

Broadcasting
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Gordon

Regarding the 'new' meeting proposition I put to you last night, a few more thoughts.

The ideal night might be Wednesday, the campaign as good as over, the issues set, the voters making their final choice ... and, one-hour, networked, 8.30, to set the stage for the voting.

I would suggest there are two principle format choices.

Either, the standard television discussion with the chairman (Denis Tuohy) playing the objective but dominant role. Say five subject areas of ten minutes each. The subject area, the form of the opening question in each area, and the order of play/methods of timing agreed with you and your opposite number in advance ... ~~Q&A~~ In each section, one uninterrupted answer from each leader, and then the chairman's role of engaging them in debate.

Or, the formalised approach with the chairman playing the passive role. Let's say four subject areas, starting, for example, with the first fifteen minutes on trade union relationships with government - and an off-screen spin of the coin to see who goes first. If Mrs.Thatcher won, the chairman would ask her why the voter should believe her government would handle union relationships better than Labour. She would have three minutes to reply, Mr.Callaghan would have four minutes to question her ... then, the identical question would be put to Mr.Callaghan and Mrs.Thatcher would have the same time to question him.

I know how speculative this all is, but I know how fast things change with an election approaching - and know we both agree

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that, if it suited your game-plan, it would be a historic piece of broadcasting at the start of what might prove to be a new period of government.

If you showed 'any' interest, I would see if I could get 'any' interest from the other side. I would hate you to feel intimidated because of the very real dangers of adverse publicity - like last time - but know you accept my personal guarantee to do everything possible to conduct the diplomacy in secret.

Yours sincerely,

Michael K. Townson

Gordon Reece

for INFORMATION

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