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ATTORNEY GENERAL

1. I thought that you would appreciate a note of response to your minute of 3 February. (As you mention, the issue of substance – Iraq – is a matter being dealt with separately).
2. For the record, I want to make it completely clear that I fully respect the integrity of Michael Wood and his colleague legal advisers. I believe that officials should always offer their best advice. At the same time Ministers must be able to raise legitimate questions about the advice they receive. As far as the implementation of Iraq UNSCRs is concerned, this is an uncertain area of law. The US, Netherlands and Australian government legal advisers all, I understand, take the view that SCR 1441 provides legal sanction for military operations. The full range of views ought to be reflected in the advice offered by our Legal Advisers.

20 February 2003

(JACK STRAW)

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