHS spending or pared back some of their proposed tax cuts.

Putting together a common programme is one thing. Actually enacting it in government is quite another. The coalition will be tested. The chemistry between Mr Cameron and Mr Clegg, so apparent at yesterday's Downing Street press conference, may wear thin as the administration is forced to make hard and unpopular choices.

It is encouraging that the two sides have assembled their team quickly. The combined talent pool has produced a stronger cabinet

Whether it succeeds or fails, the Con-Lib coalition deal will change British politics

that would have been the case with the Conservatives on their own. The decision to put representatives of both parties in each department is good in that it cements co-responsibility as a principle. But how well the two sides will rub along when the going gets tough remains an open question.

Lastly, there are the backbenchers and the grass-roots members of both parties. Many of them will be extremely suspicious of the deal that has been struck and the compromises required. Some will have had their hopes for office frustrated. The well-organised Tory grass-roots are already grumbling about the lacklustre campaign Mr Cameron fought. On both sides the activists remain a potent and combustible source of potential discord in the years ahead.

It will take real leadership to keep the coalition on track. Both sides will need to deal with the inevitable disagreements in the same mature spirit that they exhibited when constructing the deal. It will not be easy. British politics is traditionally majoritarian and adversarial. But the course is now set. Whether it succeeds or fails, this deal will change British politics.

Forced into toughness, Madrid must pursue real reform

Zapatero finally wields the axe

Forced into toughness, Madrid must pursue real reform

Spain, long protesting that it does not deserve to be put in the same category as Greece, has finally realised that this is a distinction markets, not politicians, get to draw. Yesterday's budget cuts should help convince investors that Madrid's effort to rein in its deficit has moved from cheap talk to painful actions. But the time wasted resisting the need to prove that public finances are sustainable delayed the task of securing sustainability of a more important kind: that of the Spanish economy.

José Luis Zapatero, Spain's prime minister, has a point. Public finances were reasonably sober during the boom. The government ran a surplus and owed less than 40 per cent of national income. But the growth that supported this was based on a mirage, as the government rode on the back of a private sector intoxicated by foreign capital. Had the huge private sector deficit been invested to make the economy more productive, it might not have been a bad thing. Instead it financed house-building – which creates jobs and tax revenue, but only so long as the going is good.

The vacuum left behind when the credit flows stopped made both employment and public finances implode. One in five is now without a job. The deficit reached 11.2 per cent of output last year. Spanish real estate, and the banks exposed to it, stand as monuments to a barren economic strategy.

Spain's most urgent task now is to gain credibility with bondholders, without losing sight of the need to reform a rigid labour market that hinders growth from taking root.

Last February, Madrid presented a radical plan for cutting the budget deficit. But it did not rein in the credibility deficit, the most acute contagion which has spread from Greece. Mr Zapatero's earlier nonchalance made markets doubt his commitment to the plan and the realism of its growth forecasts. The one percentage point spread of Spanish 10-year yields above German ones is nearly double what it was at the start of the year.

Mr Zapatero had no choice but to undergo the welfare-state equivalent of trial by ordeal. He demonstrated he could take the political pain by announcing he would cut civil service pay by 5 per cent. In total, the new measures amount to a cut in public spending of 1.5 per cent of output more than the earlier plan of bringing the deficit to 7.5 per cent of output in 2011.

It is not certain this will work. The last quarter brought the first glimpse of even anaemic growth since the crisis began. Independent forecasts see Spain growing at only 1 per cent next year, just over half the official assumption, and expect a 2011 deficit of nearly 9 per cent. If the new cuts kill off the sickly recovery, the risk is that the deficit will end up wider than hoped.

They are nevertheless indispensable signals of political will. After last week's market panic and the eurozone's extraordinary response, Spain had to prove that it would not go the way of Greece. Now that Mr Zapatero has belatedly found his tough core, he should hesitate no further to launch the structural reforms that can bring his country on to a less illusory growth path.

Letters

Greeks must wonder who will share their woe

From Mr Jacob R. Freudenthal.

Sir, All the triumphalist accounts about the brilliant success of the European Union in putting a €500bn band aid on the festering wound of Greek sovereign debt may be useful in giving a temporary boost to the stock market. But would it not also be helpful to ask a few questions about how this Mount Olympus of debt was allowed to accumulate in the first place?

The easy answer, of course, is to loan those profligate Greeks, who, just as Penelope's suitors did, were living the good life without expecting that they would ever have to pay for it ("Europe is unprepared for austerity", Gideon Rachman, May 11). But while the suitors had Telemachus to warn them against the consequences of helping

themselves to his father's meat and wine, the modern day profligates had an ample supply of German and French banks that were willing to provide them with seemingly endless food and drink in the form of billions of euros worth of loans.

Why were these banks so willing to lend to Greece? That country's financial problems were not exactly unknown, but were years in the making and, according to an FT article last year by Prof George Pagoulatos, the result of several structural weaknesses.

Since banks are not eleemosynary institutions, they must have been expecting to get some benefit from making these loans. Was this in the form of charging higher interest rates for loans that, as explained by Gillian Tett, were deemed "zero-risk

weighted"? Were the bankers expecting from the beginning to be bailed out by European taxpayers when nemesis finally arrived?

Are ordinary Greeks being singled out for blame, just as subprime mortgage borrowers were initially, in what later came to be recognised as a major American lending scandal ("Countrywide in \$624m class action deal", May 8)?

Penelope's suitors were ultimately forced to take some rather uncomfortable haircuts. The people of Greece, who may have to endure as many years of austerity as Odysseus took to return to Ithaca, might be forgiven for asking whether the European banks should not be required to do the same.

Jacob R. Freudenthal,

New York, NY, US

Australian minerals belong to the people

From Prof Ken Coghill.

Sir, Critics of Australia's resource-rent tax ("Uproar grows over Australia's super-profits tax", May 12), speak as if the nation's mineral estate is *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one).

However, Australian minerals are the common property of the people, as in most countries except the US. Mining companies now pay no more than 5 per cent of minerals' market value as royalties to Australian state governments. After paying exploration, extraction and transportation costs, standard 30 per cent corporate tax rates and benefiting from special tax breaks, high commodity prices leave miners with massive profits that dwarf the royalties received by the original owners.

The new tax is a belated move to give a fair share of net proceeds back to the Australian people.

Ken Coghill,
Director,
Monash Governance Research,
Department of Management,
Monash University,
Melbourne, Australia



The new breed of Tinkerbell MBA is in for a nasty surprise

Leave free market capitalism alone so it can do its job

From Mr Bruce Goodwin.

Sir, I am somewhat amused by Robert H. Wade's description of Sir Samuel Brittan's call for light touch capitalism as being "academic" (Letters, May 11). As we are well aware, Labour party policy and academia are united in their inability to leave free market capitalism to do its job.

I would certainly agree that Britain needs to specialise, but why would Prof Wade be so doubtful of private enterprise's ability to deliver the goods, especially with sterling now competitive? He conveniently misses the point that the finance, housing and construction boom was directly the result of misallocation of resources brought about by manipulation of, and interference in, free markets.

Housing receives preferential tax treatment and is conveniently left out of inflation calculations. The government turned a blind eye to – nay encouraged – loose mortgage lending and consumer credit. Political pressure was put on Mervyn King when he tried to cool the housing boom. Consumption is seen as the measure of strength in the economy rather than being a direct consequence of production.

At the same time, policies have been put in place that discourage traditional saving and therefore the investment that is needed in developing private production in the new industries that are so sorely needed. Large swathes of the tax system work in favour of non-productive sectors and have suppressed the real economy to the benefit of those that are supposed to serve it.

Let's bury for good the myth that the financial crisis both here and elsewhere was a failure of free market capitalism. Loose regulation may have been a contributing factor, but the financial crisis was and continues to be the result of the egregious manipulation of markets. The outsized UK financial sector is a direct consequence of this intervention.

Bruce Goodwin,

Gerrards Cross, Bucks, UK

Asia will relish touchy-feely graduates

From Mr Scott Guthery.

Sir, In the *On Management* column of May 11, regarding the appointment of Dr Nitin Nohria as the dean of the Harvard Business School, the secret delight of Asian businesses by the appointment went unmentioned ("The dean poised to shake up business").

Harvard Business School will henceforth turn out mindless touchy-feely graduates that Pacific Rim tigers will happily teach the reality of doing business, free of entrance exams and

tuition fees, no less. Will the smug self-righteousness that is prescribed for US managers be any solace to them in their state of indentured servitude? I doubt it. But once this new breed of Tinkerbell MBA makes a serfdom of the US economy, it will be difficult to undo the unintended consequences of Harvard's latest better idea. If history is any guide, it took a bubonic plague the last time around.

Scott Guthery,

Boston, MA, US

After being ill with indecision, the recovery can begin

From Mr Paul Dare.

Sir, The agreement that the new Conservative party government has made with the Liberal Democrats in return for its support includes a change to fixed-term parliaments in the UK.

This is new and was not properly presented to voters during the election campaign.

The ability of a prime minister to call a general election at any time has been a strength of the British political system. It has proved to be a remedy when a hung parliament has found itself unable to govern. It has given confidence to those investing in British government securities, since they have known that, when a government is failing and there seems no way forward for the existing parliament, action can be taken swiftly to replace it with a new elected parliament and government.

I suggest that any change to fixed-term parliaments in the UK be subject to the proviso that the prime minister may nevertheless ask the

Queen to dissolve parliament if the government loses a vote of confidence in the House of Commons or fails to get its budget approved by parliament. This should go a long way to preserving market confidence during fixed-term parliaments.

Paul Dare,

London SW13, UK

From Mr William Burns.

Sir, I am no visionary, but here lies the script: we are all going to get spoilt over the next few months, only to illustrate how generous the new coalition government is. Thereafter, another general election will be called, so that the Conservatives get an overall majority in the Commons for their generosity. We will then all suffer.

Politically, the Liberal Democrats will agonise more than any other party. They will be dropped like a hot potato once the Tories get the overall majority they seek.

The Liberal Democrats will be out the window and they will have done

irreconcilable damage to their standing with their own supporters for their opportunism.

I hope and pray that I will be shot down for being wrong. However, in the meantime, pay attention!

William Burns,

Edinburgh, UK

From Mr Jake Brahms.

Sir, A hung parliament is the best possible outcome for Britain. The air of apathy in the UK electorate is slowly receding and people are beginning to take an interest in politics once again. Instead of gaining one weak government from the election, Britain has benefited enormously as the three main parties tried to put aside their differences.

As Cicero once said of the Roman Republic, Britain is ill with indecision. The road to recovery will be slow; however a hung parliament will find the necessary remedy to cure its illness. All qualms aside, the recovery can finally begin.

Jake Brahms,

London, UK

Masochistic unions leading the charge to self-immolation

From Mr Saseen Kumar.

Sir, There was a time when unions stood up against exploitation and injustice. Not any more, it seems. The 20-day strike action by the BA union is a case in point. Driven by a self-righteous sense of entitlement, Unite seems to be in a relentless, suicidal campaign to destroy

economic value. It seems that it is taking a sadistic pleasure in killing the source of its bread and butter, without taking into account the current economic situation.

One fears that mayhem will be unleashed once the new government tries to introduce austerity measures. I completely agree with Gideon

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Notebook



Robert Shrimley

An awfully civil partnership

Downing Street's rose garden was tastefully arranged as if in readiness for a wedding; though in this case it was more of a civil partnership.

The grass was verdant; the sun shone; the blossom was in full bloom. The two young men were nicely turned out and full of sweet things to say about each other. Oh yes, this is a going to be a *very* civil partnership.

This was just the kind of thing Lord Tebbit has been warning about. We'd seen them earlier on the steps of Number 10 and – well, frankly, they couldn't keep their hands off each other. (Cynics might say each was power-handshaking, Bill Clinton style, but we've seen *He said, She said* and we can read the signals.)

It is true that there were rather more people on the groom's side than, er, well, on the other groom's side. Mr Cameron had the Mail, the Express, the entire Murdoch press, the Telegraph. Poor Mr Clegg had only the Guardian and the Independent and – to be frank – they were not altogether happy. Many of

Mr Clegg's family had stayed away. They are somewhat traditional and don't approve of these sort of things. Still, at the last minute Uncle Vince had agreed to be an usher and a couple of other loyal cousins had joined the retinue.

The two grooms sauntered out, past the wisteria and on to the grass, proudly to declare their mutual affection and admiration. They were breaking with convention by eschewing matching suits and ties but they were wearing the same winsome smile. As Nick said, they aimed to be "radical but reassuring".

Comment

A waning Europe matters less to America

Richard Haass

It is more than a little ironic that Nato has committed itself to defining a new strategic concept at precisely the moment the transatlantic relationship counts for less than at any time since the 1930s. In part this development reflects Europe's success. While Europe was the central arena for much of 20th-century history and a principal theatre for both world wars and the cold war, it now is mostly at peace. The Franco-German rift has been replaced by a broader integration of the continent inside the European Union, with France and Germany at its core. Europe is to a large extent whole and free. What happens within it will not determine the arc of the 21st century.

But Europe's loss of centrality also reflects its failings. The European project is foundering. Greece is the most pronounced problem, one brought about by its own profligacy and a weak EU leadership that permitted it to live beyond its means and violate the terms under which the

euro was established. But the crisis was made worse by German dithering, and initially timid responses from European institutions and governments. The euro could be one of the casualties.

Already there are signs the crisis is spreading to other countries that, having also lived beyond their means, are suffering from insolvency but are unable to do much about it given their domestic politics and membership of the euro. This week's €750bn rescue package will buy time, but will not address the insolvency at the core of the problem. Europe's recovery will be anaemic in absolute and relative terms. Europe is now the world's largest economy, slightly larger than the US, but will not be for long.

Even before this economic crisis, Europe was weakened by a political crisis. Many Europeans have been preoccupied with revising European institutions, but repeated rejections of the Lisbon treaty demonstrate that a united Europe no longer captures the imagination of many of its residents. Lacklustre leadership of European organisations is both a cause and a result of this loss of momentum.

Behind this drift is the stark reality that Europeans have never quite committed to Europe, largely because of the continued pull of nationalism. If Europeans were serious about being a major power, they would trade the British and French United Nations Security Council seats for a European one. This is not about to happen.

Nato will no longer be the default partner for US foreign policy. Instead, Washington will forge coalitions of the willing

Europe's drift also manifests itself militarily. Few European states are willing to devote even 2 per cent of their budgets to defence; and what they spend their money on makes little sense. National politics and economics dictate expenditures, so there is much replication of what is not relevant and little investment in what is needed. The whole is less than the sum of its parts.

Afghanistan is a case in point. The European contribution there is substantial, with more than 30,000 soldiers from EU countries. But the involvement is uneven, with nearly a third of the troops coming from the UK. In many cases the roles are diluted by governmental "caveats" that limit missions, a lack of equipment and commitments of uncertain duration. European political culture has evolved in ways that make it harder to field militaries willing to bear the cost in blood; the US secretary of defence describes this as "the demilitarisation of Europe" – where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it. All this limits Nato's future role, as Nato mostly makes sense as an expeditionary force in an unstable world, not as a standing army on a stable continent.

Time and demographics will not improve the situation. Europe's population has levelled off at about 500m and is rapidly ageing. By mid-century the percentage of Europe's adults who are older than 65 is projected to double. Fewer will be of military age; a

smaller number will be working to support the retired.

History is at work here as well. US-European ties and Nato were destined to become weaker given the end of the cold war. Alliances tend to be created and to thrive in eras of predictability and consensus over threats and obligations. The post-cold war, post-9/11 world is much more fluid than this.

The combination of structural economic flaws, political parochialism and military limits will accelerate this transatlantic drift. A weaker Europe will possess a smaller voice and role. Nato will no longer be the default partner for American foreign policy. Instead, the US will forge coalitions of the willing to deal with specific challenges. These clusters will sometimes include European countries, but rarely, if ever, will the US look to either Nato or the EU as a whole. Even before it began, Europe's moment as a major world power in the 21st century looks to be over.

The author is president of the Council on Foreign Relations and author of War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars

The strange rebirth of Tory England

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

By the beginning of this year, David Cameron and the Conservatives were riding high in the polls. They were fortified by much more money than the other parties, notably the funds Lord Ashcroft had poured into marginal constituencies. After 13 years of a flailing and often failing Labour government, with an electorate that grimaced at the memory of Tony Blair and squirmed at the clumsy ineptitude of Gordon Brown, "time for a change" was powerful sentiment.

All in all, the Tories expected to win the coming election comfortably. And yet in the event they ended 30 seats short of the number needed for an absolute parliamentary majority. They have indeed taken office, and Mr Cameron is at Number 10, but only thanks to a potentially fraught coalition cobbled together with Nick Clegg and his Liberal Democrats.

Today the watchword among MPs of both parties is "don't rock the boat", and the less said the better. But you may be sure that in private there is much Tory bitterness, soul-searching and recrimination. How had it gone wrong, and when, and why? Is it too much to say that Mr Cameron blew it?

Westminster aside, there are already Tory constituency workers and bloggers ready to accuse the party leadership of conducting a very poor campaign: nearly two out of three party workers polled online said just that. The Cameron group – one of the problems is that the party has been run by a small clique surrounding the leader – bombarded the electorate with new initiatives and policies day by day. And yet none of them caught the voters' imagination.

Something called "the big society" was going to be the Tories' chief selling proposition, and it fell flat as

In private there is much bitterness, soul-searching and recrimination. Is it too much to say that David Cameron blew it?

could be, maybe because few ordinary people understood what it meant (I certainly didn't). This was one of those bright ideas that come up in marketing meetings, and which a seasoned executive will shoot down with a gently humorous phrase. The Tory team seems to lack such wise heads nowadays.

But the problem goes back further, to the beginning of Mr Cameron's leadership. He was cunningly jockeyed into place by Michael Howard, his patron and predecessor, sealing the deal with an eloquent conference speech. Having become party leader, "Dave" then gave the impression of wondering why he had, and what he was going to do next.

Not everyone took to him, but the attacks on him were misplaced. When Labour spin-doctors wanted to deride Mr Cameron's background, Mr Blair sensibly reminded them that he himself had been to Fettes, "the Eton of Scotland", and then to Oxford, like Mr Cameron, and that such a line would be ridiculous. But Mr Brown could not resist feeble gibes about the playing fields of Eton. Other assaults came from the unreconstructed right in Mr Cameron's party and in the Tory press, but they got it wrong too, calling him a crypto-progressive or a closet liberal.

Funnily enough, this exactly mirrored the mistake the left made years earlier when they denounced Mr Blair. Because the left think incorrigibly in ideological terms, they saw Mr Blair as a rightwing infiltrator, which entirely missed the truth. The point about "Blairism" was not that it was ideologically leftwing or ideologically rightwing, but that it had no ideological substance at all.

And "Cameronism"? There were days when Mr Cameron wanted to "hug a hoodie" and days when he wanted to be tough on crime. One week he was saying that the UK should not be a client state of Washington and the next he was presenting Barack Obama with a copy of *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (Winston Churchill's worst book, as it happens).

Or he wanted tax policies that encouraged the family, or, then again, he didn't. Altogether it was possible to see Mr Cameron as the last Marxist politician – in the sense, that is, of Groucho's: "Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others."

No one supposes that a party leader will act like a bishop or think like a professor, but we are entitled to expect a degree of sober judgment, consistency and gravitas. Mr Cameron is a clever fellow, he is a fluent speaker, he is a good husband and father. Now he has become prime minister at a time of grave crisis, and we shall learn the answer to another question: is he an *homme sérieux*?

The writer's books include The Strange Death of Tory England and Yo, Blair!

Facebook's open disdain for privacy



John Gapper

Facebook is among the most powerful internet companies – maybe the most powerful together with Google – in the world.

It has 400m users, 35m of whom use it at least once a day. It is the most visited website in the US. Its initial public offering, which is expected within a year or two, would be the biggest Silicon Valley event since Google's IPO in 2004.

Facebook is thus important not only to investors but to everyone interested in the future of the internet, which is practically all of us. If it decides, in Google's phrase for deceiving or messing around with its customers, to "be evil" then millions feel the effects.

Unfortunately, Mark Zuckerberg, the 25-year-old who founded Facebook as a private social network for Harvard students, has recently been displaying a disregard bordering on disdain for Facebook users' right to maintain control over personal information.

Not only has Facebook gradually eroded the privacy rights of its users, but it has done so in a confusing and opaque way.

Facebook's privacy controls are now so complex and hard to understand that many have been nudged into "sharing" a lot, just as Mr Zuckerberg wishes.

"We are building towards a web where the default is social," he declared to a developers' conference last month. In practice, he meant that Facebook will share users' data with some websites, initially including Pandora, the music service, and Yelp, a small business recommendation site, unless they jump through hoops to stop it.

Mr Zuckerberg was at least speaking plainly, unlike last December, when he wrote in an open letter that "our work to improve privacy continues today". He failed to mention that, eight days later, it would turn six aspects of each user profile, including gender, location and the friends list, into "publicly available information".

If Facebook users were allowed a free choice, they might well tick the box to accept anyway. His vision of the "open graph", in which



Facebook's users engage more with websites they visit and applications they use because the services are tailored to them, has allure.

For the sites in its pilot programme, that means Facebook users will, for example, automatically see restaurants recommended by friends when they visit Yelp, or hear music from bands they like when they go to Pandora. The software "cookie" placed on their computers by Facebook will automatically identify them to partner websites.

Facebook users might in future find books that have been read by their friends or gifts based on their location recommended when they visit an online retailer such as Amazon. If Facebook does not encounter too many protests, this pilot is likely to expand.

Some will find this useful and others abhorrent, depending on their view of software surveillance and data sharing. What is indisputable is that consumers need to be given a clear, comprehensible choice about

JOHN GAPPER'S BLOG

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how their personal information is used, so they can decide.

By this standard, Facebook is failing dismally. It is arguably complying with the law (although several privacy groups have argued to the Federal Trade Commission that it is not) since no private data are being provided to advertisers, but it is being far from transparent.

Apart from the difficulty of keeping information private and the barriers to doing so, it is breaching former understandings by getting millions hooked on its services with a promise of strict privacy controls, and then informing them that stuff happens and they must adapt.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation has published a good timeline of how

Facebook's privacy policy has weakened from its pledge in 2005 not to share data with anyone but a defined set of friends and groups, to today's Orwellian warning that "when you connect with an application or website, it will have access to General Information about you".

Mr Zuckerberg has defended this by claiming that privacy standards online are changing and young people want to share more than in the past. This is at best disingenuous and does not justify a failure to inform and consult people.

Even if Facebook users invest the considerable amount of time and effort needed to understand Mr Zuckerberg's gradual changes of policy and decide to trust him with their data, how can they be sure he will not alter the rules again with similar insouciance?

He is not alone in Silicon Valley. Social networks and internet companies often give away services free to users and only retrospectively

address the challenge of "monetising" their users in order to satisfy the venture capitalists that have funded them.

Even highly-profitable Google used dubious tactics this year when it tried to compete with Facebook and Twitter by launching its Google Buzz social network. It set the default to link G-mail users to people they had frequently e-mailed, and it only backed down under protest.

Facebook needs to do basic things to act responsibly and regain trust. It should provide simpler and more intuitive privacy controls, and retain them. It must explain clearly how it will distribute "publicly available information" and what the limits on that use will be, not until it changes its mind but for good.

