We need clear aims in Libya

OBJECTIVES in Libya remain unclear. The raging opposition clearly is inadequate to win on the ground, and simply giving them better weapons is unlikely to do much beyond getting more people killed. Obama has been adamant On ground forces will be used. With UK troops overstepped, either someone should take the lead to do the fighting — will the Allies perhaps of Libya, or the President will have to break a promise.

Dr James H Joyner, Atlantic Council

MOSUL locals would only defect if he had thought he was welcome. If Cameron plays "west of stage" politics the flood risk, on a very wide front, is of having a personality disorder, after all.

D Stephen Cudmore

The rights and wrongs of AV

FOR Britons to be able to use their votes to signal their true preferences and for more people to feel they have had an influence on the outcome of a general election, when under our current system many voters have never voted for someone who got elected, AV can be legitimately criticised either because it will probably lead to more coalitions or because it is a poor substitute for "real PR", but arguing it would be an end to one-person-one-vote is simply wrong. As with the current system, every vote would be counted equally and only once in determining who ultimately gets elected. For the 25 historians who wrote to The Times this month to claim otherwise is a travesty of their intellectual credentials.

Two other elements relating to the referendum should be highlighted. Differential turnout across the country could potentially influence the outcome. If the Yes side makes a win on the back of high turnout in Wales and Scotland, where they will be voting by electing their parliaments on the same day, it would raise some major headaches about legitimacy. Longer term, the outcome of the referendum may influence whether the Coalition presses ahead with plans for an elected Lords, moves publicity. If AV is accepted to provide a sop to the Lib-Dems. An elected Lords with a Lib-Dem contingent holding the balance of power would be a considerable boost on a Conservative or Labour majority in the Commons. If AV is approved, there will be pressure on Cameron to resist an elected Lords, a petty distraction result from the point of view of British democracy.

Professor Simon Hix, LSE

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