

SS. A a 01

Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Note from Fred

2 messages

Adam Smith

[Redacted]

7 October 2010 16:32

To: jeremy

[Redacted]

Obviously strictly commercially confidential but very interesting.



BRIEFING - CONFIDENTIAL.DOC

51K

Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

7 October 2010 19:40

To: Adam Smith

[Redacted]

Very powerful actually

On 7 October 2010 16:32, Adam Smith

[Redacted]

wrote:

Obviously strictly commercially confidential but very interesting.

[Redacted]

27/04/2012

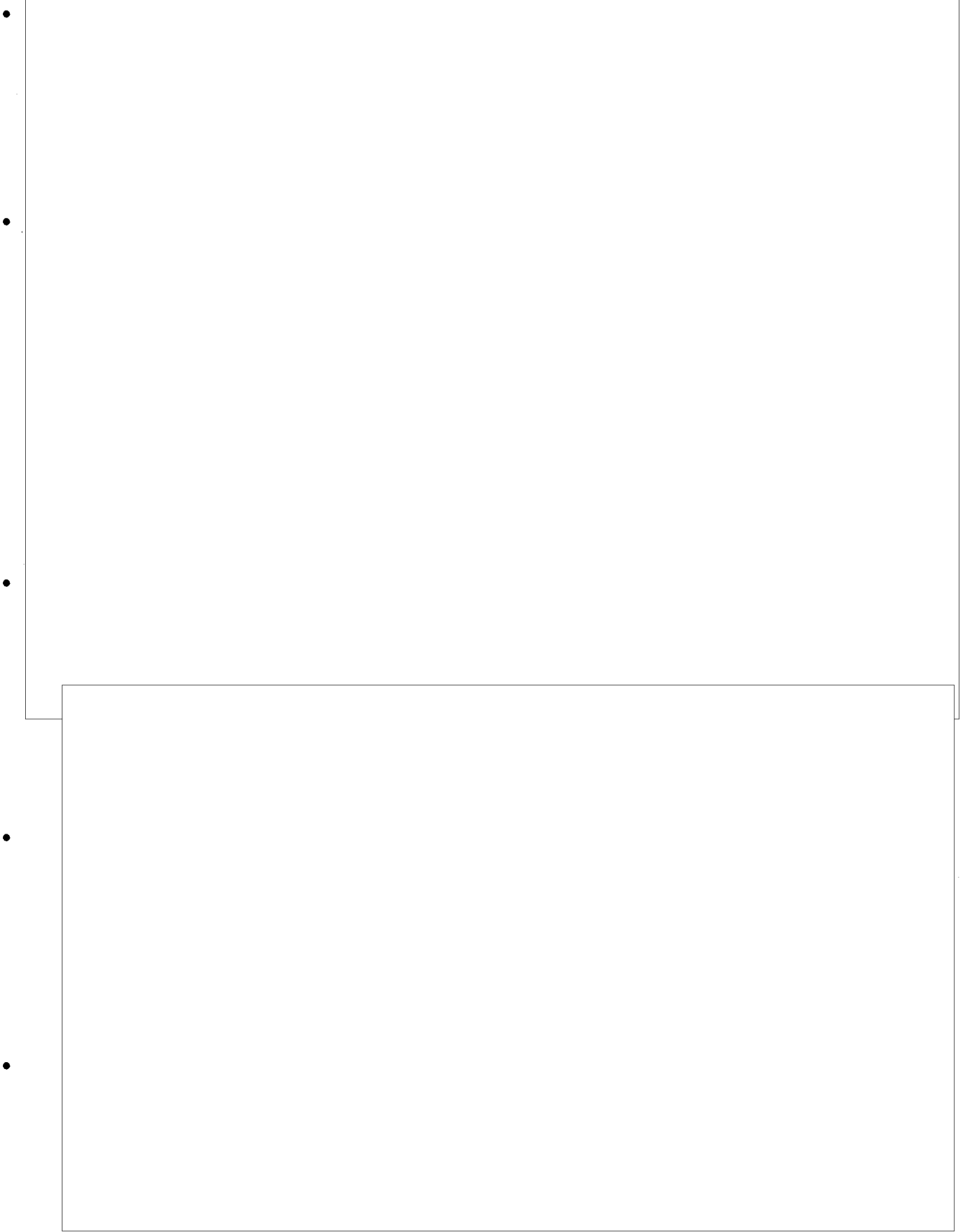
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SS. Aa 02