As it is, Mr Zuckerberg, who turns 26 tomorrow, gives the impression of not caring a hoot about privacy. Whether by protest, legal action or regulation, he should be made to.

john.gapper@ft.com

Unruffled Asia resumes its economic ascent



David Pilling

The pillars of the Parthenon may be crumbling. But half a world away, the stone slabs of the Great Wall of China, the basalt arches of the Gateway of India, and even the Twin Towers of Petronas have rarely looked in better shape. As Europe grapples with glacial growth and cavernous deficits, Asian states have rather different problems. Awash with cash and thundering along at a pre-crisis clip, they are, if anything, in danger of overheating.

The term "decoupling" was never the right one to describe economies that, in the years leading up to the financial crisis, became ever more closely hitched to the west's shopping cart. In the 10 years preceding the Lehman shock, Asian exports as a share of output actually rose, from 37 per cent to 47 per cent, making their economies more, not less, dependent on external demand. Yet, even though much of that

of this year, growth was already back up to 11.9 per cent, prompting concerns that it was expanding too fast. India, more self-contained than most of its neighbours, managed a very respectable 7.2 per cent last year and should comfortably clear 8 per cent in 2010.

How has Asia done so well? The main reason is the huge stimulus packages it mustered, led by China's gargantuan monetary and fiscal

words, consumers spent windfall money rather than saving it in the expectation that a flat-broke government would claw it back later.

Partly as a result of stimulus measures, trade patterns have begun to shift as Asia seeks alternative sources of growth. Commodity-producing economies, such as Brazil, Indonesia, Russia and Australia, and commodity-consuming ones, such as China, Japan and South Korea, are reinforcing each other. South Korea, for example, sells 70 per cent of its finished goods to emerging markets. China is sucking in iron ore, bauxite, oil, timber and other commodities. That gives suppliers of those inputs more money to buy manufactured goods, many made in China itself.

One should not exaggerate the scale of such feedback loops. China is not yet nearly big enough to carry the world on its shoulders. But it can carry parts of it. Just as once, at the end of many supply chains, there was an American shopper dropping a DVD player into his cart, now there is a Chinese local government official planning a road or a steel plant. In some cases, there is even a Chinese consumer, who – no matter how elusive he is supposed to be – continues to increase spending by double-digits. Last year, the Chinese

bought more cars and mobile phones than did Americans. China's import volumes are a fifth higher than its pre-Lehman peak and its exports 6 per cent higher, according to Richard Jerram at Macquarie Securities. Asia, overall, is producing and exporting more than ever before.

If the region has an overriding problem, says Frederic Neumann, regional economist at HSBC, it is that monetary policy too closely tracks that of weak western economies. Because of a perceived need to keep currencies competitive, average Asian interest rates are 200 basis points below where they should be, he estimates. That is despite a number of tightening measures across the region in recent months. Australia and India are among those that have raised rates, Singapore has let its currency appreciate and China has already increased bank reserve requirements three times this year. Mr Neumann fears these might turn out to be too timid to prevent runaway inflation or the emergence of asset bubbles in some countries. This is certainly something to worry about. But, one suspects, most European finance ministers would kill for such problems.

david.pilling@ft.com

encouraged the family, or, then again, he didn't. Altogether it was possible to see Mr Cameron as the last Marxist politician – in the sense, that is, of Groucho's: "Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others."

No one supposes that a party leader will act like a bishop or think like a professor, but we are entitled to expect a degree of sober judgment, consistency and gravitas. Mr Cameron is a clever fellow, he is a fluent speaker, he is a good husband and father. Now he has become prime minister at a time of grave crisis, and we shall learn the answer to another question: is he an *homme sérieux*?

The writer's books include The Strange Death of Tory England and Yo, Blair!

Business Life

Big pharma aims for reinvention

Leading drug companies have long focused on blockbuster medicines to drive their profits, but the model is changing, writes Andrew Jack

With some of his most profitable medicines going off patent, and the uncertainty of replacement drugs continuing to rise, US health-care reform has been the least of Andrew Witty's recent worries.

When the chief executive of GlaxoSmithKline presented his company's most recent financial results last month, he gave a sense of how the UK's biggest drugmaker – and the industry more generally – is responding to structural pressures: diversify to survive.

For his company, he says, this means a shift away from "white pills in western markets", with the proportion of traditionally core patent-protected, chemically based drugs, which are sold mainly in North America and western Europe, falling to just more than a quarter of total sales.

For many years, large companies such as GSK have relied on a handful of typically high-priced, mass-market "blockbusters" that generate billions of dollars a year in sales. But as patents expire on drugs such as Lipitor, Pfizer's anti-cholesterol medicine that is the biggest selling medication in history, big pharma is having to rethink its business model.

Most large pharmaceutical companies have adopted four principal strategies to diversify. First, expand the range of products in the research and development pipeline and the use of external as well as in-house scientists to discover them. Second, expand geographically, especially into emerging markets. Third, increase sales of products other than patented prescription medicines. Fourth, experiment with greater flexibility in pricing in different countries and with ways to ensure drugs provide value for money.

Improve R&D

As John Lechleiter, head of Eli Lilly, put it recently: "At a time when the world desperately needs more new medicines... we're taking too long, spending too much and producing far too little. Re-powering pharmaceutical innovation is an urgent need."

The most widespread tactic to change this is to restructure in order to boost innovation. Chief executives talk about adopting a more entrepreneurial approach, simulating in-house the incentive-based, smaller-scale, science-based environment of biotech companies, finding external partners and broadening their portfolios.

Merck, once proud of its go-it-alone approach, has started to tap research conducted by other companies and academics. Last year, it helped fill holes in its own pipeline with the purchase of Schering-Plough.

GSK last year spun off its HIV work entirely into ViiV Healthcare, a joint venture with Pfizer to share the expertise, costs and benefits of new product development. As Jeff Kindler, Pfizer's chief executive, put it at the time: "The new company can reach more patients and accomplish much more for the treatment of HIV globally than either company on its own."

Most companies have also diversified their research portfolios, shifting from their traditional reliance on chemical-based drugs to biological ones including vaccines. AstraZeneca cemented such a move with its purchase of biological medicine-focused companies such as CAT and MedImmune. Roche's full takeover of Genentech last year re-emphasised its focus on biological products to treat cancer.

Perhaps the biggest trend in recent months has been removing a taboo on cutbacks in R&D, which had previously been largely spared when marketing and other costs were trimmed instead. For example, one rationale behind Pfizer's takeover of Wyeth last



'When the world desperately needs more medicine... we're taking too long and producing too little'

John Lechleiter
Eli Lilly

year was to defer the pain of patent expiries. That has allowed it to pare back in-house research, freeing up resources to forge partnerships with external researchers instead.

But even if overhauling R&D boosts innovation, the benefits for some companies will not come fast enough. "There's a lot of talk about the patent cliff," says Nils Behnke, a partner with Bain, the consultancy. "The problem could maybe have been solved 10 years ago. But now there is going to be a gap."

He estimates that \$100bn (£67bn, €67bn) in sales from medicines will be lost in the next five years as intellectual property protections expire, while the value of drugs in development in the industry's collective pipeline that could be launched during that period are worth just \$30bn.

New markets

Given both the time pressures and the difficulties of innovation, another means of diversification has been to expand into new geographical regions to boost income from existing medicines.

Some companies remain wedded to traditional markets, such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, which still relies on the US for more than 60 per cent of its sales. Others – notably European pharmaceutical companies with rela-

tively small domestic markets and strong historical links abroad – have made efforts to increase sales in emerging markets.

Many companies have sealed deals to expand through acquisitions – such as Abbott's purchase of Solvay, a European company with a strong presence in emerging markets. Others have stepped up their own organic growth by investing in everything from clinical trials to manufacturing facilities and marketing.

Product diversification

Pharma companies are expanding the breadth of their own activities, and buying up or forging partnerships with others in different niches.

Last year, Sanofi-Aventis acquired Zentiva in Slovakia, Medley in Brazil and Kendrick in Mexico. Pfizer, by contrast, has so far opted for partnerships, agreeing to license medicines from Aurobindo and Claris Life Sciences in India, as did GSK with Aspen in South Africa.

Novartis has moved into eyecare products with its acquisition of Alcon; GSK has strengthened its position in consumer healthcare by purchasing Stiefel for dermatology; and Sanofi-Aventis and Merck have invested in an expanded version of Merial, their joint venture for animal health.

Such businesses typically provide a more stable, long-term flow of income than patented medicines. But the markets are often smaller, the margins lower, the competition more intense and the techniques beyond the traditional expertise of the pharmaceutical companies.

Geographical expansion compounds these challenges in fragmented, uncertain markets. Daiichi Sankyo of Japan found that out to its cost, when it bought Ranbaxy in 2008 just ahead of intensifying troubles with US regulators over manufacturing forced the

Indian generic-drugmaker to post large losses.

Andrew Baum, pharmaceuticals analyst with Morgan Stanley, cautions that even in a country like China, which currently reimburses many innovative drugs at western levels, the situation could deteriorate. "I wonder about the sustainability of prices," he says.

Value and pricing

A final option for drug companies has been to diversify their commercial approaches. Some – such as Novo Nordisk and Roche – remain focused on a single global price for their drugs to maximise returns and reduce the risk of "leakage" from lower to higher priced markets. Others continue to justify high prices by pointing to high development costs.

But as healthcare systems increasingly seek ways to save money, the emphasis is shifting. GSK and Pfizer have sought to boost volumes in poorer countries by offering deeper discounts. Novartis, Sanofi-Aventis and Merck have recently negotiated prices in Europe and North America linked to the performance of their drugs.

Others are forging partnerships with doctors, nurses and other specialists to encourage better compliance among patients for whom their medicines do work, but are often not taken as prescribed.

In the long term, as Gary Pisano from Harvard Business School puts it: "Real innovation is the source of true long-term advantage in the industry."

In the short term, diversification by product and region may at best provide the testing ground to develop new skills that are applicable globally. At worst, it may be one of the few ways for those with the greatest pipeline problems to buy themselves some time.



Source: GSK

Photo: AP

Illustration: AP

Graphic: AP

Image: AP

A view from the gun turret

The week's new film releases: **Nigel Andrews** admires Samuel Maoz's semi-autobiographical tale of war, while **Leo Robson** assesses Ridley Scott's take on Robin Hood

It was the toast of Venice after every other contender became toast. Samuel Maoz's *Lebanon*, Israeli winner of last year's Golden Lion, is two hours inside a military tank, a grimy, sweat-soaked, oil-streaked, panic-besieged coffin on caterpillar treads, grinding and anguishing through the heart of battle. Two framing shots apart, the entire movie is set inside the tank or is seen – in murky, juddery, sometimes night-visioned images – through its gun sights.

Brilliantly crafted, this part-autobiographical film is set during the 1982 Lebanon war, in which Maoz was a tank gunner, and is itself an act of war. It challenges and combats the cinematic tradition that presents war as entertainment, or even as redemptive drama. Despite the title, it isn't about the Lebanon conflict so much as about all battle and what it does to the insides of men's heads. The tank itself, a cramped shell where delirium is incubated, is an expressionist vision of a soldier's brain.

The oil-and-water-puddled floor, the grimy faces, the imagined stink of bodies, the darkness, the wrench and grind of the turning gun turret (the film's only "music"); claustrophobia never had such an outing before. There is wit too, lethal and economical. A scared Syrian prisoner is dumped in the tank for a brief spell while his Phalangist captor menaces him in Arabic with a litany of threatened torture. The captor then turns to the Israelis and says in their language: "Treat him well, he's a prisoner of war."

In the last scenes even the irony runs out. The tank crew is trapped in a ruined, enemy-prowled town, their only hope to choke the tank's dying engine into final action and thunder down the nearest maze of alleys into escape or disaster. By then we are no longer looking at the characters from outside, we feel we have become them. We dwell, like battle victims ourselves, in the annihilated space between witness and spectacle.

It is an unrelenting week for cinephiles. After a day in the field hospital after *Lebanon*, you should sally forth to see *Vincere*. Forty-five years ago Marco Bellocchio made an epoch-defining film called *Fists in the Pocket*. Little since from this Italian



Lethal wit: Samuel Maoz's 'Lebanon' is set during the 1982 war

director has matched that masterly cry of generational dissent. But this historical epic comes close. In black, white and a chiaroscuro of rationed, subtly voluptuous colours, Bellocchio tells the tale of the young Benito Mussolini's cast-off lover Ida Dalser (Giovanna Mezzogiorno) – who claimed to have wedded him, though no marriage document was ever found – and the son she bore him, both to die in the years of ostracism they suffered after Mussolini became Il Duce.

Benito the son ended his days in a psychiatric asylum like that in which his mother wasted away. Her last years were spent penning letters to her ex-lover, who had moved on from the socialist firebrand of their first meeting to another life, another wife, another level of power and fame.

The film's stylistic explosiveness extends from its powerful music (Carlo Crivelli) to the graphics hurled out from the screen with the panache of a Mussolini-era newsreel. Some scenes are actually set in movie theatres, those generating houses of Fascist propaganda, including a dazzlingly staged battle between political factions, as stroboscopic as the flickering screen images behind them.

While Mussolini as a main character (played young by Filippo

Timi, who returns to play Benito the son) retires from the story, to be replaced by his "real" image intermittently invoked in newsreels, Giovanna Mezzogiorno takes Ida into the realms of human tragedy, leaving behind one indelible image of her character, hugging the high bars of an asylum window as she throws her messages out into a snowy midnight.

Of the week's two documentaries, *Petropolis: Aerial Perspectives on the Alberta Tar Sands* is 43 minutes of awesome landscape photography. From a helicopter, director Peter Mettler, commissioned by Greenpeace, maps the hell created by oil-collecting in a patch of Canada the size of England. This is the world's second-largest oil reserve. Peeled-back forests; outflow lakes black with bitumen; valleys eczema'd by excavation; it is at once scary, nightmarish and oddly beautiful. And silent until a late voice-over appends – even here obliquely – the message.

American: The Bill Hicks Story celebrates the cancer-curtailed career of a renegade US stand-up comic. Scenes of cut-out animation are the novel visual approach – *South Park* gone non-fiction – while the vocal panache is supplied by Hicks, blithely shooting down anything that sports or supports the Stars and

Stripes and dares to brag about it. *Eyes Wide Open*, the week's second Israeli feature, is a conflicted gay sex scene set in orthodox Jewish Jerusalem. Married butcher falls for new assistant; their flesh is willing and their spirit of resistance weak; soon the community comes together in outrage and doom walks the land. Worthy in theme, honourable in intent, oddly bloodless in execution. **NA**



Ridley Scott in 'Robin Hood'

Robin Hood

If Ridley Scott's aim was to bewilder, then *Robin Hood* must be counted a storming success. From the opening scene, we are offered little idea of who is doing what to whom. As for why: forget it. The plot is strewn across a handful of locations, and things are further obscured by Ann Scibelli's irrational sound design, with its thunderous trudging and muttered exchanges. Russell Crowe, Scott's favourite leading man, holds forth in a coarse medieval growl. As for all the possible areas of historical authenticity, accent is one we wouldn't miss.

The dialogue (by Brian Helgeland) offers the odd shaft of illumination. "The king is dead," announces one of Robin's undifferentiated sidekicks. "Dead?" he asks. "Dead," comes the reply. More often the characters join the technical team in frustrating our desire for comprehension. "How long will your business take?" asks another sidekick. "Stay safe," Robin replies, "be safe y'all." But then time-keeping is not his strong suit. Asked how long he will remain in Nottingham, he explains: "I could stay for a day, or more."

Pieces of parchment stained with back-story help us along. Robin Longstride has been fighting in the crusades for King Richard the Lionheart (Danny Huston). With enough squinting and straining, you can deduce the rest. The king is then killed in France on the journey home and replaced by his churlish younger brother (Oscar Isaac), whose closest ally, Godfrey (Mark Strong), is a traitor in the pay of the French. Robin, nifty with a bow and a sword, and a natural leader, is England's only hope against Norman invasion.

Unfortunately, he is holed up in Nottingham, having accepted a dying man's request to return a treasured sword to his blind, blathering father (Max von Sydow). Robin wasn't asked to shack up with his feisty widow, Marion (Cate Blanchett), but he does so regardless. The people of Nottingham have been pauperised by taxation, though this has done little to curb their hedonism. The film would be a good deal shorter without all the shots of grubby extras roasting hogs and dancing sweatily in chain-mail hoodies.

Those who struggled through Scott's medieval blockbuster *Kingdom of Heaven* will remember the mix of pomposity and bloody chaos. No amount of fast cutting can disguise the prevailing sense of inertia. When the gorgeous animated end-credits roll, Robin Longstride has still not become Robin Hood. A film that exists solely to breed sequels ought to leave you wanting more. **LR**

Lebanon (15) ★★★★

Samuel Maoz

Vincere (15) ★★★★

Marco Bellocchio

Petropolis (NC) ★★★★

Peter Mettler

American: The Bill Hicks Story (15) ★★★★

Matt Harlock & Paul Thomas

Eyes Wide Open (12A)

★★★★

Haim Tabakman

Robin Hood (12A) ★★★★

Ridley Scott

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This Evening's Television

BBC 1



Auntie Angela and her new husband pay a visit, 9.30pm

6.00 BBC News.

6.30 Regional News Programmes.

7.00 The One Show.

7.30 EastEnders.

8.00 Watchdog. Investigations into slimming pills sold to children, new homes riddled with defects, and a car-clocking rogue trader. Anne Robinson presents.

9.00 Have I Got News for You. Chris Addison and Julia Hartley-Brewer join Martin Clunes and team captains Paul Merton and Ian Hislop.

9.30 Outnumbered. Auntie Angela visits the family with new husband in tow.

10.00 BBC News.

10.25 Regional News and Weather.

10.35 Question Time.

11.35 This Week. Andrew Neil, Diane Abbott and Michael Portillo discuss political developments.

BBC 2

A mummified child offers clues to the past, 9pm

6.00 BBC News.

6.30 Regional News Programmes.

7.00 The One Show.

7.30 EastEnders.

8.00 Watchdog.

8.30 Outnumbered.

9.00 Have I Got News for You.

9.30 Question Time.

10.00 BBC News.

10.25 Regional News and Weather.

10.35 This Week.

11.35 Question Time.

12.00 BBC News.

12.30 Regional News and Weather.

1.00 BBC News.

1.30 Regional News and Weather.

2.00 BBC News.

2.30 Regional News and Weather.

3.00 BBC News.

3.30 Regional News and Weather.

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11.00 BBC News.

11

THE LEX COLUMN

Thursday May 13 2010

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A liberal dose of conservatism

Banking reform

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have their guns trained on the banks. They are clearly in touch with the zeitgeist. So the appointment of Vince Cable, the self-styled scourge of bankers, to a cabinet post should have struck fear into the hearts of UK bank chiefs. Yet the coalition's anticipated reform measures are surprisingly tame.

Although a banking levy was a priority for both parties, the new government is no clearer on reach or structure. Would a levy be confined to domestic deposits? Action on "unacceptable bonuses" was always on the cards. Yet "unacceptable" was not defined. Meanwhile, moves to increase bank competition are merely worthy: a few sub-scale new entrants are unlikely to alter the status quo. Likewise, increased lending to small- and medium-sized business depends on a recovery in demand. Loan guarantees might help but net lending targets might be imprudent. Returning macro-prudential regulation and "oversight" of banking supervision to the Bank of England shows a lack of faith in the Financial Services Authority. Yet Labour's regulator survives.

The coalition's biggest policy fudge is its commission to investigate the separation of retail and investment banking. It has a whole year to produce its first report. Unless manned by revisionist historians, the commission can only conclude that Northern Rock, a reckless mortgage lender, triggered the UK banking crisis. The subsequent collapse of pure investment bank Lehman Brothers merely worsened it. Not surprisingly, shares in universal banks Barclays and HSBC brushed off the coalition's break-up threat.

Away from the vote-grabbing rhetoric of the election trail, the coalition's watered-down plans are unlikely to jeopardise London's role as a global financial centre. For now, the coalition's guns are better deployed on public spending.

Capital gains tax

It is easy to imagine that the new coalition government's plans to increase capital gains tax might extract a chunk of cash from the rich to help plug the budget deficit. If only it were that simple. After the annual exemption of £10,100 weeds out small gains, only about 225,000 people pay CGT each year. Even if non-business CGT is increased from

Three decades ago, Margaret Thatcher entered 10 Downing Street quoting St Francis of Assisi; David Cameron grimly promised "hard and difficult work". The clear priority given by the UK's new governing partnership to deficit reduction has boosted sterling and gilts. A Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition is the best outcome markets could have hoped for after last week's inconclusive election.

It commands a parliamentary majority and – unusually for the UK – more than 50 per cent voter support, giving it political "cover" for tough measures. It will need it. Taming the budget deficit of 11 per cent of output by 2015-16, as the Conservatives intend, will require deeper, more prolonged spending cuts than under Mrs Thatcher.

The Lib Dems have made a significant concession in backing Tory plans for £6bn of cuts in "non-frontline services" in this financial year. This immediate, if modest, move may preserve the UK's triple A rating. In return, the Tories have accepted the Lib Dems' policy of moving towards a £10,000 lower threshold for income tax. An initial step in that direction will be funded by dropping Tory plans to raise

the current rate of 18 per cent to 40 per cent. George Osborne, the chancellor, will only have an extra £1.3bn to play with, according to Capital Economics, the research group – less than 1 per cent of the budget deficit.

Crucially, concessions for entrepreneurs – their current rate is 10 per cent – will be maintained in some form. So fears that a higher CGT rate will harm investment and stifle the economic recovery are mostly misplaced. Buy-to-let property investors, for example, will probably absorb the extra tax rather than leave the market. After all, it was growth expectations not lower tax rates that drove real estate skywards before 2007, when CGT was slashed from a top rate of 40 per cent.

The government's plan, though, is still just that. Politicians have done little more than "agree to seek a detailed agreement". And that is where the devil may lurk. Mr Osborne should, for example, consider an indexation system. This would, in effect, decrease a capital gain by the amount of inflation over the period the asset was held to ensure the equitable treatment of

New coalition has no time to waste



Sources: European Commission; Thomson Reuters Datastream

thresholds for employees' social security payments. Other taxes, including on non-business capital gains, will rise – and the Tories will sideline plans to restrict inheritance tax to millionaires.

Yet beyond this initial horse-trading, tens of billions of pounds of annual spending cuts still have to be made during the parliament, detailed in neither party's manifesto. The UK will have to consider Greek or Spanish-style

steps – cuts in public sector pay, capping public pensions.

Creating an independent Office of Budget Responsibility to review public finances is a deft way of shifting blame for such measures. But they will inevitably weigh heavily on the new government's popularity. Forming the UK's first coalition since the second world war was one thing. Holding it together through the storms ahead will be quite another.

investors across different time frames.

But right now, investors' thoughts are short-term. Mr Osborne will reveal his budget within 50 days.

The possibility that a higher CGT rate could be imposed on the spot will mean that for the next six weeks investors will have their fat fingers firmly on the sell button.

GM seeks lender

Why buy the cow when you have the milk? American taxpayers should ask the US Treasury this basic business question after unconfirmed reports that General Motors might buy back GMAC, its former financing subsidiary, or develop one internally. The supposed rationale is that GM would thus fetch more in an initial public offering. But this is robbing Peter to pay Paul. As Uncle Sam owns a majority in both, a share swap would result in a larger company but adds no value and probably destroys it.

Rebranded as Ally Financial, the former GMAC just reported its first operational profit in three years and is now financing a third of GM's

sales on an arms-length basis while providing working capital to 88 per cent of GM dealers. GM remains free to offer lavish financing incentives but must compensate Ally for this transparently. GM was able to obfuscate these costs when it controlled GMAC – using, for example, sanguine assumptions on residual lease values. GMAC expanded to become the carmaker's main profit centre, moving disastrously into mortgages.

