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Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

PRIME MINISTER

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CABINET: 11 SEPTEMBER

We have the following agenda:

1. **ROLE OF CABINET**

You might want to note Cabinet is meeting on the second anniversary of 9/11 and will then wish to outline your plans for Cabinet, using the attached speaking note.

2. **PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS**

- i. **Commons business.** Invite **Hilary Armstrong** (and **Peter Hain**, should he wish to contribute) to comment on forthcoming Commons business.
- ii. **Lords business.** Invite **Gareth Williams** and **Bruce Grocott** to do the same for Lords business.

3. **CURRENT EVENTS**

- i. **Diagnosis and Treatment Centres (DTCs).** John Reid is to announce on Friday the preferred bidders to provide 34 NHS DTCs. The planned DTCs will be located across England and will offer fast, pre-booked surgery and diagnosis facilities, particularly in those specialities that have the longest waiting times for patients. Some of the medical profession are opposed. Invite **John Reid** to inform colleagues about the announcement. There is no need for a discussion.
- ii. **ID Cards.** A separate briefing note is attached.

1. **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

- i) **You** will wish to invite **Jack Straw** and **Geoff Hoon** to give a presentation on Iraq.
- ii) **You** will want to stress the strategic importance of making a success of Iraq, mentioning your recent telephone conversation with President Bush. Insurgents and terrorists are trying to destabilise coalition efforts to put the country back on its feet. Improving security by

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involving Iraqis in guarding and protection tasks must be achieved quickly. You will wish to conclude that the UK priority is to deliver early results on the ground in the South.

The next Cabinet will be on 18th September 2003.

PP **ANDREW TURNBULL**
10 September 2003

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ROLE OF THE CABINET: SPEAKING NOTE

I have been considering how we make best use of the Cabinet and its committee machinery to reinforce our collective ownership of our agenda and goals.

I intend that:

Cabinet will have a rolling programme of substantive issues for discussion and also more actively track current business; and

I will chair regular meetings of three Cabinet committees, on European Strategy, on Foreign and Defence Policy and on Public Service Reform.

As Cabinet time is limited, most collective decisions will continue to be taken in the Cabinet committees. But I would like to make the Cabinet agenda more substantial. I propose:

- i. 'second reading' discussions on key proposals early in their development, or discussions of the future direction of policy in key areas, to collect views and ideas and develop common ownership;
- ii. presentations on important current problems to help to keep us informed and up to date;
- iii. to bring the most important policy issues to Cabinet for decision. Even if decisions are taken in other fora, in the most important cases Cabinet will be invited to confirm the policy before announcement and discuss briefly presentation and tactics;
- iv. regular agenda items on recurring subjects, such as the outlook for the economy, progress on delivery, and short thematic discussions before European Councils and the start of each EU presidency;
- v. short oral reports on major current developments as a way of keeping colleagues informed.

This morning we have a paper on identity cards and Jack and Geoff will give a short presentation on Iraq. I shall also ask John Reid to explain briefly his forthcoming announcement on Diagnostic and Treatment Centres.

We will circulate a provisional forward programme for Cabinet and the Secretariat will work with departments to keep this up to date.

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