E. R.

Prime Minister

You will want to discuss this at the end of OPD(G) tomorrow, bringing in the Lord President & the Chief Whip. CDP.

PRIME MINISTER

GULF DEBATE

John Wakeham came in this morning to discuss the Parliamentary handling of the likely debate next week on the Gulf. I have subsequently spoken to the Chief Whip.

Both are concerned that before Cabinet on Thursday morning key Ministers should have decided whether to go for an adjournment or a substantive motion for debate.

The Foreign Secretary, and probably the Defence Secretary, favour an adjournment debate. This would make it easier to preserve unity with the Labour Party.

The Chief Whip, however, sees some attractions in a substantive motion, asking the House to endorse the UN Resolutions. Given developments in the last few days, the Labour Front Bench would be likely to table an amendment along the lines of "giving maximum time for economic sanctions to work". The Chief Whip suggests devoting five to ten minutes of the OPD (G) meeting on Thursday before Cabinet to a discussion on the Parliamentary handling of the debate. He and the Lord President could attend just for that item. The Chief Whip intends to do for you a very short note setting out the pros and cons of an adjournment debate vs. a substantive motion.

NSF gen received

Content for there to be a short discussion in OPD (G) on Parliamentary handling?

DOMINIC MORRIS
8 January 1991

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