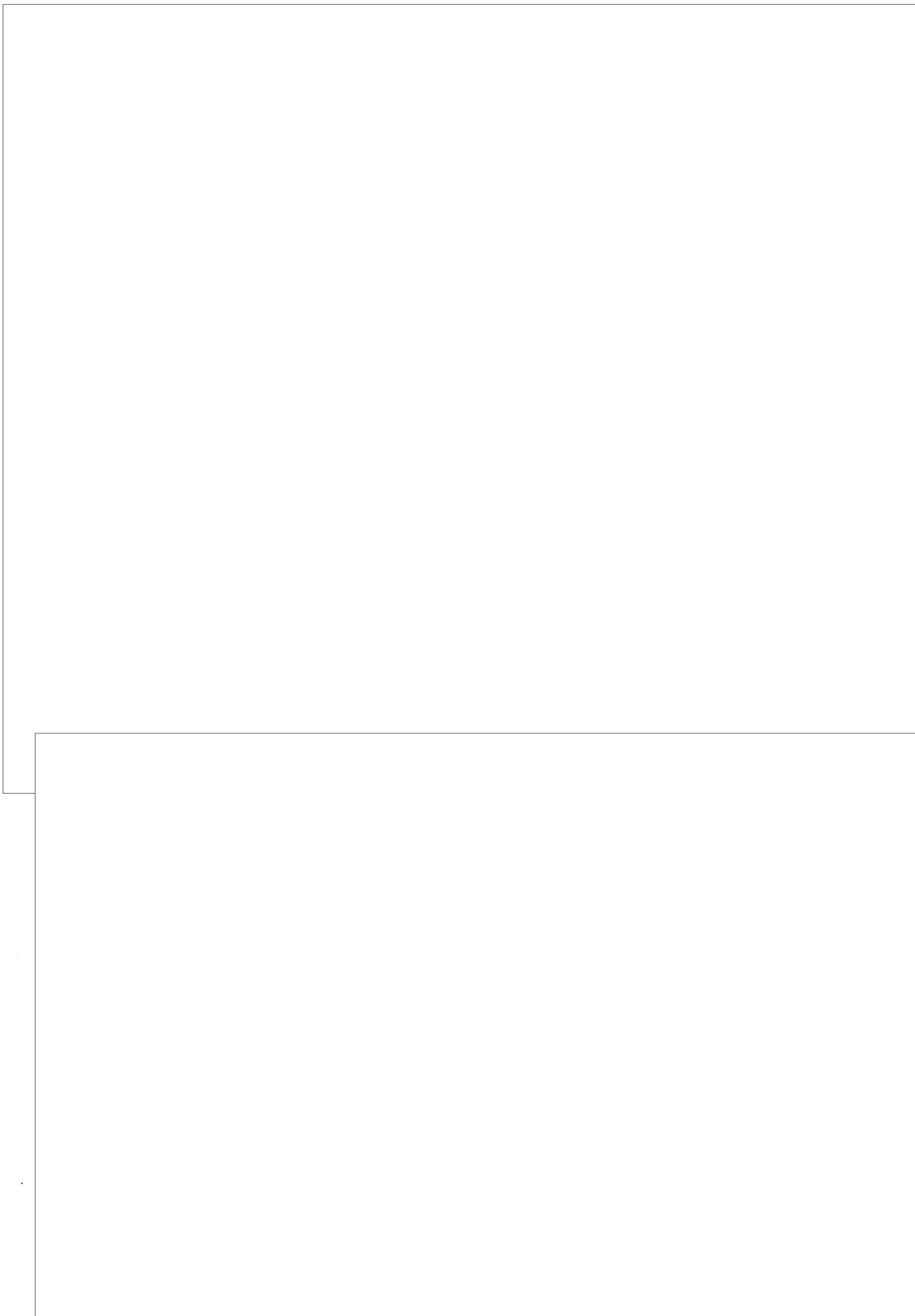
Strictly Confidential

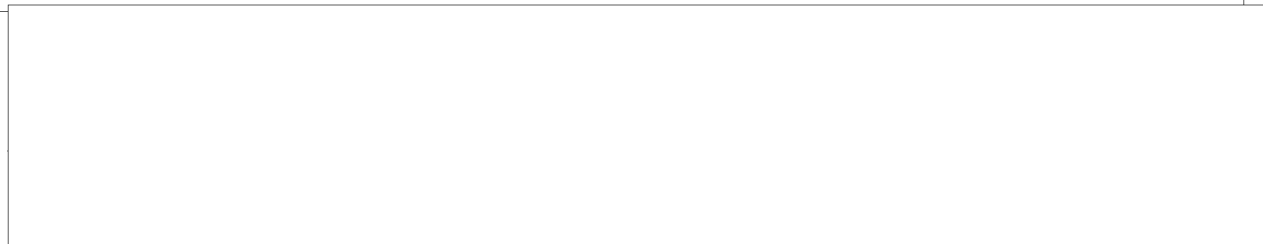
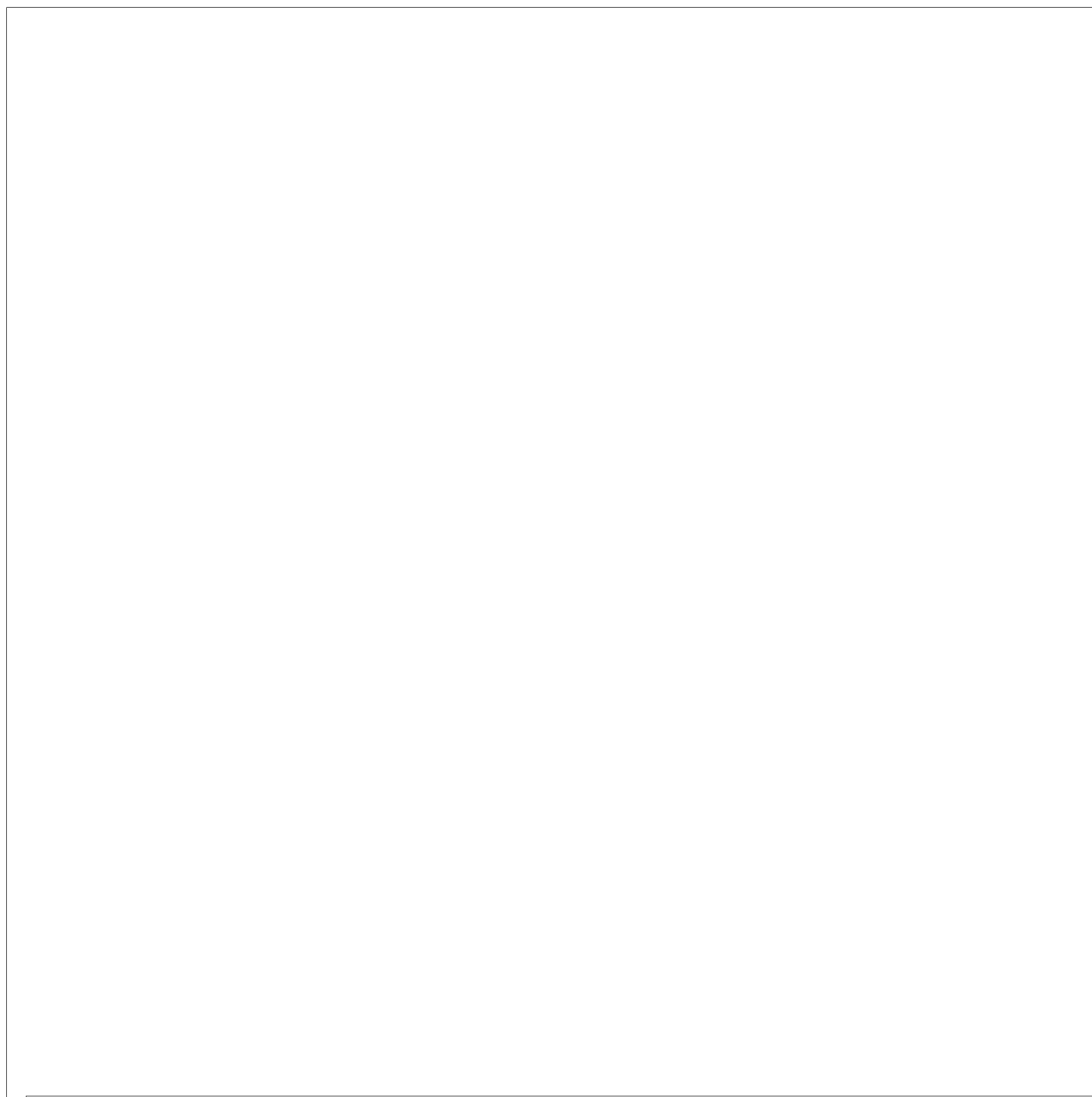
News Corporation - British Sky Broadcasting Plc

Briefing for the Right Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Culture, the Olympics, Media & Sport



Annex

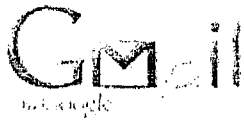




Gmail - Here goes...please check for typos and format nicely tx

Page 1 of 7

SS. Aa 03



Jeremy Hunt

Here goes...please check for typos and format nicely tx

3 messages

Jeremy Hunt

19 November 2010 13:14

To: Adam Smith <

Fortnightly update 19 November 2010

A lot has been happening in my sectors, so here goes with a brief update:

NewsCorp/Sky bid James Murdoch is pretty furious at Vince's referral to Ofcom. He doesn't think he will get a fair hearing from Ofcom. I am privately concerned about this because NewsCorp are very litigious and we could end in the wrong place not just politically but also in terms of media policy. Those people who are arguing that the Murdochs will have too much influence are in my view confusing the *revenues* Sky gets (around £8 bn) which are much higher than - say - the BBC's £4 bn with the *influence* Sky has editorially which is much less because a) most of the channels watched on Sky belong to other people over which it exerts no editorial control; and b) where it does (e.g. Sky News) it has less than 5% market share and is bound by strict rules over political impartiality. There is also a question of consistency: Sky's bid for ITV was blocked because it was deemed to be controlled by NewsCorp, so it would be very strange to say that it wasn't and a full buyout of Sky's shares would constitute a significant change of control.

More significantly I am concerned because essentially what James Murdoch wants to do is to repeat what his father did with the move to Wapping and create the world's first multi-platform media operator, available from paper to web to TV to iPhone to iPad. Isn't this what all media companies have to do ultimately? And if so, why are we trying to stop it? The UK has the chance to lead the way on this as we did in 80s with the Wapping move but if we block it our media sector will suffer for years. In the end I am sure sensible controls can be put into any merger to ensure there is plurality, but I think it would be totally wrong to cave in to the Mark Thompson/Channel 4/Guardian line that this represents a substantial change of control given that we all know Sky is controlled by NewsCorp now anyway.

What next? Ofcom will issue their report saying whether it needs to go to the Competition Commission by 31 December. Much of what we do will be constrained by the absolute necessity to respect due process at every stage, but I think that you, I, Vince and the DPM should meet to discuss our response to potential different scenarios. May I arrange such a meeting?

Redacted (1 page)



Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
To: Adam Smith <[redacted]>

19 November 2010 16:18

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Jeremy Hunt** <[redacted]>
Date: 19 November 2010 13:14
Subject: Here goes...please check for typos and format nicely tx
To: Adam Smith <[redacted]>

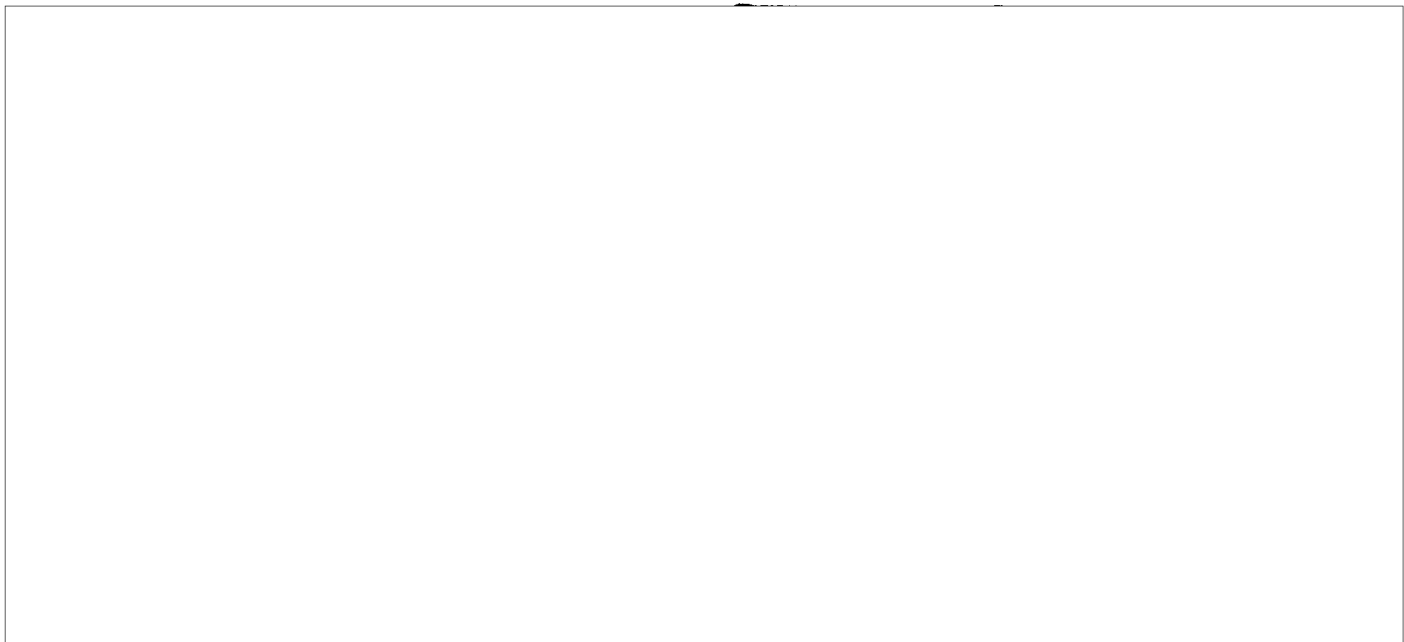
Fortnightly update 19 November 2010

A lot has been happening in my sectors, so here goes with a brief update:

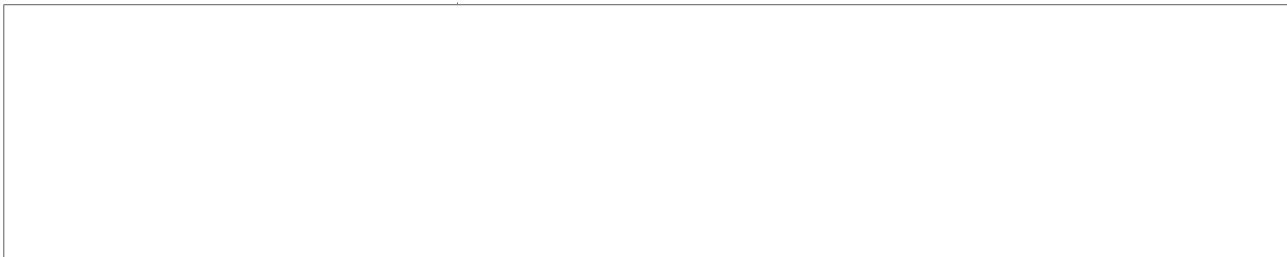
NewsCorp/Sky bid James Murdoch is pretty furious at Vince's referral to Ofcom. He doesn't think he will get a fair hearing from Ofcom. I am privately concerned about this because NewsCorp are very litigious and we could end up in the wrong place in terms of media policy. Essentially what James Murdoch wants to do is to repeat what his father did with the move to Wapping and create the world's first multi-platform media operator, available from paper to web to TV to iPhone to iPad. Isn't this what all media companies have to do ultimately? And if so, we must be very careful that any attempt to block it is done on genuine plurality grounds and not as a result of lobbying by competitors.