Other than expanding the empire of Ed Whitacre, the chief executive, it is hard to see why GM's owners should condone buying or building a financing subsidiary. Even if GM does not abuse the privilege again, Ally seems more valuable as a fully fledged bank. Without deposits, a captive financing subsidiary must rely on the more fickle wholesale funding market – a thorny issue for junk-rated GM. This was one reason it sold most of GMAC to Cerberus, the private equity firm, in 2006. Furthermore, Ally now finances an even larger share of Chrysler's sales than GM's and could do the same for others. GM should be able to put money back into shareholders'

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Litany of failures led to BP spill

Warning signs were ignored, hints Congress
US probe reveals oil well failed safety test

By Anna Fifield in Washington

A litany of failures led to the catastrophic spill from BP's Gulf of Mexico well, a powerful US Congressional investigations panel revealed yesterday, suggesting officials from numerous companies overlooked many warning signs.

The revelations, gleaned from 100,000 pages of documents from the companies involved, including Transocean, the operator, also showed that the BP well had failed a key pressure test only a few hours before a gas surge led to the explosion.

With efforts to contain the spill and protect the Gulf environment continuing with little success, the claims have the potential to further damage the reputations of the companies involved.

"The more I learn about this accident, the more concerned I become," Henry Waxman, chairman of the House energy committee, told a hearing of the oversight and investigations subcommittee, which had requested the documents.

"This catastrophe appears to have been caused by a calamitous series of equipment and operational failures."

Executives from BP, which owns the well; Transocean, which operated the rig; Halliburton, which cemented around



Fallout: the Deepwater Horizon burst into flames after a 'calamitous series of equipment and operational failures'

the well equipment; and Cameron, which made the blow-out preventer, sat solemn-faced. Bart Stupak, head of the subcommittee, said he uncovered at least four significant problems with the blow-out preventer on the rig, which was meant to shut off the well in an emergency.

These included a leak in a

hydraulic system, which was supposed to provide emergency power to the shear rams that would cut through the drill pipe and seal the well. There was also insufficient power in the blow-out preventer to propel the shear rams through the drill pipe. Furthermore, the blow-out preventer had been extensively modified, something that BP did

not realise for at least a day after trying to activate an underwater control panel.

Also, at least one of the batteries in the "deadman switch" that was supposed to provide the final back-up was flat.

"The safety of its entire operations rested on the performance of a leaking and apparently defective blow-out preventer,"

Mr Stupak said. The documents also revealed that the well failed several pressure tests on the day of the explosion, but that at 8pm – two hours before the disaster – BP decided operations could resume, with Transocean apparently disagreeing.

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Shell's Alaska risk, Page 19

The Short View

James Mackintosh



Gordon Brown's final gift to the British nation was a sharp jump in sterling. His resignation on Tuesday prompted an immediate two-cent rise against the dollar, taking the pound almost back to \$1.50. But relief was short-lived, even when the markets got what they wanted: David Cameron at the helm of a Conservative-led government.

Markets reverted to type yesterday. Rather than listening to politicians, they followed the words of the central banker. The Bank of England's dovish inflation report suggested that interest rates would remain lower for longer, leading sterling to fall and gilts to rise. If the new government follows through on Mr Cameron's promise to reduce the deficit faster than Mr Brown planned, that could further hurt sterling and help gilts, by slowing the economy.

However, there is another, conflicting, pressure: confidence in the UK, particularly in light of the eurozone's troubles. Since the Greek crisis hit, what has been good for sterling has been good for gilts, as interest rates – set to remain low beyond the time horizon of most traders anyway – were ignored. Barring wobbles with the coalition government, this trade could reassess itself.

George Osborne, the new chancellor of the exchequer, has promised a Budget within 50 days to lay out plans to reduce the deficit, giving time for markets to forget about planned cuts. History suggests that this is possible: the last time Labour handed over the keys of 10 Downing Street to the Tories, in 1979, the pound traded marginally down against the dollar during the 39 days before Geoffrey Howe raised taxes in his first Budget.

The new government faces the worst peacetime deficit in history and an untested new form of government. The trick it has to pull off is to push through enough fiscal tightening to retain confidence in sterling but not so much that it plunges the country back into recession. Not easy.

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Pru's AIA deal on course after funding shake-up

By Paul J Davies and Neil Hume in London and Helen Thomas and Francesco Guerrera in New York

Prudential hopes to launch its delayed \$21bn (£14bn) rights issue early next week after agreeing to changes to the financing of its proposed \$35.5bn takeover of AIA, the Asian businesses of the stricken US insurer AIG.

The UK company, which declined to comment, was forced to delay the launch of its rights issue at the final hour last week after the Financial Services

Authority refused to sign off on the proposed capital buffer of the enlarged company.

Prudential's acquisition of AIA would make it the biggest foreign group in the fast-growing Asian insurance market and transform the Pru into the world's biggest life assurer outside China.

The Pru still has to win final approval on its prospectus from the UK Listing Authority.

Some people with knowledge of the situation were hopeful the approval would not take more than 24 hours, meaning

there was a chance that the rights issue could be launched tomorrow. But others said once the Pru had the UKLA's approval, it would still have to ensure it had time to price its rights issue and communicate the launch timing to investors and the media.

In recent days, the Pru has struck deals with AIG and its banks that have satisfied the UK regulator's higher capital requirements for the group.

AIG will now take \$2bn of junior debt instruments – or hybrid capital – instead of cash as part

of its \$35.5bn payment. The new junior debt is part of a \$5bn slug of such instruments, which will add to the Pru's capital base and are in place of \$5bn of senior debt that would have funded a cash payment to AIG.

The UK life assurer has also arranged a special £1bn backstop facility that can be drawn down in the event of extreme financial stress.

Shareholders have been waiting for the prospectus before deciding whether to support the deal in a vote, which had been scheduled for May 27 but is

likely now to be in early June. Last week's delay to the launch of the rights issue unnerved investors. Some were concerned about the amount of money required in the rights issue, the valuation put on AIA and the risks attached to the deal.

Before the planned launch last week, the issue was expected to be priced in a way that would let investors realise a significant amount of money if they sold rights on to Asian investors.

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European officials call changes to Facebook settings 'unacceptable'

By Maija Palmer in London

Facebook has been sharply criticised by European data protection officials for putting users' privacy at risk with changes to its service.

Officials advising the European Commission said in a letter to the social networking company that changes to its default settings in December were "unacceptable".

It is the strongest rebuke yet for the US company from European data protection officials and indicates an increasing willingness to crack down on privacy violations.

Officials said Facebook needed default settings that ensured only selected contacts could see user profiles. Users should be

able to choose explicitly whether their information could be accessed by search engines.

Facebook's changes in December meant that users' profiles were made accessible to others by default and certain aspects – such as lists of friends – were kept private.

Richard Allen, Facebook's director of public policy in Europe, said he was considering the company's response to the letter. Facebook has made a few adjustments to address privacy concerns raised by European regulators in the past, but he said there could be some areas where the company would be unwilling to compromise.

For example, European data authorities have wanted users to be able to log on to social

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**Andrew
Hill**
LOMBARD

Optimists think Conservatives and Liberal Democrats will save each other from their own worst excesses. That could well be true when it comes to banking reform.

The banking industry will, in the words of one non-executive, be "in for a few collisions" with the crusading Vince Cable if, as new business secretary, he imposes net lending targets on nationalised banks. But what was an urgent goal for the pre-poll Lib Dems is now merely a topic for "consideration" by the coalition. That's as it should be: forced lending could undermine the deficit-reduction priority of selling our stakes in banks at a profit.

Compromises over banking regulation are even more welcome. By promising to

give the Bank of England "control of macro-prudential regulation" but "oversight" over regulation of individual companies, the coalition is rowing back from George Osborne's grandiose pre-election plan to restructure the Financial Services Authority under the Bank.

Mr Osborne's radical proposal went further than David Cameron's earlier catchphrase to "restore the power of the governor's eyebrow" and beyond what even the governor himself wanted. Mervyn King asked for a few more tools to prevent concerns about instability turning to crisis; Mr Osborne said he would give him the whole cluttered shed-full – whatever the consequences and cost of tidying it up.

The new control-and-over-sight model still needs refining. Some additional Bank oversight can be achieved just by flicking a switch or two so central bankers can see what supervisors see. Who precisely sets the national rules is not a huge issue now that the framework is decided in Basel and Brussels rather than Threadneedle Street or Canary Wharf.

The tricky part is control. Inside the

Bank, many would prefer direct lines of command. But outside, plenty of others still think Mr King should simply have shouted his warnings more loudly. The Con-Libs should grant the FSA a reprieve. But when it comes to ensuring financial stability, they still have a way to go before they can give a clear and confident answer to the crucial question "Who's in charge?"

EMI: headbangers wanted

There's unlimited supply

*And there is no reason why
I tell you it was all a frame
They only did it 'cos of fame*

Fast forward 30-odd years from the Sex Pistols' seminal outburst against their erstwhile record label and investors are picking up the refrain. Guy Hands' Terra Firma paid £4.2bn for EMI in 2007, presumably on the grounds he would have an unlimited supply of debt and willing investors. Alas, there really was no reason why the latter should have stumped up; most have written their investments down to precisely zero. So it is surely tempting,

now Mr Hands is back asking for another £360m, to view it all as a frame. Heavens, even if you get to party with Roll Deep, who needs that kind of fame?

Mr Hands hopes they all do. He wants them to dip into their pockets for £105m, enough to cure breached covenants with a bit over for good measure. He then needs them to part with another £255m, possibly in pretty short order, to keep EMI humming along through to 2015. The potential internal rate of return on this cash injection is 58 per cent a year; juicy enough unless experience triumphs over hope on you are pedantic enough to add in the sunk £1.75bn that went before.

But is it still just a frame? EMI is bleeding rockers, with Queen the latest to bite the dust. It operates in a world where artists have more ways to distribute their music than Johnny Rotten could ever have dreamt of. Come 2015, even the fuddy-duddy of fund managers may be file sharing. Sure, the group has trebled earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation in the three years under Terra Firma. But ebitda of £330m in the

year to end-March pales beside the £200m drain to service debts. As the song goes, *I do not need the pressure (EMI)*.

Prudence and the Pru

If Prudential goes ahead with its delayed rights issue in the coming days, it will do so having learnt two important lessons from its stand-off with the Financial Services Authority. First, what looks prudent and sensible to a board and management that have convinced themselves about the merits of a deal may not look prudent and sensible to a cautious watchdog. Second, negotiations with a determined post-crisis regulator are not the same as negotiations with rival bankers, boards or customers. These days, when the FSA names a figure for capital requirements, it is not so much an opening bid in a round of haggling as a final take-it-or-leave-it offer.

EMI: louise.lucas@ft.com
andrew.hill@ft.com
To comment, visit www.ft.com/lombard

M&S acts to reduce pension shortfall

GENERAL RETAILERS

Review turns up gaping deficit

No plan to close final salary scheme

By Elizabeth Rigby

Marks and Spencer is to put £800m into its pension scheme after a review found it had a yawning deficit, but the retailer insisted yesterday it had no plans to close its final salary scheme to existing members.

"The £500m difference between the valuation deficit and the funding plan is expected to be met by investment returns on the pension scheme's existing assets," M&S said.

The clothing and food chain, which has 20,000 current members in its defined benefits scheme, said it would not be following the growing band of companies – such as Alliance Boots, Wm Morrison and Vodafone – who are closing the final salary schemes to existing members.

It closed the scheme to new members in 2002.

Analysts expressed relief that M&S did not have to launch a rights issue or put bigger sums of cash into the pot in the short term.

However, Credit Suisse warned that the £1.3bn deficit was larger than it had expected, pointing out that the fund was only £600m in the red at the last valuation in 2006.

"There may be some relief here that the huge deficit has not resulted in a more punitive funding requirement."

"One is left with the impressions, however, that this is just the next phase in this saga (next valuation due as at March 2012) and that the attempt to cover off the liability is to a significant extent being deferred rather than addressed to protect short-term cash flows."

M&S shares rose 6.7p to 351.3p.

M&S is also putting £300m value in property in a partnership with the fund while providing a further £124m by transferring assets from US debt hedge contracts.

The retailer, which has 123,000 pension fund members, will have a £500m funding shortfall, according to the latest valuation. But the company said it was not a problem given that the markets have rebounded since that valuation was carried out.

People



EDITED BY
Emilia Mychaszuk
and **Emiko Terazono**

Political minds on Unilever board

The newest Unilever director Sir Malcolm Rifkind and the retiring Unilever director Lord Brittan both had part of their minds elsewhere yesterday as investors in the consumer group quizzed the board down to deodorant ingredients.

Sir Malcolm, the Tory MP for Kensington and Chelsea – who had some making up to do after accusing the party's new Liberal Democrat partners of two-timing – rushed off after the annual meeting to do media interviews.

He was as safely elected to his new Unilever role as he was to his west London seat, where there was a 5 per cent plus swing in his favour.

However, it prompted one investor to lament the departure from the board of Infosys founder Narayana Murthy.

"I have nothing against Sir Malcolm Rifkind," she said, "but it does seem a backward step that we are

losing an Asian director and gaining a Scottish one."

It might have also been noted that Unilever was swapping one senior Tory for another. Sir Malcolm is the second cousin, once removed, of Lord Brittan, who retires from Unilever after 10 years.

The new deputy prime minister Nick Clegg's one-time mentor in Brussels, Lord Brittan could not help looking at his watch towards the end as complaints arose from the floor about the absence of hot food from lunch. He was then occupied on his mobile phone for a while, ahead of the new team's Number 10 debut press conference.

King uses stealth

New defence secretary Liam Fox could be forgiven if he thinks he will get an easy ride from the Defence Industries Council, the powerful industry lobby group, under its low-key new chairman Ian King, the BAE Systems boss.

His predecessor was Mike Turner, chairman of Babcock International and also ex-BAE Systems. A Manchester United fan, Mr Turner sometimes deployed a combative style that became well known in Whitehall corridors.

Mr King, a Portsmouth supporter who succeeded Mr Turner at both the lobby group and BAE, is much quieter. But ministers and mandarins

shouldn't rejoice just yet, according to defence insiders. The ride may be quiet, but not necessarily any easier.

Heavey pay drill

Investors in Tullow Oil sent chief executive Aidan Heavey a small message of protest against the remuneration report. An increase in the maximum level of bonus pay saw just

under 10 per cent vote against the pay report, giving Claire Spottiswood, the Aviva policyholder advocate, something to think about as head of the remuneration committee.

Davis's Bric build

Former McKinsey managing partner Ian Davis is adding to his portfolio as he prepares for life after retiring from the

consulting group in July. Following on from his appointment to the BP board at the start of April, he is joining private equity group Apax Partners' chief Martin Halusa as a senior adviser. Apax, which has made an investment in Brazil and opened an office in China, will rely on Mr Davis for counsel on its global growth strategy.

UBS tech switch

UBS global head of technology Dominic Lester has switched to Jefferies, the US investment bank aggressively expanding its London business. It is the latest swoop on UBS staff by Jefferies, after a hiring spree last summer that included the UBS healthcare banking team.

Mr Lester led the UBS

London-based tech team from 2006, advising UK companies such as CSR, Autonomy and Sophos, the IT security company bought by Apax. At least one member of the UBS tech team is expected to move with Mr Lester.

Jefferies took advantage of the fallout at the banks after the financial crisis to more than double its size in London in two years, from 250 to 550 employees.

POWER PLAYER

Joe Plumeri

Willis chief executive

The charismatic boss of global insurance broker Willis Group, Joe Plumeri, is going to treat the audience to his inimitable New Jersey style as he plays host at the British American Business Council annual conference in London today.

An entertainer who paces

the stage and works the crowd, the former Citigroup veteran is also speaking at next week's Barclays Capital financial services event.

The 66-year-old Willis

Group chairman and chief

tells a story of being hired in 2000 by KKR founder



Henry Kravis in Paris when he was attending the French Open and by chance ran into Willis's then owner.

A sharp-dressing Italian-American, the grandson of Sicilian immigrants, he shook the staid UK broker. He is famous for a blue neon sign in his office that reads: "The boss is happy".

His perceptions of the financial crisis are acute, and

he recently said he told Goldman Sachs boss Lloyd Blankfein he was wrong about the need for regulation in building trust.

He studied history and economics and became a gofer at Carter, Berlin, Potomac & Weill in 1968 when he was looking for part-time work in law school. In his 32 years at Citigroup, he worked at Travelers, Shearson Lehman and ran Smith Barney and Citibank North America, as well as Primerica, the life

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He is married to Nancy,

with three children and

numerous grandchildren,

and owns two minor league

baseball teams and a

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Companies | UK

Regulator rejects ITV ad rule change

MEDIA

Commission still sees protection need
Investors eye gains from coalition

By Ben Fenton,
Chief Media Correspondent

Competition authorities rebuffed ITV's efforts to lift restrictions on what it charges advertisers, but the broadcaster's shares rose as investors took the view that it would benefit under a

Conservative-led government.

Adam Crozier, chief executive, condemned as "out of touch" a decision by the Competition Commission not to alter its initial findings published in September on the contract rights renewal (CRR) system, which was introduced in 2003 when Carlton and Granada joined forces to become ITV.

The broadcaster's ability to attract mass audiences, through shows such as *The X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*, remained unique and so advertisers and media buyers still needed protecting, the commission said.

CRR allows advertisers to renew their deals with ITV on the same terms as they had in 2003. Under a complex formula known as the "ratchet", it also links the rates ITV can charge to its ratings.

The regulator yesterday said it would go no further than suggested in September, when it said that it would allow ITV's ITV1+1 channel, yet to be launched, and ITV HD to be

included in those ratings. Analysts have estimated that ITV would benefit to the tune of between £40m and £55m a year if CRR was scrapped altogether.

Archie Norman, the new chairman of the UK's largest commercial broadcaster, has made removal of restrictive regulation one of his priorities.

Diana Guy, deputy chairman of the commission, said the power of the company's flagship channel remained undimmed.

"ITV1 remains a 'must have' for certain advertisers

and certain types of campaign," she said.

"So the essential reason for the CRR undertakings remains: to protect advertisers and other commercial broadcasters from the enhanced market position created by the merger of Carlton and Granada."

The commission said ITV had overstated the cost of CRR and the distorting effect it had on the market.

Mr Crozier said: "Today's ruling is out of touch and damaging for the interests of creative Britain. UK media is over-regulated and

this has to change if we value and want to sustain a vibrant independent broadcasting sector that can rival the BBC and compete on a global stage."

Nonetheless, ITV shares rose sharply at the opening of the market and closed up 3.95p, or 6.9 per cent, at 61.45p, with analysts saying that investors saw a Conservative-led government as a positive factor for ITV's medium-term future.

Mr Norman is an ex-deputy chairman of the Conservative party. However, Toby Syfret,

broadcasting specialist at Enders Analysis, said that he could see little that a government could do without producing a Communications Act to reshape the advertising market.

"I can't see that as being a priority in the first couple of years of any government in these circumstances," he said.

Mr Syfret estimated the net gain of scrapping CRR as only £30m annually.

Last year, ITV's net income from advertising was £1.29bn.

Delayed results show big losses at Cattles

GENERAL FINANCIAL

By Adam Jones and Sharlene Goff

Cattles, the subprime lender, has unveiled worse-than-expected losses for the years prior to its financial crisis.

It emerged last year that the group had underestimated the provisions it should have made in relation to bad debts. Yesterday it said the losses made in 2007 and 2008 were much worse than it envisaged six months ago.

Cattles delayed the publication of its performance figures for 2008 in February last year so it could perform a thorough review of its impairments. At that time it warned it had probably overestimated the value of its loan portfolio.

The group yesterday released the audited results for 2008, and they made worse reading than expected.

The pre-tax loss was £745.2m, reflecting a loan loss charge of £794.3m. The deficit was significantly worse than the £55.3m unaudited loss Cattles had announced in November.

This figure was released before Grant Thornton started work as its new auditor, replacing PwC. Cat-

£745.2m

Cattles pre-tax loss for 2008, revealed yesterday

ties said the larger-than-expected loss partly reflected additional loan impairments and provisions.

The lender also announced a further restatement to its 2007 figures. These revealed a pre-tax loss of £96.5m during the period instead of the £22.7m unaudited profit it had been expecting.

When Cattles published the unaudited figures for 2008 and 2007 last November, it said they were subject to material change.

Trading in the group's shares and bonds was suspended in April and the shares are now deemed to have little or no value.

The group has revealed that it owes more money to creditors than it would be able to claw back from existing customers.

The business is now under new management and has ceased lending in its main subsidiary, Welcome Finance, though it is still collecting payments from this business. Last November, Cattles announced that it had reached a standstill arrangement with its own lenders.

Cattles is still providing small loans through Shopacheck, its door-to-door lending business, which are being funded through collections made from existing borrowers. Its debt collection business, Lewis, is still operating, though it is loss-making.

Cattles intends to release its 2009 results "in the near future", adding that this would involve another substantial loss. Its shares will be suspended until at least the publication of last year's results, after which it will make a decision whether to relist or delist the shares.

It is also the subject of a Financial Services Authority investigation, which is focusing on whether the company's executives lived up to their obligations to make timely and accurate announcements about its financial situation.

Kesa hails input from Darty as Comet tails off

GENERAL RETAILERS

By Hannah Kuchler

Sales at Comet have fallen further as Darty, its sister electrical retail chain in France, continued to outperform Kesa Electricals' UK division.

Like-for-like sales in the period from January 9 to April 30 rose 0.5 per cent at Darty compared with a drop of 4 per cent at Comet.

Kesa's group like-for-like sales fell 1.2 per cent. However, revenue rose 1 per cent on a constant currency basis, reflecting the opening of new stores.

1%

Rise in revenue on a constant currency basis

£76m

Average expected adjusted profit for full year

Sales at Comet have fallen faster since January than in the full year, when like-for-like sales fell 1.4 per cent. Comet maintained its market share but the market for electrical goods has suffered as shoppers put off big-ticket purchases.

Thierry Falque-Pierrrotin, chief executive, said: "We expect adjusted profit before tax for the full year to be significantly ahead of last year and in line with the average of current market expectations of £76m."

He added that profit would rise because of an

increase in gross margin.

For the year to April 30, group like-for-like sales were down 1.5 per cent but total revenue rose 0.9 per cent on a constant-currency basis. At Darty sales were up 0.2 per cent but revenue grew 2.7 per cent. Comet's 1.4 per cent drop in full year like-for-like sales translated into a fall in revenue of 0.4 per cent.

The chief executive said he was pleased with the progress in turning around the Spanish operation and developing Italian and Turkish start-ups. Their sales rose 10.9 per cent.

Kesa shares firmed 4.7p to close at 119.3p.

• FT Comment

Darty thrives because of its market position as the best place to go for good service and quality electrical goods. Comet faces much more competition than its French counterpart; in the UK electricals are sold on promotion in supermarkets and in megastores such as Currys and the newly arrived Best Buy. Its attempt to brand itself as the quality retailer has so far fallen on deaf ears and it trades at a discount to both the sector and its electricals competitors, at about 12 times earnings.

Management is due to update on strategy in June but it is increasingly clear that the brightest future for Kesa lies outside the UK. Investors should, at the very least, expect a lull in growth before it can fully exploit its operations in southern Europe.



