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From the Private Secretary

14 March 2003

Dear Kara

**IRAQ: PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATION WITH
PRESIDENT LAGOS OF CHILE, 14 MARCH**

The Prime Minister had a ten minute call with President Lagos of Chile at 1400 this afternoon.

Lagos said that the 'elected six' had been working on some ideas on benchmarks and timing and they planned to present their ideas at noon today New York time. Their ideas were based on reasonable benchmarks and timing, but also the use of force if Saddam did not comply. Blix would have input on deciding both the timing and the benchmarks. The Prime Minister asked about the timeline. Lagos said that that would be up to the UNSC. The six did not want to present the proposals as a formal resolution. They wanted their paper to be a basis for making progress. The ideas had been briefly raised in discussions yesterday and the Russians had expressed some misgivings. A way forward could see three of the six holding talks with Russia and the other three with the UK. The original resolution tabled by the UK, Spain and the US did not have the support of Chile.

Lagos had the impression that France and Russia were now looking for a real solution in the UNSC. They realised that the issue was in the last hours and there was a risk that things would go outside the UN. There was a slim chance that war could be avoided within the next 3-4 days. The US should also understand the reasons against acting alone. Some had talked about the possibility of a short war. In the event of war starting it would be essential for the UNSC to meet as soon as possible to work on aftermath issues.

Lagos said that he would hold a Press Conference in three hours. He would mention that the Prime Minister had been the most open and keen of all the Security Council members to finding a solution. In contrast, the French had done nothing. They did not want to participate - just saying the same thing for

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the last 60 days. But, in the last 48 hours the Chilean Foreign Minister had taken up to four calls a day from de Villepin.

Lagos asked the Prime Minister about future developments. Some were talking about a vote on Monday or Tuesday or having no vote at all. The Prime Minister said that it was not clear how things would develop. The UNSG did not want to vote on a resolution that would be vetoed. Both France and Russia were very clear that they would not allow a resolution which authorised the use of force. Lagos promised to keep the Prime Minister informed of his thinking.

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 sincerely

Signed : Francis Campbell
14/03/2003

FRANCIS CAMPBELL

Kara Owen
FCO

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