The UK has the chance to lead the way on this as we did in 80s with the Wapping move but if we block it our media sector will suffer for years. In the end I am sure sensible controls can be put into any merger to ensure there is plurality, but I think it would be totally wrong to cave in to the Mark Thompson/Channel 4/Guardian line that this represents a substantial change of control given that we all know Sky is controlled by NewsCorp now anyway.

What next? Ofcom will issue their report saying whether it needs to go to the Competition Commission by 31 December. It would totally wrong for the government to get involved in a competition issue which has to be decided at arms length. However I do think you, I, Vince and the DPM should meet to discuss the policy issues that are thrown up as a result.



Redacted (1 page)



Adam Smith <[redacted]>
To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

19 November 2010 16:30

much happier with this version!

On Fri, Nov 19, 2010 at 4:18 PM, Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]> wrote:

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From: **Jeremy Hunt** <[redacted]>
Date: 19 November 2010 13:14
Subject: Here goes...please check for typos and format nicely tx
To: Adam Smith <[redacted]>

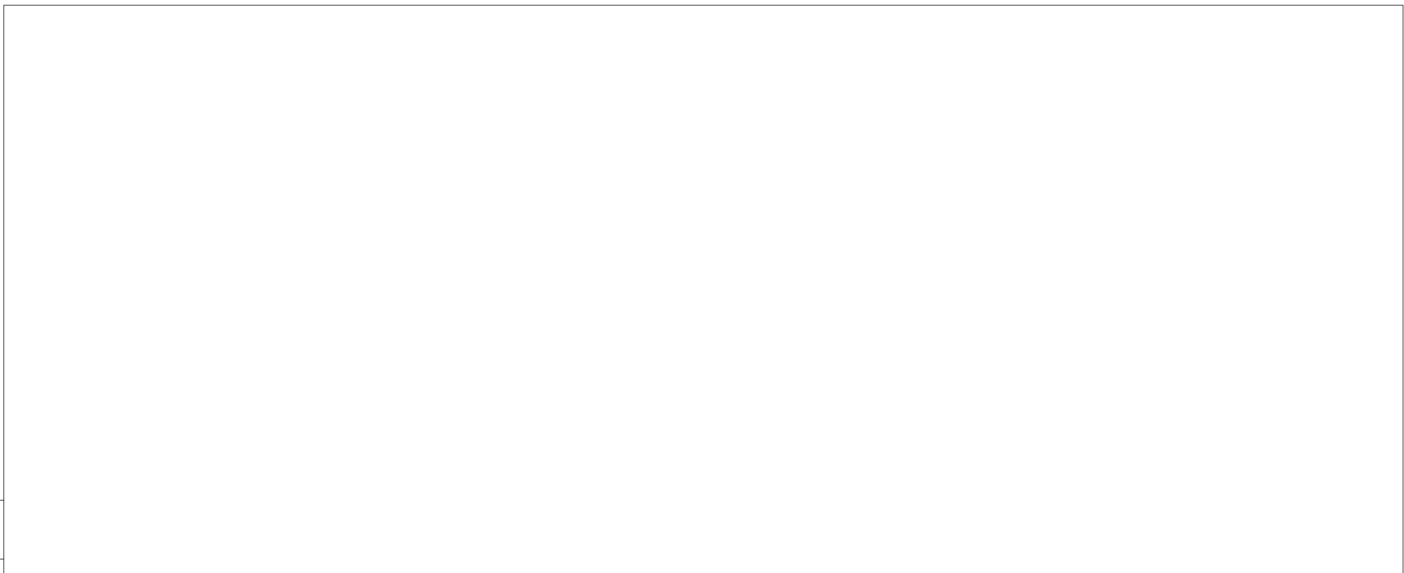
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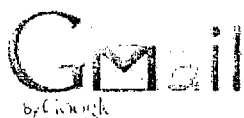
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The UK has the chance to lead the way on this as we did in 80s with the Wapping move but if we block it our media sector will suffer for years. In the end I am sure sensible controls can be put into any merger to ensure there is plurality, but I think it would be totally wrong to cave in to the Mark Thompson/Channel 4/Guardian line that this represents a substantial change of control given that we all know Sky is controlled by NewsCorp now anyway.

What next? Ofcom will issue their report saying whether it needs to go to the Competition Commission by 31 December. It would totally wrong for the government to get involved in a competition issue which has to be decided at arms length. However I do think you, I, Vince and the DPM should meet to discuss the policy issues that are thrown up as a result.



Redacted (2 pages)



JS. Aa 04

Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

FW: Stop Hunt's secret meetings with Newscorp

6 messages

[redacted]@parliament.uk>

13 January 2011 16:39

To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Jeremy

Colleagues are getting letters like the one below.

I think we might want to get a reply prepared to help PRU and think about how we deal with concerns that colleagues might have.

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I've just found out that Jeremy Hunt has had the Ofcom report on Murdoch's BSkyB bid since New Year but hasn't made it public. This makes me very concerned that the takeover bid is going to be pushed through without a proper investigation by the Competition Commission.

Please ask Jeremy Hunt to make the report public and ensure that the takeover bid is scrutinized impartially.

Please don't brush me off with another 'stock' letter informing me of what I already know rather than informing me of what action you plan to take. I recognise that you cannot be sending lengthy replies to everybody that writes to you, however, I feel it is your responsibility to inform me of where you stand on this matter and whether or not you will be using your political influence in the way that I have requested.

Yours sincerely,

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Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

13 January 2011 19:04

To: Adam Smith <[redacted]>, Sue Beeby <[redacted]>

Hi both

Please could you draft a good reply for PRU to send out?

Thx

J.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [redacted]

Date: 13 January 2011 16:39

Subject: FW: Stop Hunt's secret meetings with Newscorp

To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Jeremy

Colleagues are getting letters like the one below.

[redacted]

I think we might want to get a reply prepared to help PRU and think about how we deal with concerns that colleagues might have.

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

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Jeremy Hunt

13 January 2011 19:04

To: [Redacted]

Thanks [Redacted] will sort. Good to be a hate figure on the left, must be doing something right!

On 13 January 2011 16:39, [Redacted] wrote:
Jeremy

Colleagues are getting letters like the one below.

I think we might want to get a reply prepared to help PRU and think about how we deal with concerns that colleagues might have.

[Redacted]

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Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

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SMITH, Adam <[redacted]> 13 January 2011 19:09

[redacted] Jeremy <[redacted]> "BEEBY, Sue"

Am doing one for lawyers to check

From: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
To: SMITH, Adam; BEEBY, Sue
Sent: Thu Jan 13 19:04:35 2011
Subject: Fwd: FW: Stop Hunt's secret meetings with NewsCorp

Hi both
Please could you draft a good reply for PRU to send out?
Thx
J.