Recession bites: the intercity Greyhound business, buses for which were introduced to the UK last year, performed poorly in the US

Getty Images

Higher fuel costs weigh on FirstGroup

TRAVEL & LEISURE

By John O'Doherty

A fall in passenger numbers and higher fuel costs dented full-year profits at FirstGroup, although the rail and bus operator was cheered by strong cash generation and a dividend of 10 per cent.

"The recession in the UK and North America impacted our passenger demand businesses and created pressure on our contracted businesses [municipal bus services] in North America where lower

tax receipts have led to public spending constraints at both state and local level," said Moin Lockhead, chief executive.

"In addition, our hedged fuel costs increased by about £90m across the business and finally, as if that wasn't enough, the severe weather conditions that disrupted transport across the vast majority of the UK and North America during our fourth quarter has also impacted these rates."

However, while passenger volumes did decline in some markets, the group was able

to maintain margins and revenue per mile by cost actions and a reduction in the number of total miles travelled.

For the year to March, pre-tax profits fell 10 per cent to £180m on revenue that rose 2 per cent to £6.3bn.

Earnings per share fell from 30p to 27.3p; the total dividend is lifted 10 per cent to 20.65p following a proposed final of 14p.

The group has now committed to raising its dividend by 7 per cent a year.

FirstGroup generated net

cash of £136m and is now targeting cash generation of £150m for next year.

The cash was used to reduce the group's net debt, which fell from £2.5bn to £2.3bn over the course of the year.

Shares in FirstGroup rose 12p to 384p yesterday.

• FT Comment

FirstGroup is exposed to the recession at both ends: penny-pinching consumers cut back on intercity bus and rail travel, while tax-starved cities with empty coffers trim their local bus

services. As highlighted by the poor performance of the US intercity Greyhound business, the pain has so far come largely from the consumer side – the daily school bus run is less discretionary than a weekend visit to see family in Minneapolis. FirstGroup shares trade on about 9 times 2011 earnings, a slight discount to its smaller peer Go-Ahead on 11. With both companies sitting on forward dividend yields of about 6 per cent, income-hunting investors may see marginally better value in FirstGroup.

Stobart moves up a gear despite dents to trade

INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORT

Revenue and profit rise amid recession

Poor weather costs group £500,000

By Michael Kavanagh

Dents to trading caused by harsh winter weather and the financial collapse of a customer failed to prevent a jump in full-year revenue and profits at Stobart Group, the trucking company that is reinventing itself as a "multi-modal" logistics provider.

Revenue at the company, still dominated by its Eddie Stobart trucking operation, increased from £431m to £448m in spite of recessionary pressure on volumes in the road haulage sector.

"Most of our deliveries are for the foods and drink sector, and that is more recession-proof than most other forms of transport

delivery," said Andrew Tinkler, chief executive, pointing to recent contract wins with Unilever and AG Barr.

The company calculated that poor winter weather – which disrupted road transportation across Britain – cost Stobart Group £500,000 in profits, while it also wrote off £300,000 in debts as Jarvis, the York-based rail maintenance group, went into administration.

Nevertheless, Mr Tinkler pointed to progress in its integrated transport strategy.

That included the development of facilities at Southend and Carlisle airports and the completion of a distribution centre and chilled food warehouse facility in Widnes on the Mersey, backed by Tesco, during the year.

Pre-tax profits jumped from £22m to £34m for the year to February 28.

However, lingering distortions from losses caused by the merger of the company

with Westbury Property in 2007 saw its post-tax outcome, including discontinued operations, jump from a loss of £8.7m to a profit of £28m.

The full-year dividend is

unchanged at 6p, after a 4p final, payable from earnings per share of 11.58p.

• FT Comment

It is steady as she goes for



Airport acquisitions aid Stobart's reinvention

Daniel Jones

Shares in Compass have bounced back since Richard Cousins took the chief executive's chair four years ago, much of the rally driven by his efficiency programme. Sceptics' concerns have been two-fold: room for further margin improvement, and for top-line growth.

Yesterday's figures go some way to addressing both. The shares have risen by more than a quarter since the turn of the year, outperforming Sodexo. That leaves Compass trading at 17 times forecast earnings per share of 33p: hardly cheap, but a discount to its French rival (on about 19 times) that seems hard to justify.

• FT Comment

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Richard Cousins' chief executive, said: "We are not going to get cocky but we are quite optimistic," said Richard Cousins, chief executive.

"I wouldn't want to call it too strongly – it's still a tough economy out there." Pre-tax profits rose from £378m to £459m in the six months to the end of March on sales of £7.1bn (£6.93bn), although the figures were flattered by the weakness of sterling.

Revenue improved by a modest 0.9 per cent,

Eurofighter GmbH. Under the contract BAE will provide a range of repair services that are expected to lead to reduced support costs and greater equipment reliability.

• Vertu aims for growth

Vertu, which has grown in three years to become the UK's ninth-biggest motor retailer, sees a strong pipeline of potential acquisitions that it can assimilate, helping to achieve future earnings growth

RESULTS

Name	Turnover	Pre-Tax	EPS (p)	Div (p)	Pay day	Total
Cattles	Fin* 847 912.2					



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SAP to buy Sybase in \$5.8bn deal

SOFTWARE

Acquisition biggest in nearly three years

German group to pay \$65 per share

By Daniel Schäfer
in Frankfurt

SAP, the world's largest enterprise software maker, has agreed to buy US rival Sybase in a deal worth \$5.8bn, its biggest acquisition in almost three years.

The German software group will pay \$65 per share in cash for Sybase, SAP said in a statement yesterday evening.

That represents a 44 per cent premium to the three-month average stock price of the fourth-largest provider of database software.

The move extends the rivalry between SAP and US rival Oracle, where Oracle has been the leading database company but is number two to SAP in busi-

ness management software. Bill McDermott, SAP's co-chief executive, said the company would benefit hugely from Sybase's database and mobile application technology.

"We see a great potential in combining the leader in enterprise software with the leader in mobility," Mr McDermott said.

The deal marks a fast foray into dealmaking by Mr McDermott and Jim Hagemann Snabe, SAP's co-chief executives.

SAP's last big acquisition was the takeover of rival Business Objects for €4.8bn (\$6.1bn) in late 2007.

Sybase's share price shot up more than 35 per cent yesterday, giving the US-based company a market value of just below \$5bn. The group specialises in business intelligence and trading software for financial institutions, as well as solutions for mobile devices, matching SAP's requirement that any takeover should move the com-

pany forward in terms of new technology.

"This is a growth story," Mr Snabe said.

Mobile, "on device" software is one of three key areas for growth in SAP's strategy. But it is also one where the group, which is by far the biggest seller of traditional enterprise software, is lagging behind competitors such as Sybase.

Sybase would not have been a target for its acquisitive Bay Area neighbour Oracle, according to Yvonne Genovese, business applications analyst with the Gartner research group.

than being installed and licensed.

Mr Snabe said Sybase would be run as a fully owned subsidiary, with John Chen, its chief executive and chairman, staying at the helm of the company as well as joining SAP's management board.

SAP is financing the deal with a €2.75bn loan facility provided by its advisers on the deal, Deutsche Bank and Barclays Capital. Bank of America Merrill Lynch advised Sybase.

Crédit Agricole in Greek bank rethink

BANKS

By Megan Murphy in London

Crédit Agricole said it was "reassessing" its plans for its Greek retail banking unit after the €750bn (\$948bn) bail-out plan announced by eurozone finance ministers this week.

The French lender is viewed as one of the banks most exposed to Greece's debt crisis owing to its majority stake in Emporiki, its Greek subsidiary.

"Triggering of the emergency bail-out plan for Greece launched by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund has led Crédit Agricole to consider reassessing Emporiki's restructuring and development plan," the group said yesterday in announcing its first quarter results.

Crédit Agricole last week pegged its exposure to Greek sovereign debt at €3.8bn as European banks scrambled to reassure investors that the potential fallout from the spiralling crisis was manageable.

That figure did not include Emporiki's exposure to the souring climate for retail customers.

Crédit Agricole said that loan provision charges had a €254m impact on its Greek operations in the first quarter amid a broad restructuring effort to stem further losses.

Bertrand Badré, Crédit Agricole's chief financial officer, said that while Emporiki's loan portfolio would certainly be hit by a severe deterioration in the Greek economy, a recession would likely make restructuring the unit "easier and cheaper".

"I urge you not to jump to conclusions too rapidly," Mr Badré said.

"It's much more complicated than it looks... I don't know what the outcome will be yet."

Across the group, Crédit Agricole reported a first quarter profit of €470m, slightly lower than analysts' consensus estimates but more than double the profit the lender posted for the first quarter of 2009.

BNP Paribas and Société Générale both reported better-than-expected results this month, which might put pressure on Crédit Agricole's share price when the French stock market opens this morning, analysts said.

Within the bank's corporate and investment banking business, which has been dramatically scaled back since racking up big losses in the financial crisis, revenues rebounded to €1.3bn, up 20 per cent from a sluggish fourth quarter.

They were still down nearly 9 per cent year on year, owing to what Crédit Agricole termed an "unusually high basis of comparison".

Total group revenues increased 19 per cent to €4.82bn from €4.06bn, while provisions for future loan losses, declined slightly to €1.07bn from €1.09bn.



Witness: Josef Ackermann, Deutsche Bank chief, said he had tried for days to get information from IKB about risk positions

AFP

German financial crisis plays out in court

BANKS

News analysis

Deutsche Bank chief Josef Ackermann gives evidence in trial of former IKB head, says James Wilson

Public scrutiny of Germany's costly financial crisis moved to the courtroom yesterday when Josef Ackermann, chief executive of Deutsche Bank, appeared before a judge to explain Deutsche's relationship with a smaller rival days before its near-collapse.

The fact that IKB was already partly owned by the German government as its troubles mounted added a political dimension to its near-collapse.

The case has also highlighted the relationships between lenders such as IKB, which were eager buyers of structured credits, and the global investment banks that supplied them.

IKB invested heavily in US subprime credits through an off-balance sheet "conduit" called Rhineland. In an unrelated case, Goldman Sachs has been charged with fraud by the US Securities and Exchange Commission in

surance about its finances only days before its rescue.

Mr Ortseifen's trial is the first in Germany of a bank executive in connection with the financial crisis.

The appearance as a witness of Mr Ackermann, the country's most famous banker, was brief but is still the country's biggest piece of legal theatre to have arisen from the crisis.

The conduct ran into funding problems in 2007 and forced IKB to turn to the German government and rival banks for an emergency bail-out.

Stefan Ortseifen, former chief executive, is the first banker to face trial in Germany for his role in the financial crisis.

The lossmaking bank is now owned by Lone Star,

the US financial investor.

IKB, in part because of the multiple roles it played. It was a seller of securities to IKB, as Mr Ackermann said in court. Later, as Mr Ackermann also said yesterday, he alerted Bafin, Germany's regulator, to IKB's problems, leading to its bail-out over the last weekend of July 2007.

Mr Ortseifen has previously suggested that Deutsche Bank's decision to cut a credit line to IKB earlier that month harmed his bank's reputation and contributed to its need for a bail-out only 48 hours later.

Yesterday Mr Ackermann denied this, saying there had already been indications of problems at IKB.

In a 40-minute appearance in a Düsseldorf court, Mr Ackermann said Deutsche had tried for days to get information from IKB about its risk positions after credit spreads for IKB widened considerably.

The judge has already

said she considers the IKB press statement of July 20 misleading. Mr Ortseifen denies a charge of market manipulation.

The trial continues.

Sitting a few metres from Mr Ortseifen, Mr Ackermann said Deutsche had requested more information about IKB's portfolio on July 20, the same day IKB issued a press release about its financial situation that is at the heart of the case against Mr Ortseifen.

Deutsche had realised that IKB's valuations of the Rhineland portfolio were too optimistic, Mr Ackermann said. "We could tell that IKB was already in a very problematic situation."

Adding to the interest in the case was Mr Ackermann's reappearance in front of the same judge who acquitted him in Germany's Mannesmann trial in 2004, when Mr Ackermann and other former board members faced charges of breach of trust over bonus payments.

The judge has already

said she considers the IKB press statement of July 20 misleading. Mr Ortseifen denies a charge of market manipulation.

The trial continues.

AIG chief says group will stay in profit

NON-LIFE INSURANCE

Benmosche vows to pay back bail-outs

By Suzanne Kapner
in New York

Robert Benmosche, AIG chief executive, told shareholders at yesterday's annual meeting that the beleaguered insurer would continue to earn profit and pay back all of its obligations, including the \$101.6bn it owes taxpayers.

The shareholders meeting was the first for Mr Benmosche, who replaced Edward Liddy after he resigned in 2009 amid a political row over AIG's policies on bonuses for senior staff.

AIG's past losses mainly stem from derivatives contracts to insure investors against house price declines. Once prices fell, AIG owed billions of dollars it could not pay.

The company's near col-

lapse threatened to bring down its trading partners and destabilise the global financial markets.

Since taking the helm, Mr Benmosche has reached agreements to sell \$51bn of assets, including a deal that is pending to divest AIG's Asian life assurance division to Prudential of the UK. At the same time, business at the company's core property and casualty underwriting units has improved, helping AIG to record a \$1.45bn first-quarter profit, compared with a loss of \$4.35bn a year ago.

Some of AIG's problems stemmed from mortgage securities it insured for Goldman Sachs.

Goldman now faces civil fraud charges filed by the US Securities and Exchange Commission that allege the bank misrepresented the role played by a hedge fund in selecting subprime mortgage assets for a collateralised debt obligation similar

to the ones insured by AIG. Goldman denies any wrongdoing.

Mr Benmosche denied speculation that AIG had dropped Goldman as a top adviser as a result of some of these issues: "Goldman does some things better than others, and where they do, we want to use them."

But Mr Benmosche confirmed that AIG lawyers were combing through contracts it had with Goldman Sachs and other firms to see whether they can recover any funds. "To the extent we find anything that was done wrong, we'll take action," he said.

Compared with last year,

when investors expressed

their disapproval of AIG's ballooning losses, yesterday's meeting was calm and short, a sign AIG is putting its most troublesome problems behind it.

All of the 11 directors nominated for re-election were voted in by a majority.

Four other measures sup-

ported by the company

passed, while not one of the

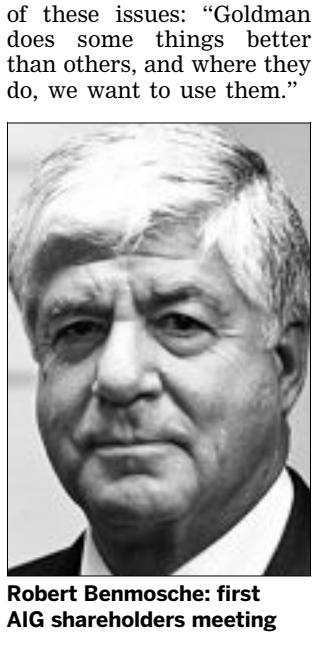
three shareholder propos

als, including a requirement

that senior executives retain 75 per cent of all

equity based pay for at least

two years after they leave the company, received the necessary majority.



Robert Benmosche: first AIG shareholders meeting

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IBM sets out bold buying strategy

SOFTWARE

Five-year plan for \$20bn in purchases

Core businesses for group have matured

By David Gelles and Chris Nuttall in San Francisco

IBM will spend \$20bn on acquisitions over the next five years, Sam Palmisano, chief executive, said yesterday.

"In five years we will spend more in acquisition than we did in the previous 10," Mr Palmisano told analysts gathered for the company's investor day.

IBM has already stepped up the pace of acquisitions in recent months.

During the first quarter it spent \$1bn in cash, buying mostly smaller companies and putting it on track for the \$4bn a year it would

'In five years we will spend more in acquisition than in the previous 10'

Sam Palmisano
IBM chief executive

need to spend to hit Mr Palmisano's target.

Acquiring new companies would provide IBM with additional paths to growth, good news for a company whose core businesses of consulting and software are largely matured.

Software, analytics and software as a service (SaaS) are expected to be a focus of IBM's buying spree.

The company talked about its evolving "cloud" strategy at its annual software conference in Las Vegas last week. Its customers are showing more interest in having their applications and services run remotely for them over the web – so-called cloud computing.

Last week, it bought privately held Cast Iron Systems to help integrate different cloud applications and service providers.

A buying spree would also relieve IBM of the more than \$14bn in cash and marketable securities it had amassed in recent years.

Other large tech companies, including Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle, have also

hoarded cash through the downturn.

Mr Palmisano said the aggressive buying strategy would be made possible by what he expected to be "at least \$20" earnings per share by 2015, which would generate \$100bn in free cash flow during the same period.

The chief executive's forecasts were part of a "five-year roadmap" IBM presented to investors that assumed 5 per cent compound revenue growth over the five-year period.

The timeline continues IBM's habit of making detailed forecasts. In May 2007 it introduced a three-year plan to achieve \$10 per share by the end of 2010. It hit that target one year early, at the end of 2009.

The group now expects EPS of \$11.20 for the full fiscal year.

Mr Palmisano has overseen more than 100 purchases during his time as chief executive. The largest of those was the \$3.5bn purchase of PwC Consulting in 2002, a deal that bolstered IBM's services division but has been marred by choppy integration and a more competitive outsourcing market.

The second-largest purchase under Mr Palmisano was also for a services company, the \$1.3bn purchase of Internet Security Systems in 2006.

It spent \$1.5bn in the 2009 calendar year, with \$1.2bn of that spent on SPSS, the business analytics group.

IBM will be 100 years old next year. From its origins as a vendor of meat slicers and scales, it has become the world's largest consulting group and third-largest software company.



Sparks fly: US private equity firm Bain Capital viewed Gome as a rare opportunity to buy a strategic stake in a leading Chinese consumer group

Indian telecoms groups protest at charges

MOBILE AND TELECOMS

By Joe Leahy in Mumbai

India's telecoms companies have raised the alarm over a threat of retrospective charges for using the mobile spectrum that analysts warn could cost them hundreds of millions of dollars.

The move by the Indian telecoms regulator has provoked protest from Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Essar, the industry leaders.

Analysts estimate that the recommendations from the Telecoms Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) could cost Bharti about \$700m and Vodafone about \$650m at a time when they are facing billions of dollars in outlays on third-generation mobile spectrum.

Bharti, controlled by Indian telecoms entrepreneur Sunil Mittal, yesterday described the recommendations as "shocking, arbitrary and retrograde". It said: "These are against all existing global norms for spectrum allocation and efficiency." The group's shares fell 8.3 per cent to Rs261.55 while the broader market was higher.

Vodafone Essar, a joint venture led by the UK-based mobile group, described the proposals as "opaque, illogical and discriminatory".

The move comes as a blow to most operators in the fastest-growing large mobile market at a time when they are grappling with competition and raising money to acquire new spectrum. The government began auctioning 3G spectrum early last month.

Bidding for pan-India allocations had reached \$3.21bn last night, more than 50 per cent higher than most had predicted.

Bharti is under pressure to begin integrating its \$10.7bn purchase of China's corporate landscape is littered with disputes involving foreign private equity and local companies over strategy, governance and influence.

Kohlberg Kravis Roberts has had its share of headaches after investing \$112m in 2007 in China's Tianrui Cement, amid well-publicised squabbles with the company's founder.

India is adding nearly 20m subscribers a month and is second only to China in total users, with about 600m.

Trai is proposing that operators be charged a one-off fee for any spectrum they have been given above 6.2 Megahertz. The fee will be based on the 3G auction prices.

Analysts said the proposed rules will require providers to return any spectrum above 8 MHz to the government and to pay for the 6.2 MHz of spectrum when their licences come up for renewal.

The moves, combined with recommendations in the same paper restricting the size of mergers between operators, seemed aimed at limiting consolidation.

If approved, the policy would force Bharti to pay \$684m for the excess second-generation mobile spectrum it already owns, according to a note from Rajiv Sharma at HSBC India. He said Idea, a smaller operator, would have to pay \$242m.

Vodafone said: "The recommendations would place a critical industry in jeopardy, and seriously undermine the goal of extending telecom and internet services to the poorest across the country."

Free-to-air television bullish on prospects for advertising

MEDIA

By Ben Fenton in London

Prospects for free-to-air television are rising amid bullish reports on advertising from major European broadcasters, executives and analysts said yesterday.

The better advertising outlook comes amid reassessments of how badly the internet will affect the sector. Mediastar in Italy and TF1 in France beat ana-

lysts' expectations on revenues and profits on Tuesday, while last week ITV in the UK, Telecinco in Spain, and ProSiebenSat1 in Germany all gave a similarly upbeat picture.

Bertelsmann, Europe's largest media group, released a trading statement yesterday saying it was "profiting from the revival in advertising revenues," including those of the pan-European free-to-air broadcaster RTL.

The sector had been sub-

ject to some major devaluations in the past year as investors concluded that,

A senior executive at a large European media company told the Financial Times: "If a few months ago I had put down my best-case scenario for the first five months of the year, then the reality would have beaten it. The key is the second half, because at the moment we do not have any idea what will happen."

The sector had been sub-

ject to some major devaluations in the past year as investors concluded that,

lacking the resilience of the pay-television model, free-to-air broadcasters might not recover from the most serious advertising recession in history.

Added to that, the growth of internet television and on-demand viewing from platforms similar to the Hulu venture in the US was expected to cannibalise advertising from established television companies.

The executive said: "Our research suggests that

catch-up TV on the internet is actually additive to our linear [traditional] TV. And we charge the same CPT [cost per thousand viewers rates for advertisers], so that is a big positive for us."

Mediaset reported advertising sales up 5.2 per cent in the first quarter of the year, while ProSieben rose 5 per cent. TF1 reported 11 per cent revenue growth and doubled its forecast for the year to 4 per cent

growth, while ITV said its second quarter was currently up 22 per cent. All urged caution though, as visibility remains very low.

Nick Bertolotti, analyst at Credit Suisse, said: "Everyone is more optimistic, but also cautious. In the last couple of weeks, FTA broadcasters have been marked down very hard, but the bounceback has surprised people in the market."

Filippo Lo Franco, of JP

Morgan, said: "If the second half of the year is as good as the first – and the comparables with 2009 are tougher – I could see these companies [shares] growing 15 to 20 per cent."

One word of warning came from Sir Martin Sorrell, chief executive of WPP, which controls several of the world's largest advertising agencies, who said yesterday that western European markets were "depressing".

News digest

Acciona profits in sharp drop

Acciona, the Spanish infrastructure and energy group, yesterday unveiled a sharp year-on-year drop in net profits, as one-off items masked a solid underlying result.

The company, Spain's second-largest wind energy producer, said net profits for the three months to the end of March were down 75 per cent to €37m (\$47m).

However, the result was distorted by the inclusion last year of Acciona's share of profits from Endesa, the Spanish electricity utility in which it held 25 per cent. This was later sold to Enel, the Italian energy group that now controls 92 per cent of the generator.

On a comparable basis,

according to Acciona, net profits from continuing operations climbed 17 per cent, to €39m, on sales ahead 9 per cent to €1.5bn. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation were ahead 44 per cent to €275m.

Mark Mulligan, Madrid

Four-fold rise as Emirates soars

Emirates, the Dubai government-owned airline, has bounced back to strong profit as its chairman forecast double-digit growth in passenger numbers and capacity in the coming year.

The airline said that profits soared four-fold to \$964m for the year to the end of March over the previous year's \$267m.

when it was hit by high jet fuel prices. There was not a press conference that year, when profits tumbled 80 per cent.

Lower fuel prices,

reduced staff costs and an

improved load factor of 78 per cent boosted earnings, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman of Emirates, said.

