By Eugene Robinson

Prime Minister John Major played a game of political brinkmanship in an attempt to regain control of events Monday, as government spokesmen refused to rule out the possibility that Major would call a general election if he is defeated in a vote on the European Union treaty next week on European Union.

The willingness of officials to think the unthinkable—that Major would go back to the voters at a time when his popularity is at an all-time low—was a measure of how firmly Major has linked his political future to the fate of the Maastricht Treaty, a blueprint for European political and economic union.

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In reaction to another disputed section by Major, a crowd estimated at 150,000 marched through central London Sunday to protest his announcement of nine clotings and an effort to stretch out at night.

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