----- Forwarded message -----
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Date: 13 January 2011 16:39
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To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

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Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
To: "SMITH, Adam" [redacted]

13 January 2011 19:09

Brill thx, good to be a hate figure, Maggie would be proud of me!

On 13 January 2011 19:09, SMITH, Adam [redacted] wrote:

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Date: 13 January 2011 16:39
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To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

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SMITH, Adam

13 January 2011 19:20

<jeremy@

Hate figure for some but I've had people including students say you were at the top of your game last night!

From: Jeremy Hunt
To: SMITH, Adam
Sent: Thu Jan 13 19:09:26 2011
Subject: Re: Fwd: FW: Stop Hunt's secret meetings with Newscorp

Brill thx, good to be a hate figure, Maggie would be proud of me!

On 13 January 2011 19:09, SMITH, Adam wrote:

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From: Jeremy Hunt
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[redacted]

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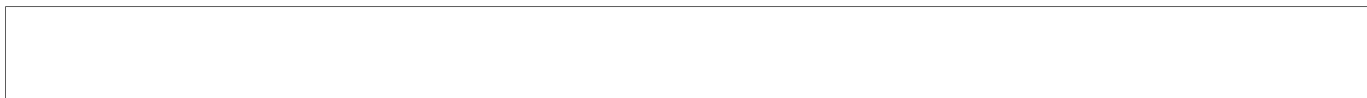
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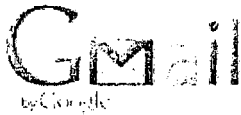
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SS. Aa .05



Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Replies on BskyB

2 messages

SMITH, Adam

[Redacted]

14 January 2011 10:52

To: Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Lawyers and everyone have cleared this. Are you happy?

Thank you for getting in touch about the News Corp/BskyB transaction. I thought it would be helpful if I clarified the process that the Jeremy Hunt is going through.

Ofcom delivered their report to the Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt on 31st December. He is now considering the report carefully. He has been clear that he will take as much time as necessary to come to a fully considered decision and he rightly believes that it is more important to come to the right decision rather than work to an arbitrary timescale. In taking this decision it is open to the Secretary of State to take representations however, it would detract from the decision making process to provide a running commentary on what, if any, discussions he is having. Jeremy will however, be publishing Ofcom's report but he has not taken a final decision about when this will happen. He has a statutory duty to publish it before or at the time of the announcement of his decision so it will be available for everyone to see at some point soon.

Due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role it is not possible to provide any further details at the moment but needless to say he is committed to reaching a decision in a fair and even-handed way. Further details about this process will be announced once the Secretary of State's decision has been made public.

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Jeremy Hunt <

[Redacted]

14 January 2011 11:07

To: "SMITH, Adam"

[Redacted]

Perfect SoS not Jeremy though!

On 14 Jan 2011, at 10:50, "SMITH, Adam"

[Redacted]

wrote:

Lawyers and everyone have cleared this. Are you happy?

Thank you for getting in touch about the News Corp/BskyB transaction. I thought it would be helpful if I clarified the process that the Jeremy Hunt is going through.

[Redacted]

Ofcom delivered their report to the Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt on 31st December. He is now considering the report carefully. He has been clear that he will take as much time as necessary to come to a fully considered decision and he rightly believes that it is more important to come to the right decision rather than work to an arbitrary timescale. In taking this decision it is open to the Secretary of State to take representations however, it would detract from the decision making process to provide a running commentary on what, if any, discussions he is having. Jeremy will however, be publishing Ofcom's report but he has not taken a final decision about when this will happen. He has a statutory duty to publish it before or at the time of the announcement of his decision so it will be available for everyone to see at some point soon.

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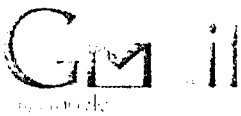
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55 - A a 06

Jeremy Hunt

Some OPQ Lines to discuss later

1 message

SMITH, Adam

19 January 2011 09:04

To: Jeremy Hunt

"BEEBY, Sue"

Some general lines

It isn't this Government who had a News Corporation director on its Business Council for Britain. It was his.

It isn't this Government who pledged to Fifa that Sky could show the football world cup. It was his.

And it isn't this Party's leader who flew to Australia seeking an endorsement. It was his.

As he so obsessed with imagined links to News Corporation then lets just look at some facts. Labour's new director of strategy and communications is a former Times journalist. And the honourable member's own political advisor is a former news international employee. How does he sleep at night when the long arm of News Corporation is reaching into the heart of his Party?

The honourable member sees conspiracy theories everywhere. He'd think I was favouring News Corp if I went on holiday to Australia or bought a copy of the Sun.

I'm afraid the honourable member is letting his political persuasions cloud his judgment. I will make this decision by following due process and being reasonable. I fear that he is in danger of being manipulated by powerful media organisations. He has had secret meetings with them. Written articles in their newspapers. He has even made speeches praising them. With absolutely no policies of his own he is simply doing as he's told by his media masters and jumping on the latest passing bandwagon.

Unlike the honourable member I don't have the luxury of being quite so vocal on this issue but....

I have a variety of formal and informal meetings and won't comment on the current process. But I wonder, did the honourable member ask the Labour DCMS Ministers in the last Parliament not to have any of the 14 meetings they held with representatives of BskyB? I would hate to think he was being hypocritical.

I have a variety of formal and informal meetings and won't comment on the current process. But he needs to be consistent. Has he had any meetings with any of the parties involved? Has his party leader sought a meeting with them? Perhaps he has had had one? If I'm not too late I'd suggest a session on how to deal with union problems might be a good opener.

If he questions the process

I am following due process at all times. I have no wish to lecture the House on the finer points of the Enterprise Act but it does set out the process and I am following it. Rather than making outlandish claims about making or breaking the law as he did yesterday I suggest he start by reading it.

Are you impartial?

Absolutely. The honourable member should know that this is not a judgment on what I think about any one particular company but a quasi-judicial decision based on the transaction's impact or otherwise on media plurality.

"Rupert Murdoch and BskyB have been a force for good in improving the quality of broadcasting for British consumers". Not my words but that of the honourable member for Bury South. I do wish he'd stop sucking up to the Murdochs.

OR

"In many ways Sky and News International have been pioneers in responding to the aspirations of consumers. For this they should be commended, not condemned." Not my words but that of the honourable member for Bury South. I do wish he'd stop sucking up to the Murdochs.

Have you met with News Corp to discuss the transaction?

I have been advised by lawyers that to provide a running commentary on any potential meetings could increase the legal risk around my eventual decision. So I'm afraid I won't be drawn on this topic. However, I can confirm that at the time of my decision I will publish as many of the details on the process as possible.

