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Aaron Wherry covers all the goings-on in and around Parliament Hill. Follow Aaron on Twitter: [@aaronwherry](https://twitter.com/aaronwherry)

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Where does Thomas Mulcair stand?

by [Aaron Wherry](#) on Monday, March 19, 2012 12:33pm - [3 Comments](#)

Mr. Mulcair has talked about the need to “renew” and “modernize” the NDP, but much of what he has had to say about said change has involved nothing more than the party’s rhetoric and what he has [proposed](#) in [terms](#) of [policy](#) seems uncontroversial in the NDP context.

So where might Mr. Mulcair represent potential differences? Let’s throw out a few possible points of interest.

As opposed to [Jack Layton](#), Mr. Mulcair opposes a [coalition](#) with Liberal MPs.

One thing Mulcair is clear on is that he’ll go after Liberal supporters, but won’t work with the rival party. “N.O.,” he told HuffPost. The NDP tried to form a coalition with the Liberals in 2008 and then the Grits “lifted their noses up on it,” Mulcair said. The coalition experience taught Mulcair everything he needs to know about the Liberals. They’re untrustworthy and he said he’ll never work with them again, whether in a formal or informal coalition. “The no is categorical, absolute, irrefutable and non-negotiable. It’s no. End of story. Full stop,” he said.

As opposed to [Mr. Layton](#), Mr. Mulcair seems not entirely opposed to [NAFTA](#).

Although the party he seeks to lead has vigorously opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement in the past and former NDP Leader Jack Layton called for it to be re-opened, Mulcair says he supports NAFTA and helped draft some of its provisions on professional services. "To some people, the NAFTA is an anathema," he said. "The NAFTA is the first international agreement that had provisions dealing with the environment. You can't throw out the baby with the bath water."

What he would like to change, however, is the way the Conservatives are allowing the U.S. to try to use the trade agreement. "When you look at how Chapter 11 has been enforced, when you are told that a company has a right under the NAFTA to continue to export a substance that our government has considered deleterious, a substance that was an additive in gasoline. When you look at the fact that the Americans are now fighting back on a ban that I helped enforce in Quebec on 2-4-D, which is a pesticide, telling us that we have no right to ban 2-4-D, then I say we have to stand up and fight back and just tell the Americans that they are not going to determine for us that we have to add certain poisons to our environment and that's not what the NAFTA is all about."

As opposed to [Barack Obama](#), Mr. Mulcair would like to see [military intervention](#) in Syria.

But, unlike some of his other colleagues, Mulcair is not a pacifist and said he would want Canada to join military action in certain cases if sanctioned by the UN. "I do think that we should have long ago been in Syria to stop the wholesale slaughter of the civilian population there...It is absolutely unthinkable that the world today would allow such an attack," he said.

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The only meaningful change any NDP leader can make is to eliminate the 'socialism' clauses.

[8 hours ago](#)[Like](#) [Reply](#)**Rick Omen**

Mulcair actually sounds like he'd be a great leader.... for the LPC. It will be interesting seeing Rae and Mulcair battling it out for the same voters that are on the right side of the NDP and on the left side of the LPC. Of course this all plays into the CPC's hands, as the LPC continues to bleed it's right-wing votes to the CPC, the sum of the votes being fought for by the NDP/LPC will continue to shrink.

Then again, if Bob Rae does assume the leadership of the LPC, that just might alienate enough LPC faithful that a significant chunk of it's base will abandon them forever.

[7 hours ago](#) [1 Like](#)[Like](#) [Reply](#)**kcm2**, The enemy of the conventional wisdom is not ideas but the march of events ~ JKG

You're whistling for a wind bud, hope you got a paddle? The CPC already got everyone they can out of the LPC. Right now the question is can they hold on to them - not if robocalls breaks badly.

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