Simeon Kerr, Dubai



Emirates predicts growth in passenger numbers

Middle-class cash bolsters Macy's

Macy's, the US department store chain, reported first-quarter results that it said exceeded its expectations, supported by recovering spending by its mainly middle-class shoppers.

Terry Lundgren, chief executive, said the company's first-quarter earnings of \$23m, or 5 cents per diluted share, were "well ahead of what we originally expected", crediting the impact of a store localisation initiative launched two years ago.

A year ago, Macy's reported an \$88m loss as consumers cut discretionary spending at its 800 Macy's and Bloomingdale's stores.

Jonathan Birchall, London

SocGen and GDF part company

Société Générale and French utility group GDF Suez yesterday said they were ending a partnership in natural gas and power trading, a decade after they brought their businesses together.

SocGen said it would sell its 49 per cent in the joint venture for an undisclosed amount.

The French bank signalled that "different ambitions" in gas and power trading had triggered the rupture.

SocGen, which is expanding into commodities, plans to rebuild its trading capacity in gas and power by the end of the year.

Javier Blas, London

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Companies | International

Lafarge seeks out the new frontiers of housing growth

**Paul Betts**

EUROPEAN VIEW

Bruno Lafont, the understated chief executive of Lafarge, considers himself a modern-day pioneer chasing business in some of the world's last great frontiers. Like many of his rivals in the cement industry, he is looking for growth not only in the big emerging markets but in what he calls the underdeveloped economies.

Countries such as Ethiopia, Peru, Zambia and Bangladesh, will all be the motors for his growth, as well as the large emerging economies of China, which accounts for half of the demand for world cement, India, Brazil and Russia. After all, Mr Lafont's business is to provide the cement and other aggregates that the people in these countries need to build affordable housing.

Like his main competitors such as Switzerland's Holcim, Germany's Heidelberg Cement and Mexico's Cemex, it is relying on small homebuilders in emerging markets to help pull its group – the world's largest cement maker – through one of the worst slumps in the construction industry. At the same time, the strategy is also designed to secure long-term growth for Lafarge. For Mr Lafont believes that emerging markets, including those in what he calls the last frontier, will account for about 90 per cent of future housing.

But building a presence, especially in smaller underdeveloped countries, takes time, and Mr Lafont knows that. It has taken Lafarge about 10 years to develop a presence in many African countries that is only now beginning to pay dividends. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why he has been so quiet of late. But perhaps his modesty also reflects the fact that he has had to keep his head down to tackle the impact of the global crisis that has hit his company particularly hard.

As the crisis broke, Mr Lafont found

himself with a heavy burden of debt. This was the result of a €10bn (\$12.6bn) gamble to expand in Egypt and the Middle East through the acquisition of Orascom Cement. So he has had to spend the past two years divesting non-core assets and cutting costs in an effort to reduce the debt to more manageable levels. At €14.5bn net debt at the end of the first quarter this year, there is still a long way to go.

But arguably it is that acquisition – together with other deals in India and Brazil – that has helped support sales badly hit in the company's mature developed markets. In turn, this has given him the necessary breathing space to carry out his balance sheet restructuring – of course, last year's €1.5bn capital increase also helped.

Lafarge has continued to invest in innovation and expand in emerging markets. But clever as this strategy may look – 52 per cent of group sales now come from emerging regions – the company is still reliant on a recovery of the construction markets in a handful of

key mature markets such as the US, the UK and France.

Recent political developments in Europe have certainly clouded the picture. But Mr Lafont argues that there are now signs of a revival in the US where the housing construction market has fallen to such low levels that a pick-up is inevitable. But he also concedes that the recovery in the US and in the housing market of other developed countries hinges on two key factors – available financing and a rebound in general public confidence. In both cases, it is still far too early to say we have finally turned the corner. In the meantime, Lafarge's pioneer will have to keep seeking out new frontiers in the quest for growth.

Luxurious parallels

Surprisingly, the same rules that apply to the most unglamorous of industries such as cement can equally be used to deliver growth in the more glittering world of luxury goods.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the US and Japan represented the new frontier for the European luxury goods industry. But these days, emerging economies are accounting for a growing share of the business and not just some of the big Bric member countries such as China, India and Brazil.

Much like Mr Lafont's economically underdeveloped countries, Sanford Bernstein luxury analyst Luca Solca argues that the so-called South-East Asian Five – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam – could jointly account for about 500m potential luxury goods customers.

These aspiring luxury hubs, he says, may start from an economically-backward position in relative terms, just as South Korea did in the 1960s, and present all sorts of cultural challenges. But the Korean experience has also shown that long-term success and the acceptance of overseas luxury brands can be achieved in the context of rapidly-rising income levels in these potentially promising markets.

european.view@ft.com

Maersk hints at container revival

INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORT

Company reports \$639m profit

Hapag-Lloyd also returns to black

By Robert Wright in London

Denmark's AP Moller-Maersk, owner of the world's largest container shipping line, announced yesterday a sharp swing back into profit in the first quarter and predicted full-year results would be better than expected.

Maersk's figures provided the latest evidence of the sector's revival and came as Germany's Hapag-Lloyd, one of the container lines worst hit by the slump, also claimed it had returned to profitability.

Tui, the tourism group that owns 43 per cent of the operator, said Hapag-Lloyd had recorded underlying earnings before interest, tax and amortisation of €13m (\$16.4m) for the January to

March quarter, against a €222m loss last year, on revenue up 13 per cent to €1.3bn.

Maersk's container shipping and related activities division – dominated by the Maersk Line container shipping operation – carried 20 per cent more containers in the first quarter of 2010 than in 2009. It produced net profits of €168m, compared with a \$581m loss last year, on revenue up 23 per cent to \$5.75bn.

For the group as a whole, first quarter net profits were \$639m, against a \$373m loss last time, on revenue up 20 per cent to \$13.2bn.

The figures pushed Maersk's B shares up 8.9 per cent to Dkr48,680.

Maersk suffered the worst year in its 106-year history in 2009, reporting a \$1.02bn net loss as a result of a \$2.09bn loss in container shipping.

The improved results – which were also helped by net profits up 76 per cent to \$450m at Maersk Oil and



Maersk Line carried 20 per cent more containers in the first quarter of 2010 than in the same period a year earlier

Bloomberg

Hapag-Lloyd helps shrink Tui losses

The improved trading at Hapag-Lloyd contributed to a reduction in losses for Tui, its largest shareholder, over the six months to March 31.

Earnings before interest, tax and amortisation in continuing businesses fell to €426m (\$539m), from €452m in the same half of last year.

Hapag-Lloyd's losses for the first half fell to €8m from €230m in the same half last time, while the group said that underlying losses in tourist operations fell nearly 17 per cent to

€229m, from €274m the previous year.

The overall first-half figures – where

comparisons are distorted by last year's gain on the partial sale of Hapag-Lloyd

– showed a €430m net loss on revenue down 11 per cent to €5.83bn, against a €419m net profit last time.

Michael Frenzel, chief executive, said that the company had reduced capacity in Tui Travel during 2009.

"This strategy is paying off," he said.

Gas – prompted the company to say it now expected a profit for the year, rather than a "modest profit", as it said in March.

Nils Andersen, chief executive, said the first quarter result had been much better than expected a few months ago.

But he went on: "The underlying economic situation is just so uncertain that we have decided not to give any real guidance."

The continuing risks were underlined by poor figures from Maersk's tankers, offshore and other shipping operations division, whose Maersk Tankers arm is the world's largest operator of oil product tankers. The

division saw net profits improve 40 per cent to \$115m on revenue up 8 per cent to \$1.39bn, but Mr Andersen said tankers' underlying result remained loss-making for the quarter.

The main risk for the company was still that large scheduled deliveries of new ships – particularly in container shipping – or reactivation of the hundreds of ships still laid up out of use could bring on a fresh collapse in rates.

However, Mr Andersen insisted that operators understand the dangers.

"It doesn't serve a purpose to bring in a lot of capacity when the market is the way it is," he said.

Lawyers flock to join Toyota class action

CARS

By Bernard Simon
in Toronto

Scores of lawyers are expected to converge on a courtroom in Santa Ana, California, today in the hope of persuading a US District Court judge to include them in the legal team that will spearhead a massive class-action lawsuit against Toyota.

The Japanese carmaker faces 327 separate federal and state claims, based on a report filed with the court in late April. The claims, which total billions of dollars, are for deaths, injuries and economic damage that were allegedly caused by unintended acceleration in Toyota vehicles.

The plaintiffs include individuals, car rental operators, car dealers and insurance companies.

Toyota recalled millions of vehicles this year to fix defective accelerators and out-of-place floor mats that could cause accelerators to jam. It instructed dealers to halt sales of eight popular models for more than a week while a slim piece of steel was inserted in the accelerator mechanism.

A panel of federal judges ruled last month that the acceleration claims should be consolidated in one jurisdiction on the grounds that they involve common questions of fact.

"Centralisation will eliminate duplicative discovery, prevent inconsistent pre-trial rulings... and conserve the resources of the parties, their counsel and the judiciary," the panel concluded.

The stakes for the plain-tiffs' lawyers are high. In a typical class-action lawsuit the court sets aside a percentage of any award or settlement for the lawyers leading the case. If the case fails, they receive nothing.

"The amount the lawyers will have to invest will be

very, very significant," said Steve Sheller, partner in a Philadelphia law firm that has sent two lawyers to the hearing. He described the Toyota case as "immensely complicated".

But with the prospect of a huge award or settlement, lawyers are competing aggressively for a role in the case. Jim Carter, a Georgia attorney who has joined forces with lawyers in 13 other states to pursue their clients' cases against Toyota, said: "There's plenty of [legal] talent to go around. We don't know who the judge is actually going to suggest in the end."

Mr Carter, who has lobbied for a role in the discovery stage of the case, said he expected a decision within two weeks.

Toyota has been careful not to acknowledge any legal liability for the defects

"There's plenty of [legal] talent to go around. We don't know who the judge will suggest"

that led to the recalls. It paid a record \$16.4m fine to the US government last month for failing to notify the authorities promptly about the unintended acceleration problem. But it said it decided to pay "to avoid a protracted dispute and possible litigation".

In agreeing the fine, Toyota denied it had violated the US Safety Act or other safety regulations.

"We have acknowledged that we could have done a better job of sharing relevant information within our global operations and outside the company," Toyota said, "but we did not try to hide a defect to avoid dealing with a safety problem".

www.ft.com/toyota

New Eon chief makes his mark in management shake-up

ELECTRICITY

By James Wilson and Daniel Schäfer in Frankfurt

Eon's new chief executive yesterday asserted control over Germany's largest energy company with a wide-ranging management shake-up.

Only two weeks into his job, Johannes Teyssen brought two company outsiders onto an expanded six-person management board

while Eon parted company with two of the four members of its existing team.

Mr Teyssen and Marcus Schenck, chief financial officer, are the only survivors from the management board headed by Wulf Bernatot, who stepped down as chief executive on May 1 when his contract ended.

The overhaul demonstrates Mr Teyssen's desire to get closer control of the energy group's operations. The board of management

will be more closely involved in steering and managing the company's operational businesses", Eon said yesterday.

The new appointments also show the trend towards increasing diversity on German management boards.

Jörgen Kildahl, a Norwegian and a managing director at Statoil, the Norwegian energy company, will fill a new post overseeing electricity and gas production, global trading

and energy management. Regina Stachelschäfer, who was head of Hewlett-Packard in Germany before working for Unicef in Germany for the past 18 months, has been named as industrial relations director, in charge of personnel as well as IT, procurement and legal affairs.

Women are under-represented in German boardrooms and senior management. Eon is only the third of 30 German blue-chip

companies to add a woman to its management board.

The corporate governance commission, guardian of Germany's non-binding corporate governance rules, made the promotion of diversity on supervisory boards one of its main topics for this year.

Klaus-Dieter Maubach, head of Eon Energie, will become head of technology on the board, overseeing research and development as well as Eon's global

investments, while Eon said it would appoint another new board member to manage the group's country subsidiaries. Christoph Danziger-Vanotti and Lutz Feldmann are to leave.

The appointments were announced a day after Eon revealed a 7 per cent year-on-year fall in first-quarter net income, although underlying earnings rose 20 per cent. Eon said it expected annual net income at the same level as 2009.

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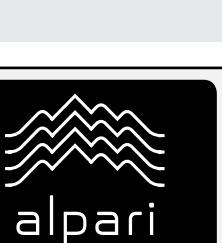
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IT Asset Management																									
Other International Funds						Invesco - Cont'd.					JPMorgan Asset Mgmt - Cont'd.					Landsdowne Partners Limited Partnership - Cont'd.					Legg Mason Dublin Funds - Cont'd.				
IT Funds Info Tech A	\$475.18	+2.9	0.12			Invesco Europe Equity & EIR Cap. I	\$10.74	+0.24			Premier Growth Inc. F-4*	34.31	+0.24	1.8%		Landsdowne European Long Only Fund Ltd					Fixed Income Funds				
Impax Asset Management (IRL)						Invesco Standard & Poor's 500 Index Fund	\$16.98	+0.12			Premier Inv Inc. F-4*	40.73	+3.50	3.6%		Landsdowne Global Fund					Fixed Income Funds				
FSA Recognised						Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Premier Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		Stated Corporate Plus B A-4	100.9d	+2.22	0.00	
Enviro Mkt's Inv Sterling A	\$1.799	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	43.19	+0.31	4.2%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		Accum Units				
Enviro Mkt's Inv Sterling B	A-1.752	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		NACIFIC (A)				
Enviro Mkt's Inv Euro A H	\$1.445	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		Accum (Units)				
Enviro Mkt's Inv Euro A H	\$1.144	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		M&G Global Manager Fund				
Enviro Mkt's Inv US Dollar A H	\$1.401	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		Regulated				
Enviro Mkt's Inv US Dollar A H	\$1.254	-				Invesco Event Bond Fund A	\$3.44	+0.14			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		GDP Series I Class A	\$10.65	+0.29	-0.05		Regulated				
INDIA VALUE INVESTMENTS LIMITED (INVIL)																									
Other International Funds																									
M&V May 11 ...	\$4.83	-				Invesco US Dividend Recovery Fund	\$7.00	+2.69			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		JPMorgan Asset Management - Cont'd.					Property & Other UK Unit Trusts				
Ingenius Assets Management Ltd (IRL)						Invesco US Dividend Recovery Fund	\$7.00	+2.69			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		JPMorgan Asset Management - Cont'd.					M&G Multi Strategy Fund A-4	100.9d	+2.22	0.00	
Ingenius Assets Management Ltd (IRL)						Invesco US Dividend Recovery Fund	\$7.00	+2.69			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		JPMorgan Asset Management - Cont'd.					M&G Multi Strategy Fund A-4	100.9d	+2.22	0.00	
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Ingenius Assets Management Ltd (IRL)						Invesco US Dividend Recovery Fund	\$7.00	+2.69			Strategic Corp Bond Ass'tl B-3	59.81	+0.43	4.8%		JPMorgan Asset Management - Cont'd.					M&G Multi Strategy Fund A-4				

Managed funds service

Init Notes	Selling	Buying	+ or	Yield	Init Notes	Selling	Buying	+ or	Yield	Init Notes	Selling	Buying	+ or	Yield	Init Notes	Selling	Buying	+ or	Yield	Init Notes	Selling	Buying	+ or	Yield
Morgan Stanley Investment Funds - Cont'd.																								
Morgan Capital Partners Limited	£12.50	12.50	-0.00	0.00	Morgan Stanley Investment Funds - Cont'd.	£26.94	26.94	-0.19	0.00	Nevsky Capital LLP	£308.86	308.86	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet Portfolio Managers Ltd - Cont'd.	£95.3700	95.3700	-0.2200	0.48	RBC Offshore Fund Managers Limited	£144.00	144.00	-0.00	0.00
Marfin Capital Partners Limited	12 Hay Hill London W1J 8NR	0207 054 9257	—	—	Diversified Alpha Plus A £54	£26.94	26.94	-0.19	0.00	Other International Funds	£309.86	309.86	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet Portfolio Managers Ltd - Cont'd.	£95.3700	95.3700	-0.2200	0.48	RBC Wealth Management	£144.00	144.00	-0.00	0.00
Marfin Diversified Strategy Fund - USA A	\$81.5604	—	—	—	Emerging Markets Debt A £54	£62.40	62.40	-0.07	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£304.47	304.47	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£309.86	309.86	-0.2200	0.48	Royal Bank of Scotland - Cont'd.	£144.00	144.00	-0.00	0.00
Marfin Diversified Strategy Fund - Euro A	£76.8839	—	—	—	Emerging Markets Equity A £54	£16.93	16.93	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£305.93	305.93	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£307.08	307.08	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Asset Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£108.456	108.456	-0.00	0.00
Marfin Diversified Strategy Fund - Euro B	£74.1669	—	—	—	Euro Bond F ...	£4	123.28	-0.39	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Asset Management Bond Funds PLC	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Margates Fund Management Ltd	(UK)	—	—	—	Euro Corporate Bond A £4	£22.94	22.94	-0.06	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Order Date: 05/04/2010 0808 Enquiries: 0805 607 6008	—	—	—	—	Euro Corporate Bond A £4	£22.94	22.94	-0.06	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Authorised Inv Funds	—	—	—	—	Euro Corporate Bond A £4	£22.94	22.94	-0.06	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Select Strategy GBX A-C-X	5	258.88	270.17	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Venture Strategy GBX A-C-X	5	294.71	317.17	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
International Strategy GBX A-C-X	5	202.27	202.27	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Providence Strategy GBX A-C-X	5	239.02	251.52	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Order Date: 05/04/2010 0808 Enquiries: 0805 607 6008	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Authorised Inv Funds	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Global Diversified Fund - USA A	£10.37	10.37	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Open Growth GBX A-C-X	5	37.11	44.24	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Open Income GBX A-C-X	5	137.01	144.21	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Margates Fund Management Ltd	(UK)	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Order Date: 05/04/2010 0808 Enquiries: 0805 607 6008	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Authorised Inv Funds	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Global Diversified Fund - USA A	£10.37	10.37	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Open Growth GBX A-C-X	5	137.01	144.21	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Open Income GBX A-C-X	5	137.01	144.21	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Margates Greystones IVC	(UK)	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Order Date: 05/04/2010 0808 Enquiries: 0805 607 6008	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...	£310.35	310.35	-0.2200	0.48	Pictet-Indian Equities - US F	£304.17	304.17	-0.2200	0.48	Royal London Fund Mgmt (Ireland) Ltd	£104.81	104.81	-0.00	0.00
Authorised Inv Funds	—	—	—	—	Global Bonds A £4	£27.05	27.05	-0.04	0.00	Nevsky Capital Inc A £30 ...														

FT500 - World's Largest Companies

Stock	Day Price	Chg	52 High	Low	Yd P/r	McCap m\$	Stock	Day Price	Chg	52 High	Low	Yd P/r	McCap m\$	Stock	Day Price	Chg	52 High	Low	Yd P/r	McCap m\$	Stock	Day Price	Chg	52 High	Low	Yd P/r	McCap m\$	Stock				
3M ... 88.44	10.90	55.23	128.12	61.638	Covidien	19.52	54.28	33.67	1.51	19.90	23.264	Kellogg	54.89	0.5	55.45	42.25	2.73	16.09	20.84	SBI New... m\$	2.32	-	2.5k	12.23	0.43	11.90	32.704					
ABB ... 21.13	0.3	24.49	15.35	16.90	44.29	CredAegis	10.67	0.2	15.66	8.62	4.2	21.33	31.370	Kim Clark	6.20	-	7.03	50.33	4.01	14.07	25.997	Shimborg	6.65	0.2	7.39	49.3	1.23	1.26	47.501			
AbbottLbb 49.15d	0.3	56.79	42.75	3.34	14.31	75.866	CreditSuisse	48.52	0.2	60.90	47.10	4.2	8.77	51.938	Kohl's ...	5.715	0.4	60.89	40.70	-	17.74	17.544	Schneider	83.994	15	89.48	51	244	24.49	77.984		
Accenture 41.6d	0.44	46.87	28.40	17.72	30.74	CRH	1.82	0.3	27.05	14.46	3.5	23.3	17.783	Komatsu	1.72xd	-	2.1k	1.28	0.93	18.05	18.413	CTJU68a	-	19.95	16.25	1.3	35.7	21.01				
ACE ... 53.79	2.2	55.64	41.14	2.01	6.2	18.27	CritCain	3.63	0.1	3.98	2.83	3.6	9.32	5.159	KoreanE	31.45k	0.1	42.25	27	7.64	7.64	7.64	Sevens & 1	2.35k	-	2.47k	18.3k	2.3	20.28	22.87		
Adobe ... 34.80	1.0	38.20	24.78	51.89	18.320	CSL	32.94	0.1	37.56	28.42	2.7	2.57	14.46	16.97	KPN	10.62	-	12.59	9.01	6.50	7.48	21.791	ShinhanFin	41.359	0.0	59.10	25.92	0.92	18.82	17.975		
Afcon ... 56.66	0.1	56.56	43.89	3.40	15.22	2.04	18.27	CritCain	3.63	0.1	3.98	2.83	3.6	9.32	5.159	KoreanE	31.45k	0.1	42.25	27	7.64	7.64	7.64	Sevens & 1	2.35k	-	2.47k	18.3k	2.3	20.28	22.87	
Air China ... 11.4	-	11.40	8.40	12.32	0.45	2.04	10.15	1.05	15.23	2.04	1.72	2.04	17.57	17.57	KoreanE	5.07	0.5	6.62	4.50	3.02	15.63	18.54	LoydsPhar	5.91	0.0	7.48	19.19	0.4	31.16	24.439		
AirLiquid 03d	-0.6	91.60	50.25	26.2	18.28	Danher	3.742	0.2	8.73	57.53	2.04	16.27	28.31	28.31	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264	SBI New...	2.32	-	2.5k	12.23	0.43	11.90	32.704		
AKBank ... 7.84	0.8	4.28	1.72	11.54	20.588	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	Kim Clark	6.20	-	7.03	50.33	4.01	14.07	25.997	Shimborg	6.65	0.2	7.39	49.3	1.23	1.26	47.501			
Alcon ... 15.21	2.34	16.46	9.48	21.75	26.3	41.53	Danske	0.2	15.50	1.91	1.70	1.70	17.50	17.50	Kohl's ...	5.715	0.4	60.89	40.70	-	17.74	17.544	Schneider	83.994	15	89.48	51	244	24.49	77.984		
Alstom ... 44.25	0.1	55.10	43.03	0.26	16.26	19.52	DBS	-	14.44	-	15.80	10.88	3.89	15.69	23.899	Linde ...	9.87	0.6	38.27	22.98	1.30	19.32	19.497	ShinhanFin	41.359	0.0	59.10	25.92	0.92	18.82	17.975	
Allianz SE ... 5.79	0.2	6.55	6.13	4.18	8.96	49.05	Deere	6.14	1.7	6.37	4.81	3.83	28.94	51.94	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	LoydsPhar	5.91	0.0	7.48	19.19	0.4	31.16	24.439		
Allstate ... 33.11	0.4	35.51	24.74	4.97	15.26	16.01	GSX	5.74	0.2	56.14	36.74	2.7	2.54	19.61	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
Alvarez ... 56.60	0.1	65.56	43.03	0.26	16.26	19.52	DBS	-	14.44	-	15.80	10.88	3.89	15.69	23.899	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264	ShinhanFin	41.359	0.0	59.10	25.92	0.92	18.82	17.975	
Anadarko ... 56.96	-0.1	70.47	20.83	30.10	28.81	DowChem	2.883	0.3	32.05	42.26	2.7	2.56	32.36	32.36	McKesson	6.93	0.1	30.90	31.27	2.04	17.57	17.57	LoydsPhar	5.91	0.0	7.48	19.19	0.4	31.16	24.439		
ANBStibn 38.98	0.1	39.62	23.04	7.37	19.07	23.04	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264	ShinhanFin	41.359	0.0	59.10	25.92	0.92	18.82	17.975		
ANZ ... 22.47	0.26	22.46	14.29	1.72	11.54	20.588	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	Kim Clark	6.20	-	7.03	50.33	4.01	14.07	25.997	Shimborg	6.65	0.2	7.39	49.3	1.23	1.26	47.501		
AppiaNet ... 58.84	1.8	48.15	27.25	1.72	11.54	20.588	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
Appidat ... 58.84	0.1	44.68	27.25	1.72	11.54	20.588	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
Apple ... 34.80	0.1	34.80	24.74	4.97	15.26	16.01	GSX	5.74	0.2	56.14	36.74	2.7	2.54	19.61	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
AppleMot ... 50.01	-0.1	45.46	18.14	21.14	23.61	24.93	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
Archer Daniels ... 56.96	-0.1	56.96	43.07	1.72	11.54	20.588	Danone	4.32	0.4	44.68	32.29	2.7	16.43	35.510	KoreanE	1.60	0.2	15.70	12.02	2.3	12.03	23.264	DeutCorp	12.54	0.4	14.66	8.68	4.78	23.3	23.264		
Archers ... 21.67	0.1	21.74	16.56	2.13	1.72	11.54	20																									

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Interim since reduced, passed or deferred.

