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to all  
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file

From the Private Secretary

15 March 2003

Dear Kara

**Iraq: Chile, 15 March**

The Prime Minister had a ten-minute call with President Lagos at noon today.

Lagos said that the US was not pleased with the statement he had delivered yesterday. He did not understand their reasoning. His statement had three parts. Firstly, a section showing his understanding of US feelings in the aftermath of 9/11 and the subsequent war on terrorism. Secondly, a section on benchmarks and timing with a reference to a period of three weeks. Finally, he had made a clear reference to the use of force should Saddam not move on the five benchmarks. These were the same as the British ideas, but with different numbers, which he had taken from Blix. He thought that this approach would have the backing of the 'elected six' and therefore a majority of the UNSC. After his statement CNN reported that Chile was moving towards the US position. Mexico had called to check on that, but he had said that the Chilean position remained the same. He did not like the US reaction. They had dismissed it as a non-starter. They were suspicious that it was something he had done with the French.

The Prime Minister said that he would explain the situation to the US. The US was concerned that the 'elected six' document would be used by the French to cause further delay. The Chilean statement was tougher than the 'elected six' document; though the US would still have issue with the Chilean timelines. Lagos said that the 'elected six' wanted to have a statement by the President of the UNSC rather than a resolution and it was that that lay behind their paper. A statement by the President of the UNSC would still require the approval of the Council. It seemed that the US was worried that it would be a resolution against theirs.

The Prime Minister said that this was what he had been trying to get movement on last week. He had seen that time was running out. When the Prime Minister

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spoke to Chirac yesterday it was clear that the French position would still not accept the automatic use of force or an ultimatum in the event of non-compliance. Lagos said that benchmarks without a timeline would result in endless discussions. It was not clear what the UNSC could now do - time was running out. Colin Powell had told the Mexican Foreign Minister that the US did not want any further movement at the UN. Lagos had acted in good faith, but he would not do anything further.

The Prime Minister said that he would have further discussions with the US today and there could be a chance to squeeze things through. Lagos said that maybe by tomorrow we would be in a different stage of the conflict. The Prime Minister said that he thought there was still time and he would keep trying until the last minute. Lagos said that the Prime Minister knew where Chile stood and he was sorry that they had not been able to achieve a successful outcome last week. He stood ready to help. The Prime Minister and Lagos agreed that they would stay in contact.

I am copying this letter to Peter Watkins (MOD), Sir Andrew Turnbull, John Scarlett and Desmond Bowen (Cabinet Office), PS/C, Sir Francis Richards, Eliza Manningham-Buller, Greg Faulkner (Santiago), Sir Jeremy Greenstock (UKMis New York), Tony Brenton (Washington), Sir John Holmes (Paris), Sir Paul Lever (Berlin), Sir Nigel Sheinwald (UKRep Brussels), Sir Emyr Jones Parry (UKDel NATO) and Sir Roderic Lyne (Moscow).

Yours ever

*Signed : Francis Campbell*  
15/03/2003

Francis Campbell

Kara Owen, PS/FCO

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