Meetings without officials means you have a history of secrecy and lack of transparency?

I have a variety of both formal and informal meetings. I had hoped for instance, that when the honorable member comes to the Department in a couple of weeks we might be able to meet privately. On the basis of his question though I will ensure there's a team of officials present to minute every single one of his pearls of wisdom.

If this is from a random backbencher you could still say,

"I have a variety of both formal and informal meetings. If the honorable member ever wants to meet to discuss anything I would have previously suggested we do so without officials. However, on the strength of his feelings I will now make sure there is a team of officials present to record his every word for posterity."

Why won't he publish the report?

I will do so. The report with commercially sensitive information redacted will be published before or at the time of my decision. It is worth reminding the House that the last time Government invoked these powers Ofcom reported to the then Labour Secretary of State on 24th April 2007. He didn't make a decision or indeed publish Ofcom's report until 27th May 2007.

Previous comments

"Rupert Murdoch has probably done more to create variety and choice in British TV than any other single person".

Counter with any of the following –

"Rupert Murdoch and BSkyB have been a force for good in improving the quality of broadcasting for British consumers". So says the opposition spokesman. So it would appear that these benches are united in something at least.

If a backbencher –

I'm not the only senior politician who has said something positive about Rupert Murdoch. According to his official spokesman the Member for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, "has the most enormous personal regard for Rupert Murdoch...what he has done as an international businessman – his record speaks for itself." Honourable Members behind me want like this but I think I've finally found something that I can agree with the former Prime Minister on.

If its Gloria –

"I find it strange that the honourable Lady is prepared to be so critical of News Corporation when her register of members interests shows she is happy to take payment from one of their newspapers. I've not read her article but I'm sure the £500 fee was money well spent."

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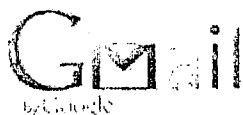
Gmail - Some OPQ Lines to discuss later

Page 3 of 3

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Gmail - !!

Page 1 of 2



Jeremy Hunt

SS. Aa 09

!!

1 message

BEEBY, Sue <[redacted]> 25 January 2011 13:42
 To: "SMITH, Adam" <[redacted]>, Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

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FT comment: Fair play to News Corp?

By Ben Fenton, Chief Media Correspondent

Published: January 25 2011 13:00 | Last updated: January 25 2011 13:00

Initial reaction to Tuesday's news that Jeremy Hunt is delaying his decision on News Corp's bid for British Sky Broadcasting seems to fall into two camps.

The first, which is the majority view, is that this is a favour to News Corp's owner Rupert Murdoch as it allows his executives to parse an offer of commitments of behaviour or of the future structure of his businesses, known as "undertakings in lieu", so that they fully address regulatory concerns about the merger.

Mr Hunt's openness to News Corp is shown by the fact he has had two meetings with the company since Christmas.

The second view, a minority, is that Mr Hunt is ensuring that News Corp and BSkyB can have no legal recourse to challenge his decision by judicial review because they have not been given adequate chance to frame their undertakings in an acceptable way. This is indicated by his repeated statement that he intends to refer the bid to the Competition Commission.

Mr Hunt has precious little room for manoeuvre within the Enterprise Act. Tuesday's announcement, indeed, accords quite closely with the way in which previous decisions by other secretaries of state under the act have been reached. (It should be noted that while all of those seven decisions eventually went against a referral to the commission, none are relevant here.)

However, in this case, News Corp does already have strong material influence over BSkyB with 39.1 per cent of shares, so in order to justify referral to the commission, Mr Hunt's officials will no doubt tell him, he must make his case in plain sight and after a full exploration of anything News Corp might offer.

Some – including friends of Mr Murdoch – have already argued today that if the joint examination by the Office of Fair Trading and Ofcom of further remedies offered by News Corp is sufficiently exhaustive, it might in any case form a substitute for a full Competition Commission plurality review.

But Ofcom has added to Mr Hunt's burden of decision by saying that the mechanism for considering plurality is flawed and should be recast, making it less likely that the culture secretary could regard the OFT/Ofcom examination as an adequate surrogate.

Assessing the available evidence, it seems more likely that Mr Hunt is faithfully fulfilling his duty to offer fair play to News Corp while maintaining scepticism that it will come up with a good enough response.

If the opportunity he is giving Mr Murdoch's company results in a satisfactory outcome for plurality and serves the needs of shareholders simultaneously, it would be a welcome use of discretion. But Mr Hunt will undoubtedly know

MOD300007927

Gmail - !!

Page 2 of 2

that political controversy surrounding this proposed bid sets the bar for a "satisfactory outcome" several notches above normal, making that "if" a very big one.

Sue Beeby

Special Adviser to the Secretary of State

DCMS



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SS.Aa 10



Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

UILs being accepted instead of CC referral by Labour

1 message

SMITH, Adam

[Redacted]

25 January 2011 14:29

To: Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

"BEEBY, Sue"

[Redacted]

It is very common for UILs to be considered as an alternative to referral to the CC in defence public interest tests, and also in competition cases more generally.

For instance the acquisition of UWS Winfred Division of Qinteq by Atlas Elektronik UK Ltd was cleared in September 2009 after undertakings were offered and before referral to the Competition Commission. This acquisition was cleared by Lord Mandelson.

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[Redacted]


 SS. Aa 11
 Jeremy Hunt

New Statesman Blog post - Miliband orders frontbench to lay off murdoch

2 messages

 Adam Smith

2 February 2011 16:43

 To: Jeremy Hunt

Seen this!

An email, forwarded on behalf of Ed Miliband's director of strategy, Tom Baldwin, to all shadow cabinet teams warns Labour spokespeople to avoid linking hacking with the BSKyB bid, to accept ministerial assurances that meetings with Rupert Murdoch are not influencing that process, and to ensure that complaints about tapping are made in a personal, not shadow ministerial, capacity.

The circular, sent by a Labour press officer on 27 January, states: "Tom Baldwin has requested that any front-bench spokespeople use the following line when questioned on phone-hacking. BSKyB bid and phone-tapping . . . these issues should not be linked. One is a competition issue, the other an allegation of criminal activity."

It goes on: "Downing Street says that Cameron's dinners with Murdoch will not affect Hunt's judgement. We have to take them at their word."

Referring separately to the phone-hacking allegations, the memo states: "We believe the police should thoroughly investigate all allegations. But this is not just an issue about News International. Almost every media organisation in the country may end up becoming embroiled in these allegations."

It adds: "Front-bench spokespeople who want to talk about their personal experiences of being tapped should make it clear they are doing just that – speaking from personal experience."

The guidance concludes with the warning, "We must guard against anything which appears to be attacking a particular newspaper group out of spite."

The memo follows a number of recent high-profile interventions from Ed Miliband in the phone-hacking issue. In the wake of the resignation of Andy Coulson, the Labour leader criticised David Cameron, stating that the affair raised "questions about David Cameron's judgment about hanging on to him as long as he did".

