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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

17 February 1998

Dear Fiona,

### NEW VARIANT CJD AND BLOOD PRODUCTS

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 12 February, which set out the options for dealing with potential problems with the safety of blood and blood products in the light of the appearance of NvCJD.

The Prime Minister believes that we need to deal with this issue in a low profile way, consistent with maintaining a high level of health protection and public confidence in the safety of blood. With this in mind, and subject to the views of others, he is content with the overall approach proposed by your Secretary of State:

- on blood, to wait for SEAC's advice on 9 March on the need to introduce leucodepletion, whilst sticking to the public position that the Government will take all necessary steps recommended by experts to safeguard patients. If SEAC do recommend leucodepletion, the Prime Minister is ready to consider this, but will wish to be consulted before a decision to proceed is taken. It would clearly be helpful to have as much advance warning as possible of SEAC's advice and there should be contingency planning for a situation where SEAC raise public concerns about the safety of blood, but stop short of advising in favour of leucodepletion;
- on blood products, to allow the BPL to import non-UK sourced plasma and make the full range of products from non-UK sources, and to make non-plasma derived clotting products available to haemophiliac children and new patients.

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- 2 -

The Prime Minister also attaches considerable importance to ensuring that a handling strategy is worked up in conjunction with MAFF, the FCO, UKREP and the European Secretariat to deal with possible reactions in Europe and their implications for negotiations on lifting the beef ban.

I am copying this letter to Gabs Mahklouf (HM Treasury), Dominick Chilcott (FCO), Ken Thomson (SO), Ken Lindsay (NIO), June Milligan (WO), Rupert Huxter (Office of the Minister without Portfolio), Robert Hill (Policy Unit) and Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

V  
lowB,

GRO-C

**ANGUS LAPSLEY**

Ms Fiona Anderson,  
The Department of Health.

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PM 10 DOWNING STREET

Richard essentially agrees with  
Frank. is.

- act on blood products; where  
BPL will go bust if we do not  
and we can also keep the haemophiliacs  
happy;
- wait for SEAC on knucleoprotein  
and whole blood.

Are you content with this?

GRO-C