

Title: LOBBY BRIEFING 11 AM 7 SEPTEMBER 1990

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister will attend much of the Debate in the House and will be present for the Vote this afternoon. Later she will leave for Scotland. She will spend much of tomorrow and Sunday at Balmoral.

PRESS NOTICES

Operational Note on the Prime Minister's visit to New York.

PUBLICATIONS

None

IN THE HOUSE

Statements

None

Answers of Interest

None

Other Departmental Business

FCO - Mr Waldegrave attending EC Foreign Ministers Meeting in Rome

NIO - Mr Brooke speaking in Northern Ireland at about 3.30 pm

HMT - Mr Major attending informal ECOFIN meeting tomorrow in Rome

Mr Forsyth

In response to questions about whether or not there would be a statement today on Mr Forsyth we said we did not know: we could not rule out anything for today. We confirmed that Mr Forsyth had seen the Prime Minister last night for about half-an-hour, but that she had not seen him this morning. We said that as far as we were aware no meeting was planned, but we did not know whether or not they were likely to meet in the House. We reminded the Lobby that in the sense that he was Scottish Party Chairman it was a Party matter. Again in response to questions, we confirmed that any announcement could be made at any time if it were necessary. We said that the Prime Minister was not going to Aberdeen this weekend.

We confirmed that the Prime Minister had full confidence in Mr Forsyth. We had no idea what might happen today.

In response to questions about Mr Rifkind carrying out visits on the Prime Minister's behalf yesterday, we explained that as was normal a programme had been drawn up linked to the Prime Minister's visit to Balmoral. Mr Rifkind had carried out these visits in her stead because the Prime Minister had to be in the House yesterday for the Debate. No such visits had been arranged for today. Asked about Mr Rifkind's attendance at today's Debate, we said that we would be surprised if Cabinet members were not in the House to Vote.

### Gulf

In response to questions about the announcement of the deployment of troops, we said that we doubted that we were looking at several weeks. It would most probably be sooner rather than later, obviously with an announcement coming as soon as a final decision was taken. There would be no announcement today, nor would there be any other announcements in Mr Hurd's wind-up speech, as far as we knew. We told the Lobby that as far as we were aware there had been no approaches made by us to any of the Arab states asking for financial support for any of our forces. We pointed out that British forces deployed in the Gulf were much smaller than the US contingent, and we did not have any land forces.

In response to questions we said that the Prime Minister had set out her position on the Gulf very clearly yesterday, highlighting how she saw the situation, and the question of Article 51.

PB