Miliband also raised Coulson's impending departure at last Wednesday's Prime Minister's Questions.

Here's the full text of the email:

From: xxxx | **Sent:** 27 January 2011 **To:** xxxx
Subject: Important: Phone hacking

Dear all,

Tom Baldwin has requested that any front bench spokespeople use the following line when questioned on phone hacking.

BSkyB bid and phone tapping

These issues should not be linked. One is a competition issue, the other an allegation of criminal activity.

On BSKyB, we have been consistent in calling for fair play. We believe ministers should conduct themselves properly in what is a quasi-judicial process. We said Vince Cable showed he was incapable of behaving fairly towards News Corp. We have since raised questions about whether Jeremy Hunt can be fully impartial given his record of past statements. We do believe the bid should be referred to the Competition Commission and think Hunt should get on with it. Downing Street says that Cameron's dinners with Murdoch will not affect Hunt's judgement. We have to take them at their word.

On phone hacking, we believe the police should thoroughly investigate all allegations. But this is not just an issue about News International. Almost every media organisation in the country may end up becoming embroiled in these allegations. This goes to the root of a wider problem in public life. MPs are taking a hard look at themselves in the mirror over expenses. It is time the media did so too over the way it conducts itself.

Frontbench spokespeople who want to talk about their personal experiences of being tapped should make it clear they are doing just that – speaking from personal experience.

We must guard against anything which appears to be attacking a particular newspaper group out of spite.

Thanks,

xxxx

Labour Party Press Office

Jeremy Hunt

2 February 2011 17:15

To: Adam Smith

Classic!! Something for the despatch box or to use anytime we are accused of being pro-Murdoch!
J.

On 2 February 2011 16:43, Adam Smith wrote:
Seen this!

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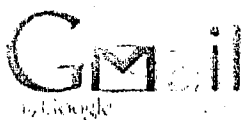
Frontbench spokespeople who want to talk about their personal experiences of being tapped should make it clear they are doing just that – speaking from personal experience.

We must guard against anything which appears to be attacking a particular newspaper group out of spite.

Thanks,

xxxx

Labour Party Press Office



SS. Aa 12

Jeremy Hunt




Fortnightly

1 message

Jeremy Hunt <
To: Adam Smith



5 February 2011 14:24

 Fortnightly 4th Feb 2011.docx
19K

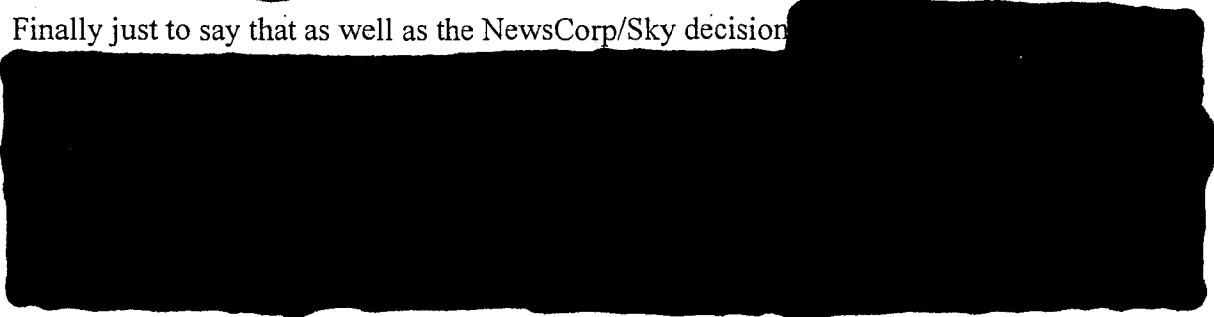


SS.Aa.13

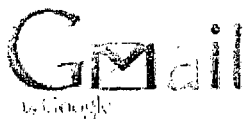
Redacted (1 page)



Finally just to say that as well as the NewsCorp/Sky decision



4th February 2011



SS. Aa 14

Jeremy Hunt <

FW: Stop Rupert Murdoch's media takeover

2 messages

HUNT, Jeremy

1 March 2011 17:35

To: <> jeremy<>

<>

Office of Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
Member of Parliament for South West Surrey
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

From: <>
Sent: 01 March 2011 17:35
To: Jeremy<>
Subject: Stop Rupert Murdoch's media takeover

Dear Prime Minister Cameron,
Dear Deputy Prime Minister Clegg,
Dear Ministers,

Granting Rupert Murdoch controlling ownership of BSkyB would trample our media ownership laws and threaten our democracy.

No one person should be permitted to control nearly half our country's mass media, certainly not someone with such a clear record of abuse of media power for political influence and personal gain. Opinion polls show that opponents of the Murdoch bid outnumber supporters 9 to 1. We strongly oppose any deal made with Murdoch, and pledge to hold you accountable for this crucial decision for the future of our democracy.

Please do not allow this to happen!

Yours sincerely,

<>
[England]
<>

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Jeremy Hunt

1 March 2011 17:41

To: Sue Beeby <> Adam Smith <>

<>

Just so you know, an email campaign on the Sky bid has started today. We have had about 200 emails today and it is picking up...one example is below although they are not all the same.
J.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: HUNT, Jeremy [redacted]
Date: 1 March 2011 17:35
Subject: FW: Stop Rupert Murdoch's media takeover
To: [redacted] <jeremy@[redacted]>



Office of Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
Member of Parliament for South West Surrey
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

From: [redacted]
Sent: 01 March 2011 17:35
To: Jeremy [redacted]
Subject: Stop Rupert Murdoch's media takeover

Dear Prime Minister Cameron,
Dear Deputy Prime Minister Clegg,
Dear Ministers,

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Please do not allow this to happen!

Yours sincerely,

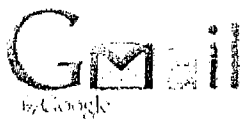
[redacted]
[England]
[redacted]

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SS - Aa 15



Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

oral statement

6 messages

[redacted]

2 March 2011 22:08

To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

Hi Jeremy

Here is the oral statement cleared by Spads, Jon Zeff and Lawyers.

We are also now working on the consultation document and press notice which I will get sent through asap.

Thanks

[redacted]

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Oral Statement News Corp. preSoSclean.doc.docx
17K

Jeremy Hunt [redacted] 2 March 2011 23:11
To: [redacted] Sue Beeby <[redacted]>
Adam Smith [redacted]

My amends attached. I want to go to bed now so will assume you can use what I have done with small amends and adapt the press release accordingly.
Many thx to everyone
J.

