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10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

11 September 2002

Dear Michael,

As I have said in recent days, Parliament must and will be at the heart of the national debate on the issue of Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction, and I thought it would be helpful if I set out my thinking on the recall of Parliament.

I would like, with your permission, to recall Parliament for a one-day debate on the adjournment, led by the Foreign Secretary, and preceded by a statement by me, during the week beginning September 23rd.

By then, important discussions at the UN will have taken place. And the Government will be in a position to publish the dossier that is being prepared on what we know of the Iraqi regime and its WMD programme. This should allow Parliament to debate the issue with the fullest possible knowledge.

We will discuss with your office and with other parties the best day for the recall, but our preference at this stage would be early in that week.

I understand why Members are calling for an earlier recall, and earlier publication of the dossier. I would point out that a rigorous process is being gone through to ensure that the document is as detailed and comprehensive as possible, without compromising sensitive intelligence material.

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I would also repeat that we are not at the stage of making decisions about military commitments with regard to Iraq, and that should we be so in the future, Parliament would obviously be given every opportunity to express its view.

I am copying this letter to the leaders of the other parties, and I have written to the Lord Chancellor in similar terms, so that he may consider the response of the House of Lords.

yours ever
Tony

The Right Honourable Michael Martin

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