



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

bc HMA
FCO

SUBJECT
MASTER

7 December 1998

THE PRIME MINISTER

Filed on:

Dear President Frei,

Thank you for your letter of 26 November which your Foreign Minister handed over on his recent visit to London. Although we would have liked to welcome him to London under different circumstances, Robin Cook, Peter Mandelson, George Robertson and my own staff have told me how impressed they were with the candid, forthright, but courteous manner in which he presented his case.

I fully understand the difficult job which you, as President, and the Chilean Government have had to perform over the past few weeks. You have earned widespread admiration for the calm and dignified manner in which you have dealt with an unprecedented situation. As Robin Cook told Sr Insulza, we particularly appreciate the efforts you have made to ensure the safety of our Embassy and all British interests in Chile.

I hope you will in turn appreciate that, as we have repeatedly made clear, neither the original arrest of Senator Pinochet nor subsequent steps have been politically motivated. We have had to allow the legal process to take its course. The next stage of the process involves a decision by the Home Secretary acting independently in accordance with his statutory responsibilities. It will be up to him to decide which factors to take into account in making that decision.

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Chile and the UK have been close friends for many years. We have strongly supported the process of re-establishing democracy in Chile. I hope you will agree that we should continue to work together to ensure that these legal proceedings do not undermine those warm and mutually beneficial relations.

Yours sincerely
Tony Blair

HE Sr Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle

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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

4 December 1998

London SW1A 2AH

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CC JEH
✓ AC

Dear Philip

Letter from President Frei: Reply from the Prime Minister

... On his recent visit to London, the Chilean Foreign Minister, Insulza, handed over a letter from President Frei to the Prime Minister regarding the extradition application in respect of Senator Augusto Pinochet. I attach a draft reply, which has been cleared with the Home Office.

Since the Chileans have publicised the fact of the letter, a failure to reply could well become public too. Not to reply to President Frei's letter would leave us open to a charge of discourtesy at the least. A reply would, moreover, be of great help to the Chileans and would help bolster President Frei's position.

We would not seek to make any reply public. It would be up to the Chileans whether or not they chose to do so. It has been drafted in terms which are entirely consistent with the public lines we are already using.

I am copying this letter to Mara Goldstein (Home Office), Tom McKane (MOD) and Sebastian Wood (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Andrew Patrick

(Andrew Patrick)
Private Secretary

Philip Barton Esq OBE
10 Downing Street

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DRAFT MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO SR EDUARDO FREI
RUIZ TAGLE

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Ms Karen Miller
LACD, WH324, FCO

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