Price at time of suspension.

Mergers and reorganisation in progress.

FT Global 500 company.

c Cent

Par Fund

NAV per share

NAV is more than 3% different to previous NAV.

Earnings based on preliminary figures.

Undated

Dividend adjusted for consolidation or share split.

Abbreviations: ex ex dividend; xc ex script distribution; xr ex rights; xs ex ex capital distribution.

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Interim since reduced or resumed.

Interim since reduced, passed or deferred.

Price at time of suspension.

Mergers and reorganisation in progress.

FT Global 500 company.

c Cent

Par Fund

NAV per share

NAV is more than 3% different to previous NAV.

Earnings based on preliminary figures.

Undated

Dividend adjusted for consolidation or share split.

Abbreviations: ex ex dividend; xc ex script distribution; xr ex rights; xs ex ex capital distribution.

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High and lows marked are based on the latest day's trading for changes in price.

Interim since reduced or resumed.

Interim since reduced, passed or deferred.

Price at time of suspension.

Mergers and reorganisation in progress.

FT Global 500 company.

c Cent

Par Fund

NAV per share

NAV is more than 3% different to previous NAV.

Earnings based on preliminary figures.

Undated

Dividend adjusted for consolidation or share split.

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Markets & Investing



**Stephen
Lange Ranzini**

INSIGHT

Broad brush securitisation reform will hit small lenders

When it comes to reporting the US Senate's financial regulatory restructuring legislation, most of the media have focused on the new consumer protection agency, the regulation of derivatives, and provisions to eliminate the "too big to fail" problem.

The detrimental impact this legislation may have on the securitisation process and community banks in particular is rarely considered. But the proposed new limits on securitisation alone will devastate my bank and cause me to have to fire 75 per cent of our employees. These new limits will require retention of some of the risk, which could trigger accounting and capital rules that make it difficult for banks to sell loans.

The law would require a 5 per cent risk retention on all loans sold. Under GAAP accounting rules, that would prevent a sale so we would immediately have to stop originating mortgages for the secondary market as the loans we originate could never leave our balance sheet and my bank would immediately run out of capital to support our mortgage business.

Even if that problem is fixed, the requirement to retain 5 per cent means that within a year we would run out of cash to hold those assets and we would be forced to shut down our mortgage origination operations. Moreover, it is very unlikely for it to ever be a financially prudent activity for a bank to invest in fixed rate 15- and 30-year assets, except with a tiny percentage of a bank's capital.

Denying my bank direct access to secondary market securitisations means we would be forced to sell the mortgages we originate to one of the four remaining US mega-banks. Since they all have both wholesale and retail origination operations that compete directly with my bank they will have the opportunity to price and squeeze us out of business. This provision will increase the market share of new mortgage originations of these four "too big to fail" banks from 50 per cent towards 100 per cent. This would cause the availability of mortgage credit to be diminished and cause mortgage interest rates to rise and the value of homes to decline once again.

My bank did not make subprime loans or do anything else that helped cause the financial crisis. All we are trying to do is serve our community and make credit available to consumers and businesses in a very difficult economy. Yet, this bill would subject my bank to numerous new and costly regulatory requirements, often on issues that have nothing to do with the financial crisis.

The Dodd bill creates an unworkable regulatory structure that will impose heavy new regulatory requirements on traditional banks, pushing business to less regulated or unregulated non-banks, some of which contributed to this crisis and will be lightly regulated under the Dodd bill.

The bill creates a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that would subject all banks, regardless of size, to new rules

The bill creates a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that would subject all banks, regardless of size, to new rules. I support strong consumer protection and believe improvements should be made, but the creation of this new regulatory bureau for consumer products is the wrong approach. Enforcing truth in advertising rules on non-banks would be a better approach as their false and deceptive advertising, effectively unregulated by any entity in the US, is a root cause of the problem that the supporters of the CFPB claim it would fix. This, together with the new Federal Reserve Bank regulations on ensuring minimum underwriting criteria for residential loans, if effectively enforced, would close most of the remaining loopholes among the unregulated sector participants that caused the problem.

In spite of what you may have heard, community banks such as mine would be subject to this new consumer bureau's rules, allowing the CFPB to basically determine what products my bank can offer, on what terms, and under what settings and circumstances. The new CFPB would be required to mandate expensive new reports from my bank and is authorised to mandate others. These reports have nothing to do with the financial crisis and would not be required from many non-bank competitors.

Community banks support reform, but it really needs to be done right. While there are good provisions in this bill, it still:

- does not adequately address "too-big-to-fail" because it does not lead to a path towards restricting the growth of and the mandatory breaking up of the mega-banks;
- it greatly increases the costs of community banks;
- it does not extend adequate regulation or require a level playing field of non-banks;
- and it undermines the ability of traditional banks to make more loans.

This legislation will determine the future of my bank and how we serve our community. The Dodd regulatory reform legislation needs substantial changes to make reform workable.

Stephen Lange Ranzini is president and chief executive of University Bank, a community bank based in Ann Arbor, Michigan

'Flash glitch' fears force SEC hand

News analysis

The US regulator is looking at circuit breakers to prevent re-run of last week's volatility, writes Michael Mackenzie

The fragmented US equity market – where shares are traded via rapid-fire computers across some 50 different venues – faces a raft of new rules after last week's wild swing in prices.

Chief among them is the introduction of circuit breakers for individual stocks.

As exchanges try to discover what exactly sparked the so-called "flash glitch", when equities slumped and rebounded inside a period of 20 minutes, the industry is braced for a regulatory overhaul.

"I believe we... must consider the various types of time-out mechanisms that can be applied to individual stocks," said Mary Schapiro, Securities and Exchange Commission chairwoman, in testimony this week to a Congressional hearing.

Foremost is an industry-wide circuit breaker – it is suggested that the SEC will implement a brief trading halt in a stock if its price falls 10 per cent inside a five-minute period.



The Dow Jones Industrial Average suffered its biggest intraday fall last Thursday Bloomberg

In the highly competitive world of US equity trading, however, there are plenty of opinions as to what kind of circuit breaker should be calculated and enforced across the array of exchanges, private platforms at broker/dealers and dark pools.

James Angel, professor of finance at Georgetown University, says the current system of trading halts in a stock ahead of a news announcement is a good place to start as all trading venues respect that rule.

Currently, the floor of the New York Stock Exchange enforces a system of curbs on stocks, which sprang into action last week.

That sparked complaints from other exchanges but the NYSE floor did not execute any erroneous trades.

Hence it had no need to cancel any trades, unlike at other electronic exchanges, including NYSE's own Arca platform.

Any limits on cash equities need to be replicated across futures, options and the realm of exchange traded funds, which follow the prices at which individual stocks trade.

You need circuit breakers in all markets and, while it's feasible, there are

a lot of moving parts and it will be harder to implement than people think," says Anthony Conroy, head of trading at BNYConvergEx, an electronic brokerage.

Knight Capital Group, another electronic brokerage, proposes that once an individual stock drops 25 per cent from the previous day's close, then trading should be halted for five minutes and that such a circuit breaker be uniformly applied across all areas of the market.

But individual stocks differ in terms of their liquidity and support by market makers – and not everyone

thinks an industry-wide standard can be applied.

Nasdaq OMX Group told the Congressional hearing that they favour a "flexible approach that recognises that stocks trade in different ways, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach that treats all stocks identically".

The introduction of circuit breakers may also not address the main lesson drawn by many from the trading "glitch".

Justin Schack, director at Rosenblatt Securities, says the real issue is the amount of erroneous orders that flooded the market last week. As stocks fell, many traders stepped away from providing prices to buy them while sell orders kept arriving from investors with a mandate to execute a trade at the "market" or prevailing price.

In extreme cases, token 1 cent bids that were left on some exchanges by market makers were the only bid in the system and they were duly executed by computers.

"Maybe we need to place some type of limit on market orders so that they don't trade at a price significantly different from the previous sale," says Mr Schack.

That view is shared by Ms Schapiro, who told the hearing that the SEC will consider placing a "collar" on the price of a market order and limit aggressively priced orders.

El Niño declared to be over

By Javier Blas in London

El Niño, the weather-altering Pacific warming that has hit the price of commodities from sugar to natural gas, has dissipated, the closely watched Australian Bureau of Meteorology said yesterday.

The event of 2009-10 has introduced circuit breakers may also not address the main lesson drawn by many from the trading "glitch".

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Market reports

Warsaw lifted by PZU listing

EUROPE

By Anjali Raval

PZU, Poland's largest insurer, jumped on its trading debut on the Warsaw Stock Exchange yesterday after investors bid for nine times more shares than were offered in Europe's biggest initial public offering since 2007.

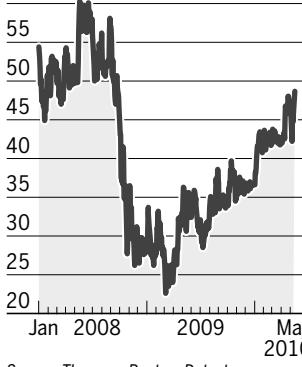
The company climbed 15.2 per cent to 360 zlotys in an IPO at the top of the price range, at 312.5 zlotys a share.

The IPO is part of the Polish government's programme to raise a record \$10bn from asset sales this year to help cut its budget deficit.

State-owned Tauron Pol-

Møller-Maersk

Share price (DKr '000)



ska Energia, the country's second-largest power producer, will hold an IPO next month.

The benchmark WIG index closed 1.1 per cent higher at 41,896.60.

European shares bounced back after Spain announced a package of tough austerity measures, helping ease fears about eurozone debt markets.

Overall, the FTSE Eurofirst 300 index rose 1.3 per cent to 1,048.56.

The Ibex 35 in Spain rose 0.8 per cent to 10,089.8, Portugal's PSI 20 added 2.9 per cent to 7,380.66 and the Athens General index gained 0.8 per cent to 1,749.59.

A series of strong earnings news from the financial sector chimed with the improving mood, with three large eurozone banks all posting better-than-forecast earnings.

ING of the Netherlands climbed 4.3 per cent to €7.03, Italy's UniCredit rose 0.4 per cent to €1.94 and KBC in Belgium added 5.2 per cent to €33.49.

AP Møller-Maersk, the Danish shipping and oil group, was one of the biggest winners on the FTSE Eurofirst after forecast-beating first-quarter numbers.

Recovering freight rates and higher oil prices pushed the company's shares up 9 per cent to Dkr48.680.

Luxury goods makers were winners on the FTSE Eurofirst after Swatch Group said it had seen strong first-quarter growth and earnings numbers. Its shares added 4.9 per cent to SFr333.20.

Cushing spurs wider spreads of Brent and WTI

COMMODITIES

By Gregory Meyer

The price of the world's two main crude oil benchmarks yesterday diverged by the widest amount since the depths of the financial crisis after a relentless rise in crude inventories at a US pipeline hub.

Brent, the European oil benchmark, traded at \$5.90 a barrel more than US-based WTI at one point, a spread last seen in February 2009. Brent crude normally trades at a discount to WTI.

The blend of crudes from the North Sea made rare gains on its US counterpart a month ago as inventories at the WTI delivery point of Cushing, Oklahoma, began to grow sharply.

The US Department of Energy yesterday reported that Cushing inventories had risen for an eighth straight week to 37m barrels, an all-time high, damping spot prices as traders contemplated the reaching of storage limits there.

The International Energy Agency put Cushing's operable capacity at about 41m-42m barrels, citing market sources.

The energy watchdog for western countries said that oil storage levels at Cushing along with fresh flows of Canadian crude into the central US "pressured prompt WTI prices".

The temporary shutdown of a North Sea oil field called Buzzard has, meanwhile, kept Brent prices relatively steady, the IEA said.

WTI has also traded at an extreme discount to Light Louisiana Sweet, a US crude grade of a similar quality that is less subject to Cushing storage issues.

It was precisely because of erratic price movements in WTI that Saudi Arabia decided in October to drop the US benchmark as a reference for its sales in the US for the first time since 1994. It replaced it with a basket of crudes produced in the US Gulf of Mexico.

The increase in Cushing stocks pushed Nymex June WTI down by 72 cents to settle at \$75.65 a barrel while ICE June Brent rose 71 cents to \$81.20 barrel.

Nymex June WTI futures were hit by the hardest, pushing them more than \$4 below the July contract, the widest discount since February 2009.

For investors who buy and hold commodity indexes such as the oil-heavy S&P GSCI, this discount is costly.

While many investment managers have devised strategies to work around

this so-called roll-cost, "with a curve this steep, you can only minimise it, you cannot eradicate it. It clearly is a drag on returns while this persists", said Sean Corrigan, at Diapason Commodities Management in Switzerland.

The steepness of the futures curve is, meanwhile, a windfall for operators of storage at Cushing as they can buy US oil at relatively low prices and lock in gains by selling futures. June 2011 WTI was yesterday at \$87.70.

Elsewhere in the commodities markets, gold and silver prices soared on strong investor demand.

The rally has been supported by a rush of demand for coins and small bars from European investors, particularly in Germany, where there are fears of inflation in the wake of the €750bn eurozone bail-out agreed on Sunday night.

Spot gold hit an all-time high of \$1,244.70 a troy ounce, up 1 per cent on the day. Silver rose 1.8 per cent to \$19.61 an ounce, its highest level since March 2008.

Gold loses glisten in India: www.ft.com/indiangold

COMMODITY PRICES

Energy

	Price*	Change

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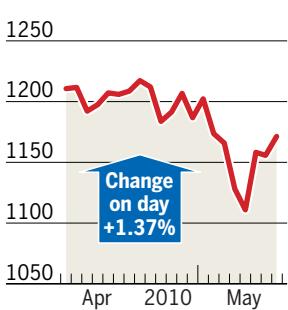


MARKETS

Thursday May 13 2010

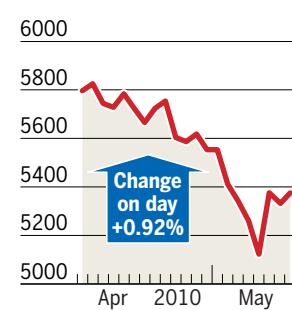


S&P 500 index



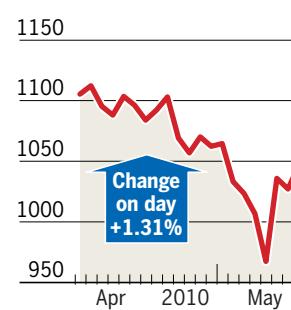
Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

FTSE 100 index



US equities
Technology and multinational stocks moved higher on Wall Street as worries about sovereign debt default in the eurozone eased. IBM led the way, with Intel not far behind and Caterpillar also gaining ground

FTSE Eurofirst 300 index



UK equities
Rolls-Royce gained as the composition of the coalition government bolstered hopes that military spending would be protected. But some financials fell on fears that bank taxation would move up the political agenda

Nikkei 225 Average '000



Asian equities
Positive earnings news helped limit the Nikkei's decline while bargain-hunting pushed Shanghai and Hong Kong higher. Sydney rose 0.6 per cent as gold miners gained on the back of a record high for the metal

Markets updated at www.ft.com/markets

Spanish austerity measures boost sentiment

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Corporate earnings soothe investors

Fears of eurozone debt default remain

By Dave Shellock

A mood of guarded optimism spread through US and European equity markets yesterday as confidence was buoyed by positive newsflow on sovereign risk and some encouraging corporate earnings news.

However, gold's rise to a record high, along with renewed pressure on the euro, underlined that genuine fears about a eurozone debt default continued to bubble under the surface.

But Spain's announcement yesterday of tough public spending cuts to rein in the country's budget deficit

helped alleviate worries about contagion from the Greek crisis.

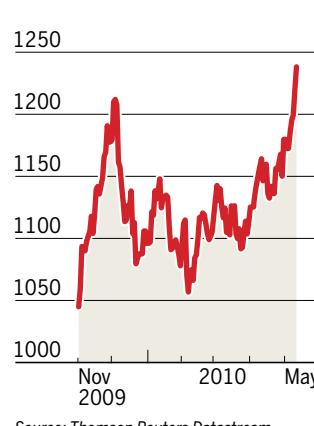
"Investors are keenly watching for European economies to spell out how they are going to fix their leaking roofs to maintain recovery efforts," said Giles Watts, head of equities at City Index.

The mood was further helped by news that Portugal had successfully auctioned €1bn (\$1.3bn) of 10-year bonds.

And the positive news continued as data showed the eurozone economy expanding by 0.2 per cent in the first quarter of the year – slightly more than expected – after stagnating in the final quarter of 2009.

Carsten Brzeski, economist at ING, said second-quarter growth should also be good – although he warned that the outlook beyond the "spring sprint"

Gold price \$ per troy ounce



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

► Gold reached a fresh record high above \$1,240 an ounce amid persistent concerns about eurozone sovereign debt and the potential impact of the ECB's decision to buy government bonds

► The yield spreads between German and peripheral eurozone government bonds continued to narrow after Spain announced tough austerity measures

Government bonds 10-year yields (%)



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

was less rosy. "Against great odds, the eurozone recovery continues," he said. "However, with fiscal consolidation and strong export-dependency, the recovery will remain two-speeded."

Meanwhile, the formation of a coalition government by the UK Conservatives and Liberal Democrats provided further encouragement to those looking for signs of reduced sovereign risk in Europe.

"The markets have responded positively to the news of the coalition, presumably because, first, with the Conservatives the deficit will be cut more quickly, reducing the possibility of a ratings downgrade. And,

second, a Conservative coalition will have a larger majority in parliament and thus be potentially more stable," said George Buckley, chief UK economist at Deutsche Bank.

But sterling lost early gains as a dovish quarterly inflation report from the Bank of England encouraged the view that UK policy would not be tightened any time soon. The pound ended the European session 0.5 per cent lower against the dollar.

Elsewhere in the currency markets, the euro fell to within a cent of last week's 14-month low against the dollar before rallying to stand little changed against the US currency.

The single currency has been under pressure recently by concerns about the European Central Bank's purchases of peripheral eurozone government

bonds – a move agreed as part of the €750bn eurozone bailout plan but in direct contradiction to its previous stance. "It is becoming increasingly clear that the far-reaching aid programme agreed over the weekend is to the detriment of the euro," said Ulrich Leuchtmann at Commerzbank.

"Even if officials are taking exercises in damage limitation the credibility of the ECB has obviously suffered considerably on the markets. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the eurozone has not solved its budget difficulties with the European stability mechanism."

One sign that investors shared those fears came from gold's rise to a record high above \$1,240 an ounce.

Elsewhere in commodities, the US benchmark oil price fell below \$76 a barrel, although Brent crude rose

above \$80 – the biggest divergence since the peak of the financial crisis – due to a steady inventory rise at a big US pipeline hub.

Equities had a strong session on both sides of the Atlantic. In New York, the S&P 500 closed up 1.4 per cent, while the pan-European FTSE Eurofirst 300 index rose 1.3 per cent. Asian stocks were less sanguine, with the Nikkei 225

down 0.2 per cent.

US and German government bonds were steady as their peripheral eurozone counterparts saw fresh gains. The 10-year Treasury yield was up 6 basis point to 3.58 per cent after a \$24bn auction of 10-year paper. The Greek-German 10-year yield spread fell to 453bp, its lowest in three weeks. The cost of insuring peripheral sovereign debt against default was lower across the board.

Rolls-Royce driven higher by prospect of share buy-backs

LONDON

By Bryce Elder and Neil Hume

Share buy-back hopes helped lift Rolls-Royce yesterday as the London market continued its see-saw performance.

The jet engine maker closed up 5.4 per cent to 611p, taking its gain since the start of the week to 11.5 per cent. The move reflected expectations that military spending budgets in the UK and US would be protected, dealers said, as well as hopes of the cash return to shareholders.

"We estimate Rolls has scope to spend £2.2bn of cash before it runs the risk of a credit downgrade," JPMorgan Cazenove said in a recent note.

Analyst John Middleton forecast the engine maker to spend £500m a year on share repurchases from 2012 onwards. This would boost peak-cycle earnings from 65p per share to 76p, he said.

A rally on Wall Street helped lift the wider market, with the FTSE 100 closing up 49.24 points, or 0.9 per cent, to 5,383.45. In spite of the domestic political dramas over the previous 48 hours, the index was barely changed on a two-day view.

Tour operators led the blue-chip risers, with Tui Travel up 6.5 per cent to

265p as brokers including Merrill Lynch kept "buy" advice following its results on Tuesday, while Thomas Cook ran 6 per cent higher at 232p.

Prudential led the financial stocks, up 4.5 per cent to 565½p, amid rumours it was nearing an agreement with the Financial Services Authority over its proposed bid for AIG's Asian arm.

The insurer was said to be aiming to publish its rights issue prospects by Friday.

Old Mutual climbed 4 per cent to 119p following reports that Standard Chartered was in the early stages of examining a potential offer for Nedbank, its South African arm.

Chartered closed flat at £17.03.

Other lenders weakened to profit-taking after the formation of a Con-Lib coalition government moved unilateral bank taxation up the political agenda.

Royal Bank of Scotland slipped 3.2 per cent to 48½p, leading the blue-chip fall-

ers, while Lloyds Banking Group was down 1.3 per cent to 59½p.

Publisher Reed Elsevier added 4 per cent to 508½p after Dutch peer Wolters Kluwer said its US market was improving. Meanwhile, Citigroup raised its earnings forecasts for Reed and repeated "buy" advice.

Tullow Oil rose 5 per cent to £11.42 and Soco International gained 8.8 per cent at £17.61 after Goldman Sachs added the stocks to its "buy" list. "Tullow's recent underperformance has left an attractive buying opportunity in a stock with world-class assets and oil-price leverage," said Goldman.

On Soco, it said the shares "could almost double this year" if its exploration portfolio delivers.

