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From the Principal Private Secretary

cc: JP
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Jeremy Heywood
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Dear Jeremy

I am writing to confirm the conversation you had with Suma Chakrabarti earlier this evening.

My Secretary of State will think about her position overnight, as she said in Cabinet this afternoon. Subject to her deciding she can remain in the Government, she would like to take up the Prime Minister's suggestion that she visit New York and Washington for urgent discussions to follow up his conversations with the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and to take forward discussions on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance with the UN, International Financial Institutions, and US Administration. The Secretary of State would report back on her visit at Cabinet on Thursday.

This will mean that she is unable to be present for the vote tomorrow evening, although she will be in the Chamber for part of the debate, in particular the Prime Minister's opening speech. In addition, should her overnight considerations allow her to do this, she would write to every PLP member before their meeting tomorrow, setting out her position, and letting them know that, had she been present, she would have voted for the Government motion and urging others to do likewise.

In addition, should the Prime Minister agree to this visit, the Secretary of State would like her Parliamentary Private Secretary, Dennis Turner, to accompany her.

I should be grateful for the Prime Minister's agreement to the above.

I am copying this to (HMT) and PS/Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Anna Bewes

Anna Bewes
Principal Private Secretary

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