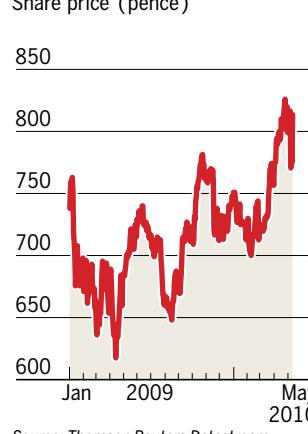
Compass Group was 5.3 per cent higher at 557½p after a trading update from the caterer showed it had returned to growth in the first half.

Immarsat rose 3.9 per cent to 789p as its results on

favour of airlines with higher passenger load factors such as EasyJet, Ryanair and Tui Travel".

EasyJet ended 2.9 per cent higher at 435½p, while Ryanair gained 1.1 per cent to €3.46.

Capita Share price (pence)



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

Key indicators

	FTSE 350	Closing price	Day's change	Day's chng%
Rises				
Soco Intl	£17.61	+143	+8.8	
Hochschw Min	279.50	+18.50	+7.1	
Dimension Data	100.50	+6.50	+6.9	
ITV	61.45	+3.95	+6.9	
Petrovskiy	£12.79	+79	+6.6	
Falls				
Provident Fin	832	-37	-4.3	
Royal Bank Scot	48.40	-1.60	-3.2	
Electra Pvt Eqty	£13.38	-37	-2.7	
JD Wetherspoon	466.70	-11.40	-2.4	
Enterprise Inns	136.20	-3.10	-2.2	
Indices				
FTSE 100	5383.5	+49.3		
FTSE 250	10186.9	+210		
FTSE 350	2842.2	+30.2		
FTSE All-Share	2780.91	+29.48		
FTSE All-Share yield	3.34	3.37		
FTSE 100 Fut Jun	5312.5	-		
10 yr Gilt Yield	3.81	3.86		
20yr Gilt All-Share Ratio	1.32	1.32		

▲ Capita rebounded by 4.8 per cent to 812½p, having underperformed during the hung parliament negotiations on concerns that contracts would be delayed.

KBC Peel Hunt argued that the Con-Lib government was more likely to bring forward projects for outsourcers

Tuesday helped encourage speculating about a possible bid from Harbinger Capital, its biggest shareholder.

In the mid-caps, ITV rose 6.9 per cent to 61½p on news it had been included in MSCI's indices as part of its bi-annual review.

Insurance broker Jardine Lloyd Thompson gained 5.5 per cent to 585½p amid renewed speculation about a break-up bid. Aon, the Chicago-based insurer that last year bought Benfield, was once again rumoured to be interested.

An upgrade to "buy" from Numis also aided JLT shares. "With the full benefits of recent investment in staff still to emerge and stronger global collabora-

tion across the group driving further contract wins, we believe that mid-single digit organic revenue growth is sustainable without a return to more favourable trading conditions," Numis said.

Kesa Electricals gained 4.1 per cent to 119½p after the retailer reassured on full-year targets.

Tullett Prebon edged up 1.7 per cent to 362p ahead of its annual shareholder meeting and trading update due today. The inter-dealer broker said two months ago it was in sale talks, triggering speculation of interest from private equity and the Middle East. However, dealers played down talk that CVC might make an offer.

Small caps

By Neil Hume and Bryce Elder

Xcite Energy, which is looking to exploit reserves of heavy oil in the North Sea, added 18 per cent to 78½p on the back of a "strong buy" recommendation from house broker Arbuthnot Securities.

"If, as expected, the Bentley field is 200m barrels in size, then Xcite will be on par with Premier Oil and Dana Petroleum [in the North Sea]," said Arbuthnot.

The house broker set a new target price of 123p.

It also said Bentley would benefit from a new annual tax field allowance of £160m.

Last week, the biofuels company said two bidders

were working on possible offers.

Chime Communications climbed 12.7 per cent to 204p after the marketing services group said it was trading ahead of expectations.

"We are particularly encouraged that first-quarter new business is up over 30 per cent year-on-year and 77 per cent of 2010 forecast operating income is now committed," said Numis Securities.

Zamano, the text message marketing group, dropped 13.7 per cent to 11p following a profit warning.

The company blamed tighter regulations, particularly in Ireland, as well as weaker-than-expected demand both in the UK and Australia.

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EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

FINANCIAL TIMES

Thursday May 13 2010

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The success of the approach is demonstrated by the Program's 10 year performance track record. Being non-correlated with traditional asset classes it delivers powerful diversification benefits to a wide range of investors.

The Opportunity

My client has developed a structured marketing and sales strategy for the Program and now seeks a highly motivated, energetic sales professional to sell this compelling story to astute investors seeking to diversify their portfolios. The position is based at the Manager's City of London office and will involve UK and International travel. The successful candidate will spearhead the marketing effort by proactively targeting and raising assets from Funds-of-funds, Wealth-Managers, Pension Funds, HNWIs, IFAs, Family Offices, etc.

Your Profile

No previous experience of fund-raising is required. However, you will have a solid understanding of financial markets and a flair for selling - evidenced by your track-record in a high-value sales role. You will possess the initiative to identify new sales opportunities and the communication skills to connect with, influence and convince sophisticated investors.

Contacts within the investor community would be an advantage but not essential as your sales ability will be the key to your success. Above all you will be highly-motivated with a "can-do" attitude and hungry to maximise earnings, while following strict ethical standards in a highly regulated environment.

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Key responsibilities include:

- directing and controlling the activities of finance & administration, IT, human resources and providing skilled judgement and advice in order to achieve key objectives
- as a member of the executive, prepare budgets, reports and forecasts as directed by the VP Western Europe
- taking a full and active role in the company operations, responding to business imperatives with effective strategic and operational initiatives
- playing a key role in commercial decision-making

The successful candidate will be a qualified accountant and have the ability to forge strong business relationships with the management team and group departmental heads. In addition, you will have the confidence to present persuasively to the board. To apply for this outstanding role, please contact Martin Cullinan at Robert Walters on + 44 (0) 121 698 2313 or send your Curriculum Vitae, including current remuneration to martin.cullinan@robertwalters.com Robert Walters, 3 Brindley Place, Birmingham B1 2JB. Web: www.robertwalters.co.uk

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Leading an in-house team of three you will develop group tax strategy and advise on many areas of taxation including; corporate tax, CFCs, tax relief, transfer pricing, tax structuring and employee remuneration. You will also impact on bids and lead tax due diligence for acquisitions and strategic initiatives.

With a proven in-house track record, you will be a fully qualified ACA with experience of working for an international organisation. You will also be an excellent communicator, able to present practical ideas to colleagues at all levels using non-technical language. Ref: 108580

To discuss in more detail, contact Greg Dadson at Hays Taxation at greg.dadson@hays.com or call 020 7520 5959. The closing date is Friday 28 May 2010.

All applications are open to candidates with an overseas equivalent qualification, if applicable.

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For either role, ideally, you will be a graduate ACA from a Big 4 background with financial services audit experience and expert knowledge of the key risks facing the industry.

As a senior audit manager, you will lead multiple, large audits which will require leadership, project management and communication skills, as you will be interacting with key stakeholders.

Strong team development and technical auditing skills are essential for the audit manager positions. Ref: 1071832

To discuss this opportunity in more detail, contact Katy Walker at Hays Corporate Governance at katy.walker@hays.com or call 01256 721824. The closing date is Friday 21st May 2010.

All applications are open to candidates with an overseas equivalent qualification, if applicable.

hays.co.uk/internalaudit

Executive Appointments

Outstanding Treasury Opportunities in Financial Services

Our client, an established UK bank, is seeking to expand their Treasury function. Treasury has undergone significant transformation as a result of a changing competitor and customer environment. A new structure has been introduced in order to adapt to both these internal and external changes. The key focus going forward will be to expand and manage what is already a sizeable franchise of corporate and institutional investors to fund the business lending activities of the Bank. In addition, Treasury make a strong contribution from income derived from the sale of foreign exchange and interest rate products as well as the provision of risk management solutions. The bank has ambitious plans providing successful candidates with opportunities for career development.

Manager, Institutional Dealing Team

London ◆ £ Competitive

Working closely with Business Lending Account Managers this role will be responsible for:

- ◆ Identifying, managing and executing interest rate management solutions for customers
- ◆ Providing support and guidance to Lending Managers and customers
- ◆ Maximising funding and fee income from an existing customer portfolio
- ◆ Building and maintaining strong relationships with customers
- ◆ Identifying and developing suitable new products for customers

Required:

- ◆ Proven interest rate structuring, foreign exchange and money market liabilities products sales experience with corporate and institutional customers
- ◆ FSA CF30 registered

Manager, Institutional Sales Team

London ◆ £ Competitive

The successful candidate for this role will be responsible for:

- ◆ New business development through the sale of money market liabilities, foreign exchange and interest rate products to corporate and institutional customers
- ◆ The provision of risk management solutions to customers
- ◆ Identifying key market segments for new business sales
- ◆ Achieving strong representation of the bank in the market generally through industry groups and trade associations

Required:

- ◆ Excellent business development experience with a proven track record in Treasury Sales
- ◆ Extensive knowledge of all Treasury products including money market liabilities, foreign exchange and interest rate products
- ◆ FSA CF30 registered

Treasury Officer

London ◆ £ Competitive

This position is for a key member of a team focussed on providing specialised services to the Dealing and Sales teams. The range of activities includes:

- ◆ Business analysis
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Performance measurement and monitoring
- ◆ Product structuring
- ◆ Training coordination
- ◆ Project delivery

Required:

- ◆ Previous experience of working in a Treasury/Financial Services environment
- ◆ Understanding of Treasury products
- ◆ Flexible approach to work and good interpersonal skills

Interested candidates should send a full CV, quoting reference MPFI13103545 to Paul McMahon by emailing paulmcmahon@uk.michaelpage.com or call 020 7776 5963 for a confidential discussion. Closing date: 27th May 2010.

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Michael Page
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SSC Financial Accounting Manager



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- ◆ Establish financial discipline and controls to safeguard company assets and ensure financial integrity of reported results
- ◆ Promote best practice across accounting teams
- ◆ Direct and control the production of monthly, quarterly and annual reporting requirements in line with US GAAP
- ◆ Direct and control preparation of Statutory Accounts

Applicants must have:

- ◆ Professional accountancy qualification

Interested candidates should send their CV to Rashi James quoting reference MPFI13095650, by emailing rashijames@uk.michaelpage.com All direct and third party applications will be sent to Michael Page Finance.

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Michael Page
FINANCE

Regional Financial Controller



Millward Brown Group is part of Kantar, WPP's information, insight and consultancy division. WPP are the world's largest communications services group with revenues in excess of £8.5 billion and over 100,000 employees. Millward Brown is one of the world's top ten full-service marketing research agencies, with more than 78 offices in 51 countries and a variety of specialty practices. The MB UK and Ireland region accounts for some 20% of the total MB Group revenue.

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You will report into the CFO for the UK and Ireland and be part of the UK Finance Leadership team. As Regional Financial Controller you will manage a team of 15-20 people responsible for business performance measurement, financial control and reporting, and transaction processing, and you will also be expected to influence the strategic and operational direction of Millward Brown UK. Duties will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- ◆ Management and development of a high performing finance team
- ◆ Performance measurement – including production of financial management accounts, reforecast and annual budgeting
- ◆ Contribution to the development and execution of Millward Brown's strategic plan

Interested candidates should send their CV to our retained consultant, Daniel Yates at danielyates@uk.michaelpage.com quoting reference number MPFI13092007. All direct or third party applications will be forwarded to Michael Page.

Michael Page
FINANCE

Senior Credit Research Manager

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- ◆ Lead the research efforts on GCC credit analysis including formulating and developing macro, thematic and sector views from a fixed income investor's point of view
- ◆ Help formulate and implement the DCM GCC investment process and credit analysis function, as well as setting up and maintaining the credit monitoring process of the GCC portfolios
- ◆ Have input on determining the GCC fixed income investment strategy based on market fundamentals, credit, and investment selection and further develop a robust and sellable investment process

Interested candidates should send their CV to Ben Ewbank at benewbank@ae.michaelpage.com quoting reference number MPFI16504.

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Head of Financial Services



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Reporting to the Deputy Group Finance Director you will take responsibility for the management of the Group's financial services including Income, Reconciliations and Banking, Payments and Payroll teams. A large part of this post will focus on driving efficiencies through the department and ensuring all processes, systems and resources are of the highest possible standard.

You must be a fully qualified Accountant with proven success in a similar role and experience of the following:

- ◆ Identifying barriers to change and overcoming them
- ◆ Process improvement and financial control monitoring

Interested candidates should send their CV to James Champion at jameschampion@uk.michaelpage.com quoting reference number MPFI13098212.

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Head of Risk Management

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- ◆ Recommendation and implementation of agreed risk policies covering credit and market risk
- ◆ Lead the Capital Adequacy and Liquidity Adequacy assessments
- ◆ Manage rating agency relationships
- ◆ Produce information summarising the risk profile of the firm, including commentary, forecasting and stress testing

If you are interested in this role, please contact Tom Smith on 020 7776 5952 or email your CV to: tomsmith@uk.michaelpage.com quoting reference number MPFI13107655.

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Interim Special Feature

24 June 2010

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We now want to strengthen our Strategic Development Team to drive the future growth of our business with the creation of a number of key roles at both Head of Business Development and Business Development Manager level.

This team identifies and evaluates a diverse range of commercial growth opportunities to create new business strategies that will deliver future value consistent with our ambitious vision for our organisation. This is a wide ranging activity which may involve, for example, evaluating potential acquisition targets, developing new retail formats, and identifying opportunities for further growth in our chosen markets. Successful candidates will work on high profile strategic issues in both healthcare and retail sectors, and have a significant degree of involvement and influence across our business.

Please reply, with full career and salary details, to David Craig, Justin Dünner or Mark Richards at Walker Hamill, quoting reference DC 35686. Email: boots@walkerhamill.com

All direct responses to Boots will be forwarded to Walker Hamill Executive Search and Selection.

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ISLAMIC FINANCE

FINANCIAL TIMES **SPECIAL REPORT** | Thursday May 13 2010

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Rich potential in emerging markets

As more of the world's 1.6bn Muslims start to use banks, many will want to do so in line with their religion, says **David Oakley**

Islamic finance is taking tentative steps towards regaining its mantle as one of the fastest growing asset classes in the world. In spite of the continuing aftershocks of the financial crisis and the Dubai debt standstill, the industry is expanding in many emerging markets and introducing new standards

that should help develop products and attract investors.

Although it is not seeing anything like the growth it experienced before the financial crisis, the sector has expanded, even as other markets have been swamped by Europe's sovereign debt crisis.

Assets in Islamic finance rose to \$822bn by the end of 2009, an increase of 29 per cent compared with the end of 2008, according to Maris Strategies, the research and advisory group. Anecdotal evidence suggests it has continued to grow this year, as more institutions gain Islamic licences.

The driver of this growth is retail banking, which is attracting

more interest not just in the world's two biggest hubs of Islamic finance in the Middle East and south-east Asia, but in China, Russia and Africa.

Joe DiVanna, managing director of Maris Strategies and one of the foremost experts in *sharia*-compliant finance that bans interest payments in line with Islamic law, says growth is inevitable in these emerging market countries.

This is because vast numbers of their populations do not

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use banks, which makes them ideal potential customers for a relatively new form of banking that started out as an experimental venture in the 1960s.

As an indicator of this potential, Mr DiVanna points to the fact that of the 1.6bn Muslims in the world, only 14 per cent use banks. By comparison, 92 per cent of US households use banks: in the UK it is 95 per cent.

Figures from the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (Sesric), support this thesis too. While Islamic finance represents just 1 per cent of the global financial system, the Muslim world accounts for 7.6 per

cent of nominal gross domestic product. Growth among the 57 Muslim nations is also much higher than in the rest of the world, Sesric adds.

As these Muslim and emerging nations become more sophisticated, more of their citizens are bound to start using banks and financial institutions, with many wanting to do so in line with their religion.

Khalid Hamad, chairman of the International Islamic Financial Market and another leading figure in the industry, agrees with Mr DiVanna's optimism, although he emphasises that the industry is still in its early stages of development.

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Contributors

David Oakley
Capital Markets
Correspondent

Robin Wigglesworth
Gulf Business
Correspondent

Sam Jones
Hedge Funds
Correspondent

Anousha Sakoui
Capital Markets
Correspondent

Stephanie Gray
Commissioning Editor

Steven Bird
Designer

Andy Mears
Picture Editor

For advertising details,

contact:

Chris Nardi on:

+44 020 7873 4311;

fax: +44 020 7873 4296;

e-mail: chris.nardi@ft.com

or your usual

representative.

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Plenty of room for growth

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ment. Mr Hamad, who is also executive director of banking supervision at the Central Bank of Bahrain, says: "Islamic finance has made progress, but it has only been around in a meaningful way for about 30 years and its possibilities have not yet been fully explored."

However, there has been progress in the market in a number of economies. First, China, the new powerhouse of the global economy, which has 83m Muslim residents, is starting to wake up to the opportunities that could present themselves in this field of finance.

It awarded its first licence for Islamic banking to Bank of Ningxia in September last year and now a number of the country's biggest conventional banks are also reported to be looking at how they can create or offer Islam-compliant products.

Second, Russian investors and financiers are increasingly looking at ways to develop sharia-compliant products and develop the industry.

Finally, Africa, which has long posed the biggest challenge for investors, is starting to look as if it could even challenge the main centres of the industry, although this is probably a long way off.

Mr DiVanna says: "There are great hopes for growth in Africa. This is a continent where people are starting to open bank accounts for the first time. For example, Kenya is looking to expand its banking system and Islamic finance. About 80 per cent of customers have never used banking services before."

This month, Njuguna Ndung'u, governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, said the country had made adjustments to its banking sector to let Islamic finance institutions set up and prosper. However, analysts are mindful of the setbacks since the financial crisis, which has stalled the corporate and investment banking side of many Islamic financial groups.

The fallout from the Dubai debt standstill and debate over the evolution of the *sukuk*, or Islamic bond, market also raise uncertainties. Although many commentators expect the *sukuk* market to see further growth this year, hopes that more western issuers might



Bank branch: London is the main hub for Islamic finance outside the Muslim world

Alamy

consider raising money through these bonds have failed to materialise.

Many analysts say the market needs more sovereign *sukuk* to give it some impetus. Although this is happening in the traditionally strong Islamic finance centres of Bahrain and Malaysia, other governments are failing to issue these bonds.

Certainly, progress on this front among the western economies appears to have stalled, with doubts

that the UK will introduce a sovereign *sukuk* and few western companies seeking to issue sharia-compliant debt. The UK government needs to rediscover its appetite for developing this market. Should the UK issue a sovereign *sukuk*, this would almost certainly encourage corporates to turn to this market too.

General Electric, the US conglomerate, launched the first Islamic bond by a western industrial company at the end of last year, but since then there has been very little activity.

However, London still remains the main hub for this kind of finance outside of the Muslim world. Germany, France and Luxem-

bourg are also keen to develop Islamic finance, but are a long way behind London.

A big growth area is likely to be in the small-to-medium business market (SMEs), which could give Islamic finance a fresh vibrancy and pave the way for more entrepreneurs in the developing world. "This is one area we need to develop," says Mr DiVanna.

One of the most important developments has been the creation of standardised documentation

Mr Hamad adds: "Providing financial services for SMEs can open up huge business opportunities for Islamic finance."

On a more technical front, one of the most important developments has been the creation of the first worldwide standardised documentation for privately negotiated Islamic derivatives. This paves the way for much greater use of hedging in Islamic finance.

These would not be used for speculation, but for managing risk, which is vital to help the sector expand further.

The move by the International Swaps and Derivatives Association in March should help codify individual transactions that need approval by *sharia* scholars.

Such a pan-Islamic document should also help consolidate interpretations of Islamic law. This would make hedging easier and accelerate product development.

The failure to standardise has been a drag on growth and highlights the industry's infancy compared with conventional finance.

Mr Hamad says: "This took almost two years of sometimes complex discussion between banks and authorities in several countries to standardise definitions and terms and overall documents."

The next step should be the launch of the first proper *sharia* hedging products. That would represent a landmark. "Significant interest is being shown in this because Islamic finance has now reached the stage where it really needs hedging instruments," he says.

These would not be used for speculation, but for managing risk, which is vital to help the sector expand further.

Industry 'strays too far from its roots'

Products

Innovation slows after backlash from scholars, says **Robin Wigglesworth**

Modern Islamic finance has come a long way since it started as a modest, experimental venture in the Egyptian town of Mit Ghamr in the 1960s. It encompasses a wide range of products and services that aim to reconcile conventional finance and Islamic law.

Innovation has exploded in the past five years in particular, but rather than being led by "indigenous" Islamic banks, most products have been developed by the structured finance teams of western investment banks such as Deutsche Bank and the Islamic arms of institutions such as HSBC, Standard Chartered and Citigroup.

Many have then licensed their inventions to fully Islamic banks, particularly in the Gulf, where few have had the capacity to structure their own product range.

From profit-sharing accounts and crude products, Islamic finance now spans derivatives, bonds, fund management, credit cards, car loans and even basic hedge funds – all of which use often complex structures to circumvent the Islamic ban on interest.

While the industry has a product range comparable in many areas to conventional finance, Islamic bankers say that there are still gaps in some crucial areas.

The main shortfalls are in derivatives and fixed income, bankers say. Product development in these areas has been complicated by a prohibition on interest by *sharia* (Islamic law) and its requirement for real assets to be transferred as part of any transaction.

Some progress has been

made. Longer-dated debt – in the form of Islamic bonds, or *sukuk* – is a staple of many *sharia*-compliant financial institutions' portfolio, even though maturities seldom stretch further than five years and the market has recently been rattled by several defaults.

The International Swaps and Derivatives Association (ISDA) and the Bahrain-based International Islamic Financial Market (IIFM) have recently launched a standardised master agreement for Islamic derivatives which could pave the way for the greater use of hedging in the sector.

"Given the growing nature of the Islamic finance industry, the institutions operating on *sharia* principles can no longer afford to leave their positions unhedged," Khalid Hamad, chairman of the IIFM and executive director of banking supervision at the Central Bank of Bahrain, said at the time of the

Bankers say the industry would benefit from more homogenous documentation and structures

launch. "Hence, some key hedging products are becoming common across jurisdictions to mitigate risk."

But more needs to be done, bankers concede. It will take time before the ISDA-IIFM documentation is widely adopted and derivatives remain tricky and expensive to structure in accordance with *sharia*.

Shorter-term Islamic money markets also remain crude and underdeveloped, at least outside Malaysia, which stands somewhat apart from the rest of the industry due to an often more lenient *sharia* interpretation, experts say.

"Most [Islamic] bankers you talk to would say that liquidity management is



By the book: experts expect innovation will be cautious and new products will adhere more closely to Islamic law

Alamy

their number one concern," says Daud Vicary Abdullah, head of Islamic finance at Deloitte. "There is no silver bullet. [Islamic money markets] just require time, hard work and political willingness to develop."

Yet innovation has slowed down significantly recently. The financial crisis coincided with a backlash from some senior *sharia* scholars in the Middle East, who felt that the industry had strayed too far from its roots and was mimicking conventional structures too closely, particularly in the *sukuk* sector.

"No one wants any fancy, exotic instruments any more, so innovation has slowed down," says Hussein Hassan, head of Islamic finance at Deutsche Bank. "People are now structuring products and transactions in line with more conservative *sharia* standards."

Bankers are focusing more on simplifying and standardising the vast swathe of existing products rather than conjuring up innovative ones.

Because of differences in *sharia* interpretation in many countries and regions – and competition between banks that were keen to make names for themselves as innovators – the Islamic finance market is highly fragmented.

Divergent views on Islamic law are inevitable, given Islam's global span and different schools of thought, but bankers say the industry would benefit greatly from more homogeneous documentation and structures.

"We are no longer a niche industry. However, without standardisation we will not achieve scale," says Razi Fakih, deputy chief executive of HSBC Amanah, the British bank's Islamic arm.

"Islamic finance would also benefit from more standardisation, not only in *sharia* but in the documentation of products."

Nonetheless, experts expect that innovation will continue – albeit more cau-

tiously – and they predict that new products will adhere more closely to Islamic law.

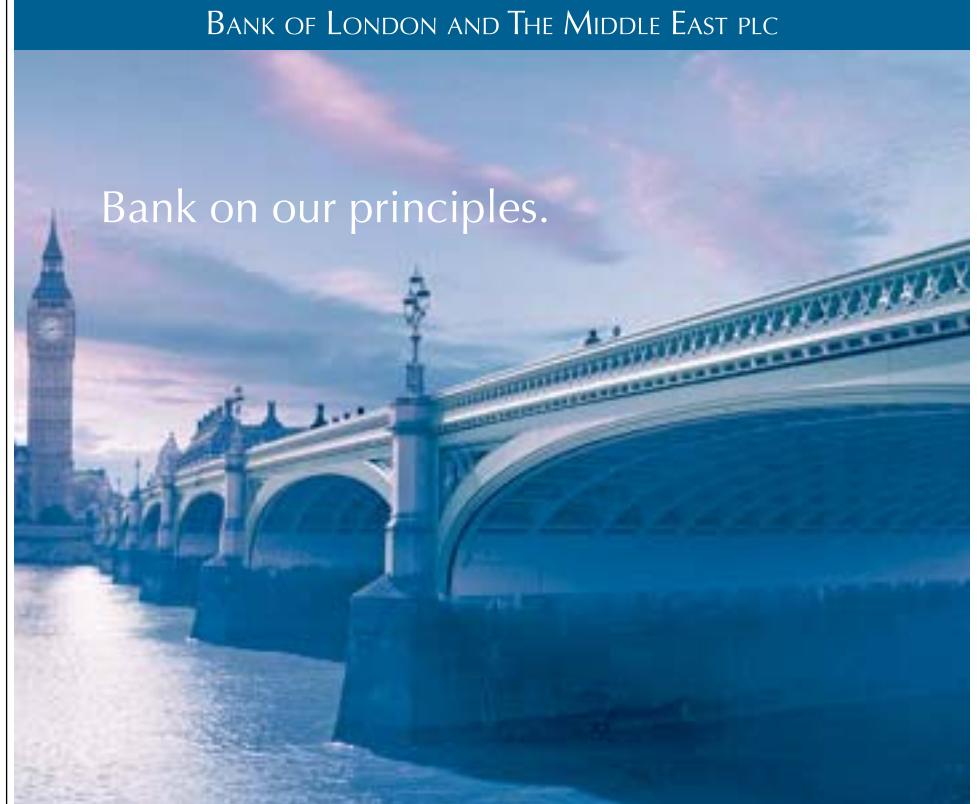
"The industry is still on a learning curve, but I think equity-based products are going to lead the way now,

as they fit better with the substance of Islamic finance," says Mr Abdullah.

"There is a genuine concern that the industry strayed too far from its roots and mimicked conventional finance too closely."

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Islamic Finance

Industry once more at centre of attention

Hedge funds

But fundamental difficulties have yet to be resolved, writes **Sam Jones**

For the past two years, the development of a sharia-compliant hedge fund industry – once one of the hottest topics at alternative investment conferences – has been on hold.

But as the asset management industry – and wealthy institutions and individuals in the Middle East – pick themselves up from the damage wrought by the financial crisis, the issue of whether an Islamic hedge fund industry is viable, or indeed even desirable, is being taken up again.

The notion is attractive not least because the past few months have seen a series of developments in sharia finance that go some way to overcoming many of the obstacles that had faced hedge funds looking to comply with Islamic strictures.

Secular trends in the asset management industry seem to be on the side of

some form of Islamic hedge fund market too.

The field of sharia finance remains one of the fastest growing areas in the global finance industry, with estimates from analysts varying between 20 and 40 per cent growth annually for the next five years at least.

Furthermore, interest in hedge funds and alternative products in the Middle East in particular is on an upward trend.

According to a recent survey of institutional investors in the region by the consultancy Capintro, 36 per cent of respondents said they were planning to increase their hedge fund allocations, while a further 53 per cent said they intended to hold allocations steady.

Most notably, as far as hedge funds are concerned, shorting – a bet that aims to make money from the decline in value of a security – is banned.

Shorting is fundamental to almost every hedge fund strategy and is the main means by which hedge funds look to fulfil their generic mandate – as an investment class – delivering returns uncorrelated to regular markets.

A comprehensive report on the hedge fund industry known as *riba*, is also proscribed, again reducing the investment universe open to hedge funds. And

in April last year projected that money invested in hedge funds by Middle Eastern investors would rise to \$194bn by 2013.

Fundamental problems remain, however.

By definition, a hedge fund is an unregulated investment vehicle open only to qualified investors that has free reign to pick and choose across the gamut of financial instruments and securities indiscriminately to reduce risk while delivering high returns.

Islamic finance, however, can be strictly prohibitive on certain types of financial practice.

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Collecting interest, known as *riba*, is also proscribed, again reducing the investment universe open to hedge funds. And

more generally, investments determined to be *maysir* or *gharar* – that is, speculative or involving unavoidable uncertainty –

are to be shunned too. As a result, successful sharia-compliant hedge funds have been almost exclusively focused on commodity markets. Funds that trade in commodities – tangible assets – face fewer restrictions under sharia law than those trading in



Palm Island developer Dubai World's debt crisis has made interest in hedge funds more pronounced as investors seek to get out of property and look to reallocate portfolios

Uniform sharia standards may unlock hundreds of previously prohibited markets to funds

multi-strategy fund, which blends investments in its four underlying funds, has been one of the most successful fund-of-fund structures so far this year.

In 2009, the DSAM Kauthar commodity fund was up 41 per cent, not only marking it out as one of the best sharia-compliant investments that year but also one of the best hedge fund performers globally. The average hedge fund returned just over 20 per cent in 2009, according to industry indices.

Replicating such sharia-

compliant successes in hedge funds that trade in assets other than commodities may not be as far off as many believe, however.

On 1 March, the Interna-

tional Swaps and Deriva-

tives Association, the global trade body responsible for standard-setting in the derivatives market, issued the ISDA Ta'Hawwut agree-

ment that will allow market participants to enter into derivative contracts that are sharia-compliant – and do so on a level playing field.

Such uniform standards,

potentially open to a host of



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Sustained recovery expected in second half of the year

Sukuk

Anousha Sakoui
reports on a slow return of confidence

When Dubai World, the state-owned conglomerate, asked creditors for a debt standstill last November, it shook global markets.

The announcement froze debt markets across the region. As negotiations between the debt-laden conglomerate and its international and local creditors have unfolded, confidence has started to rebuild.

It has, however, taken until recent weeks for the debt markets to reopen to Dubai-based issuers.

"There are a number of financial *sandsukuk* [Islamic bonds] restructurings going on in the region at the moment, with Dubai World being the most prominent," says Farimda Bi, a partner at Norton Rose, the international law firm.

"Investors are keen to see how these restructurings are concluded. In particular, the *sukuk* defaults last year gave rise to investor anxiety over whether they have taken credit risk on the asset or on the originator."

Spurred by progress over the Dubai World debt restructuring and the improving investor sentiment in the region, the state-owned Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (Dewa) was the first to reopen the bond market for issuers from the region last month.

The sale of \$1bn of five-year bonds, yielding 8.5 per cent, attracted more than \$1bn worth of orders. Dewa was able to price the deal lower than initially expected.

"This time last year, bond issuance by both Abu Dhabi and Qatar, kick-started capital markets issuance in the region after the financial crisis," says Anzal Mohammed, head of Islamic finance at Allen & Overy, the law firm.

"Investors are keen to see

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concluded. In particular, the

sukuk defaults last year gave

rise to investor anxiety over

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risk on the asset or on the origi-

nator."

Sukuk specialists now question what the future holds for the Islamic finance market.

The majority of issuance, however, this year has come from Malaysia with 13 deals.

There have only been a few deals from the Gulf, with Dar Al-Arkan Real Estate Develop-

"We will also have to wait and see if the newly elected UK

government will reconsider the *sukuk* issuance which was considered in 2008 but did not happen."

She adds that there has been comparatively little innovation in the Islamic capital markets in the last couple of years, because there have been fewer deals as a result of the financial crisis.

"What I am hoping for this year is that there will be steady growth. It would be nice to see a few corporate deals as well as sovereign rated issues," says Ms Bi.

Mr Dawood says financial institutions have a very sizeable amount of refinancing to be done. "There is about \$26bn of Gulf Co-operation Council [financial institution] debt to be refinanced over the next 12 to 18 months.

Corporates and sovereigns are looking to the *sukuk* market for access to capital. We have several mandates and we see a strong outlook for the market this year. Liquidity in the region among Islamic investors is strong."

The spread on *sukuk* of some borrowers in the region are lower than their conventional bonds, indicating that the *sukuk* market offers companies lower costs.

"There is a lot of pent-up demand for strong credits," says Mr Dawood.

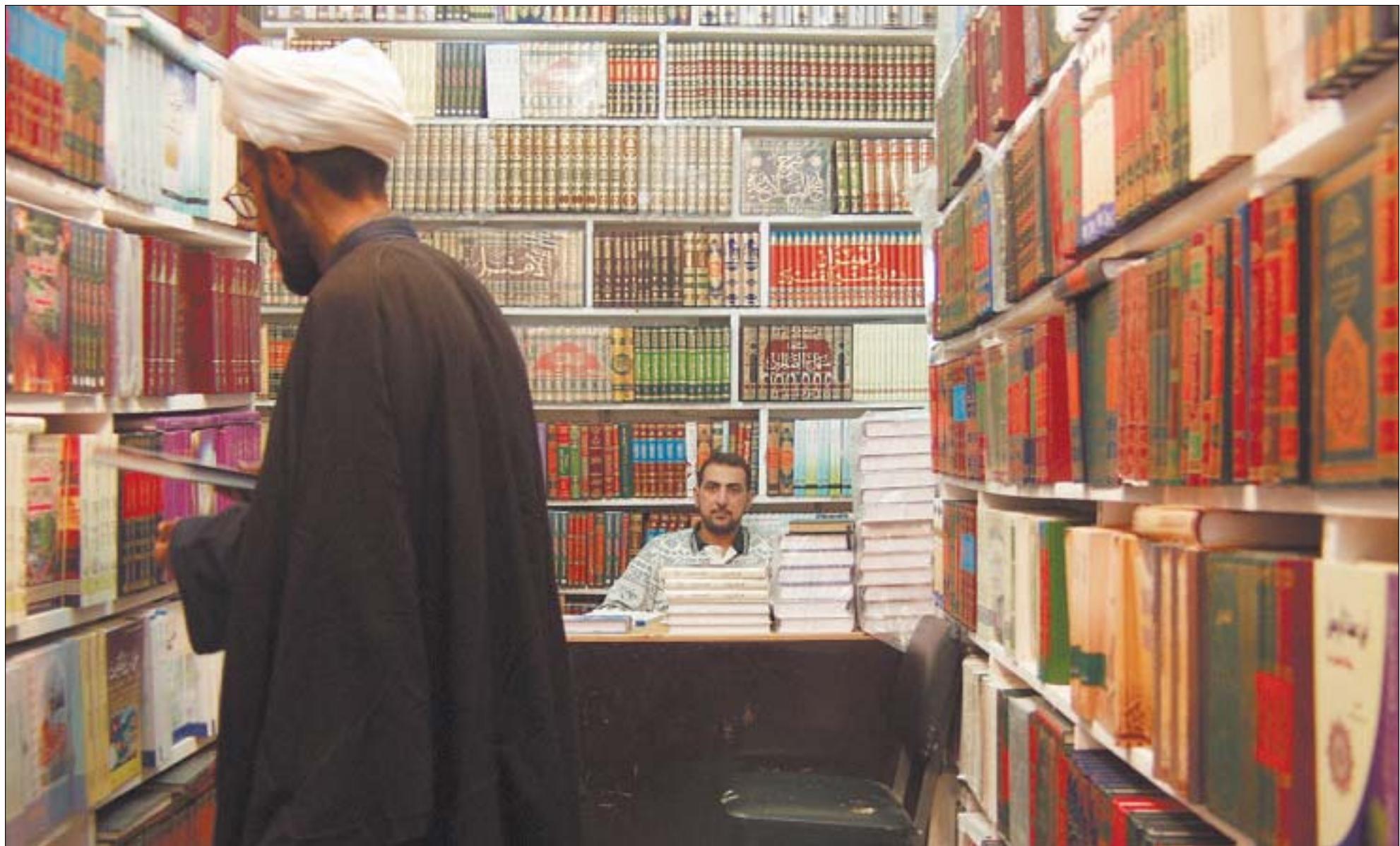
Another dynamic that will support supply is that several regional banks are converting to Islamic institutions and in certain regional jurisdictions these could soon outnumber conventional banks, says Mr Dawood.



We have come full circle since the Dubai World November restructuring announcement'

Anzal Mohammed,
Allen & Overy

Islamic Finance



Different documents: the International Swaps and Derivatives Association (ISDA), recently drafted a master agreement with standardised documentation for Islamic derivatives

AFP

'In need of robust architecture'

Derivatives

Robin Wigglesworth
reports on efforts
at standardisation
of documents

Structuring derivatives that comply with the principles of *sharia* has long been one of the most complex niches of Islamic finance. But it is an increasingly important one, as the industry continues to grow and risk management becomes vital.

Sharia scholars, who have to bless all products and services offered by Islamic banks, have often been reluctant to approve derivatives, because of Islam's bans on interest, speculation and unnecessary risk - *riba*, *maisir* and *gharar* in Arabic - and the requirement for real assets to underlie all transactions.

"The varying scholarly opinions in the world of Islamic jurisprudence on the legitimacy of derivatives has so far translated into a total ban on these instruments in some countries and actual implementation - albeit on a limited scale - in others," Moody's, the rating agency, noted in a recent report.

Nonetheless, while innovation has slowed in the wake of the

international financial crisis and clerical criticism of some high-profile instruments, the structuring and use of Islamic derivatives is gradually gaining ground, experts say.

"There was a time when 'derivatives' was a dirty word for scholars, but they've come round to accepting them, as long as they are for hedging and not speculation," says Harris Irfan, head of Islamic products at Barclays Capital.

"They're still in their infancy, but we're starting to see them used more and more."

The most common Islamic product used to structure *sharia*-compliant derivatives are *wa'ad*, a type of unilateral promise, and *murabaha*, one of the most popular, which can be likened to a conventional "sale and deferred payment" structure.

"You use Islamic finance products such as *murabaha* and *wa'ad* like Lego to build derivative instruments that comply with *sharia*," says Priya Uberoi, director of Islamic derivatives at Clifford Chance.

"About half of Islamic derivatives use *murabaha*, and the rest are based on *wa'ad*, but there are other products out there that can be used. They just haven't been tapped yet."

Other products include *arbun*, which is similar to a conventional

option, and *bai salaam*, which resembles forward contracts.

Existing types of Islamic derivatives include cross-currency swaps, foreign exchange options, total return swaps and profit rate swaps, the Islamic equivalent to an interest rate swap.

Lawyers, bankers and scholars have even managed to engineer Islamic credit default swaps, a *sharia*-compliant version of the popular conventional fixed income insurance product.

Islamic banks are banned from

'There was a time when derivatives was a dirty word for scholars but they've come around to accepting them'

speculating in a credit default, but can in theory protect themselves against an Islamic bond failure.

Ms Uberoi says: "Islamic CDSs are still controversial, and the structures aren't perfect, but you can, with innovative thinking, probably replicate most conventional derivative structures."

However, the complexity, cost and disparate standards of Islamic derivatives - almost every industry institution uses its own struc-

tures and documentation - hampers their frequent use, experts say.

To stimulate the use of Islamic derivatives, the International Islamic Financial Market (IIFM), a Bahrain-based Islamic capital markets industry body, and the International Swaps and Derivatives Association (ISDA), recently drafted a "Tahawwut Master Agreement" with standardised documentation for Islamic derivatives.

In Malaysia, Bank Islam and Bank Mumalat Malaysia executed a pro-forma derivative master agreement for documentation of Islamic derivatives in 2006.

But Asian *sharia* standards are often seen as too lax for Middle East clerics, and the IIFM and ISDA hope their new documentation can be more widely adopted.

The Tahawwut Master Agreement has been blessed by the IIFM's board of *sharia* scholars, which includes some of the industry's most prominent and widely-respected clerics.

These include Sheikh Nizam of Bahrain and Sheikh Hussein Hamid Hassan from Egypt.

"The ISDA-IIFM documentation will bring more rigorous and robust architecture to the development of Islamic derivatives," says Ms Uberoi.

"It's a very new development, but a lot of Islamic banks are

looking at how they can tailor their existing derivatives platform to fit with the master agreement," she says.

Bankers warn that it will take time before the Tahawwut documentation is widely adopted, as most banks have already spent a lot of time and effort on their own agreements and structures.

Hussein Hassan, head of Islamic finance at Deutsche Bank, explains: "If lot of banks move over to the IIFM-ISDA standards, it will help us toward some standardisation, but there will have to be a lot of effort on getting banks to use it."

Nonetheless, the implications of more widespread use of Islamic derivatives could be significant, experts say.

Sharia-compliant institutions would be able to hedge against currency movements, credit exposures, interest rate movements or even commodity inflation - all risk management tools that conventional banks take for granted.

"The golden principle of the *sharia* in human dealings is that all is permissible except that which is specifically prohibited," says Muddassir Siddiqui, a *sharia* scholar and head of Islamic finance at Denton Wilde Sapte, the law firm.

"There is a need for these products, and God would not give us a need without a way to fulfil it."

Ahead of the game in local contest

Malaysia

But this is no time for complacency, says Kevin Brown

Malaysia, which has a substantial lead in the competition to emerge as Asia's primary centre for Islamic finance, is facing increasing competition from Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, and other countries in the region.

However, experts say Malaysia's lead is so great and its ambitions so extensive that it is more likely to benefit than to lose from the attention being paid to the sector in other Asian capitals.

"Malaysia has a very internationalist view of its role in the financial system," says Hooman Sabeti-Rahmati, an Islamic finance expert in the Singapore office of the international law firm Allen & Overy.

"I think they have the ambition, they are developing the institutions, and they are far ahead of some of the people in the Gulf and elsewhere," he adds.

According to Bank Negara, the central bank, Malaysia's total outstanding *sukuk* amounted to \$66bn at the end of last year, or 62 per cent of global outstanding issuance.

About 19 per cent of banking assets are *sharia-compliant*, as are 88 per cent of listed stocks on Bursa Malaysia, the Kuala Lumpur stock exchange.

The sector has strong government support, including a friendly tax regime and predictable regulation, which have provided a high degree of legal certainty for issuers and investors.

This mix, combined with government encouragement to state institutions to use Islamic financing whenever possible, has helped make Malaysia significantly more innovative than other jurisdictions.

Last year, for example, Bursa Malaysia launched the world's first *sharia-compliant* commodity trading platform, intended to provide a mechanism for Islamic banks to manage their liquidity.

Malaysia faces considerable potential competition, however. Neighbouring Singapore is much better estab-

lished as an international finance centre and, while Muslims are in a small minority in the city-state, the Singapore government is keen to expand into Islamic products.

It changed its regulations last year to allow banks to undertake *musharaka* and *murabaha* transactions, and more recently issued guidelines on *istisna*, or project finance deals, and officials in both Hong Kong and South Korea have talked of facilitating Islamic financial instruments, especially *sukuk*.

Indonesia, the biggest economy in south-east Asia, also has ambitions to build an Islamic finance sector, and will be taken seriously because of its sheer size. "Indonesia has seen a renewed focus on Islamic finance and is building momentum," says David Vicary, global Islamic finance leader at Deloitte in London.

However, much of this activity may be less significant than it appears.

Few think Hong Kong and South Korea are likely to amount to more than niche players in Islamic finance, while Singapore's motivation is mainly to ensure that its growing financial centre has the capacity to deal with transactions of all sorts, conventional and Islamic.

Indonesia is a more powerful and long-term competitor

The sector has strong government support, including a friendly tax regime and predictable regulation

itor, says Mr Sabeti-Rahmati, but the diffusion of authority that has grown up in the vast archipelago since its democratic revolution in 1998 militates against the rapid introduction of an effective Islamic financial system alongside the conventional one.

"If this were happening 15 years ago and there was a central decision to facilitate Islamic finance it would just happen very readily. But nothing happens very quickly now in Indonesia because of the diffusion of authority there," says Mr Sabeti-Rahmati.

"That's why we have seen



Kuala Lumpur's big role: Malaysia's total outstanding Islamic bonds amounted to \$66bn at the end of last year

AFP

more of a piecemeal approach, he adds.

"For example a new law came into effect at the beginning of April to remove some of the tax impediments for *murabaha* transactions, but not for *sukuk*.

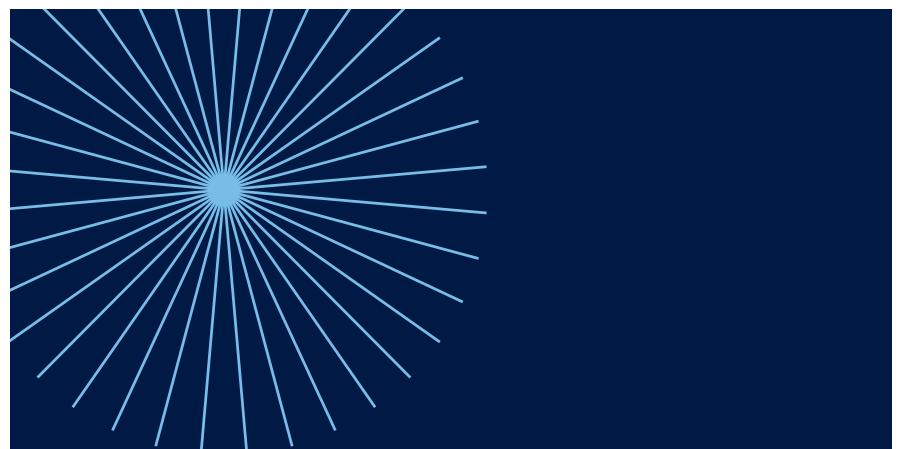
"There is no reason to remove it for one but not the other, but it just didn't happen in this particular round and no one knows when it might happen."

Raja Teh Maimunah, global head of Islamic markets at Bursa Malaysia, says the increasing activity in the sector in other south-east Asian countries is a "good" development.

"We need more players in the market, because we aspire to become an international financial centre and we can't quite be international if we're doing something on our own, so we need everybody to subscribe to this as well," she says.

"It assists Malaysia in a few ways. If you look at Indonesia, a number of our banks are there and our banks would have Islamic windows or branches. Growth and activity there would mean heightened business for our Malaysian banks."

"We don't look at Malaysia being a financial centre whereby [business] has to come and physically be present in Malaysia – the whole exportation of the technology of Malaysian Islamic finance is what we are looking at really."



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