On 2 March 2011 22:08, [redacted] wrote:

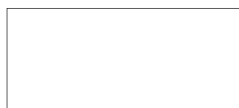
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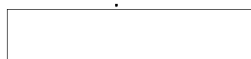
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 **Oral Statement News Corp. preSoSclean.doc.docx**
21K

[Redacted] 2 March 2011 23:20
To: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted] BEEBY, Sue [Redacted]
"SMITH, Adam [Redacted]"

Jeremy – here is the draft press notice.

Consultation document to follow in a couple of mins.



From: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]
Sent: 02 March 2011 23:11
To: [Redacted] BEEBY, Sue; SMITH, Adam
Subject: Re: oral statement

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 NEWS CORP press notice.docx
49K

Jeremy Hunt

[redacted]

2 March 2011 23:23

[redacted]

To: [redacted]

Press release amends
Thx
J.

On 2 March 2011 23:20, [redacted] wrote:

Jeremy – here is the draft press notice.

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 NEWS CORP press notice.docx
49K

SMITH, Adam [redacted] 2 March 2011 23:28
To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
"BEEBY, Sue [redacted]"

I've added in the dates and change some typos. Sue really doesn't want you to use the phrase about public not trusting media barons and politicians as she fears media would just clip that and nothing else! Also on the point about Sky's board currently, it already contains a majority of independent directors. I've made these changes so as long as you are happy [redacted] can accept these to give a final version.

From: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
Sent: 02 March 2011 23:11
To: [redacted] BEEBY, Sue; SMITH, Adam
Subject: Re: oral statement

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J.

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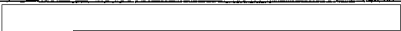

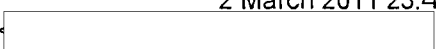



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 **Oral Statment News Corp Update.docx**
19K

Jeremy Hunt  2 March 2011 23:44
To: "SMITH, Adam" , Sue Beeby 


OK I give in to Sue! One small final amendment attached...
Good night all and many thanks
J.

On 2 March 2011 23:28, SMITH, Adam < > wrote:

I've added in the dates and change some typos. Sue really doesn't want you to use the phrase about public not trusting media barons and politicians as she fears media would just clip that and nothing else! Also on the point about Sky's board currently, it already contains a majority of independent directors. I've made these changes so as long as you are happy Dean can accept these to give a final version.

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On 2 March 2011 22:08, [redacted] wrote:

Hi Jeremy

Here is the oral statement cleared by Spads, Jon Zeff and Lawyers.

We are also now working on the consultation document and press notice which I will get sent through asap.

Thanks



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 **Oral Statment News Corp Update.docx**
19K



SS-Aa 16
Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Questions

2 messages

SMITH, Adam <[redacted]>

2 March 2011 23:03

To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Tried to think of some friendly questions backbenchers could ask to allow you to elaborate on the safeguards within the UILs. I can talk to Rob Wilson about these tomorrow morning (and getting nice comments at the start of each one) but thought of these for starters –

Can the Minister confirm that there are a significant number of additional steps to be taken before these undertakings are agreed? That amongst other things he will have to approve the crucial carriage agreement and brand licensing arrangements? (Yes)

As well as approving the carriage agreements can the Minister explain what further oversight he will have over other arrangements like use of buildings or satellite uplinks that will need to be put in place before the merger can proceed? (Yes)

Can the Minister explain what would happen if News Corporation wanted to cancel the carriage arrangement or brand licensing deal after the transaction has taken place? (dispute mechanism details of which have to be approved by you)

Can the Minister confirm that the New Company will have to abide by stricter corporate governance arrangements than any other media company in the UK? (yes, it has to comply not just comply or explain)

What monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that these undertakings are abided by? (they are legally binding, will be in the articles of association of the New Company and Section 7 of the UILs includes a compliance order)

Can he confirm that Ofcom's advice is that these arrangements are sufficient to address the plurality concerns that initially led them to believe the deal should be referred to the competition commission?

Does he not agree that the most striking aspect of Ofcom's initial report was the size, influence and ability to dominate the news agenda of the BBC? How would he see his review of communications regulation address this particular finding?

Could the Minister explain why he decided to give News Corporation time to address Ofcom and OFT concerns about the undertakings. Were you following Ofcom advice on this? (yes, they said the proposed UILs may represent a way forward in principle subject to resolution of outstanding points).

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Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]> 2 March 2011 23:13

To: "SMITH, Adam" <[redacted]>

Great stuff, but suggest leaving out the BBC one as they will all go for it!
J.

On 2 March 2011 23:03, SMITH, Adam <[redacted]> wrote:

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[Redacted signature area]

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SS. Aa 17

Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Question

2 messages

Jeremy Hunt [Redacted] 3 March 2011 09:03

To: Adam Smith [Redacted]

When did James M step down as Sky chairman?

SMITH, Adam <[Redacted]> 3 March 2011 09:15

To: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]

He hasn't. He's still non-exec chairman. But obviously not independent as it will have to be now

From: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]

Sent: 03 March 2011 09:04

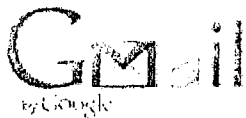
To: SMITH, Adam

Subject: Question

When did James M step down as Sky chairman?

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SS - Aa 18

Jeremy Hunt <

Coverage

2 messages

BEEBY, Sue

4 March 2011 11:07

To: Jeremy Hunt

SMITH, Adam"

This is my favourite piece of coverage. It comes from the Daily Mash...enjoy!

Sky News sell-off will ruin our lives, warn Guardian readers

03-03-11

ONE of the greatest *Guardian* reader conspiracy theories of the last 20 years was under threat last night after Rupert Murdoch agreed to sell Sky News.

Dozens of left-wing people across north London warned their lives would be rendered hollow and meaningless unless Murdoch was given free rein to turn Sky into an ultra-right wing news channel pumping Christian free-market hate ideology into the homes of millions of lower middle class sheep.

Murdoch agreed to the sell-off yesterday as the price for his greater goal of making even more money by giving people lots of telly programmes they want to watch.

Julian Cook, a think-tank consultant and self-certified writer from Finsbury Park, said: "Think of the blogs, think of the comment threads under *Guardian* articles about anything, think of the dinner parties, oh sweet Jesus, think of the dinner parties.

"I can't keep complaining about the *Daily Mail*. It's like phoning the police every time your 85 year-old neighbour walks down the street in her underpants. I needed this."

Helen Archer, a gender economist from Highgate, said: "I'd made a cake with 'Fox News UK' on it and a picture of Murdoch eating a cake in the shape of Britain. It was very clever.

"I can only assume the sell-off is part of some even greater and more evil conspiracy, almost like something out of *Boardwalk Empire*, whatever that is."

Helen Archer added: "It looks like I'll have to resurrect my 1998 theory that News Corp is just a front for a global heroin dealing operation and that Murdoch is the king of a secret country in central Asia that I think is called 'Makkapakkastan'."

Sue Beeby

Special Adviser to the Secretary of State

DCMS

[Redacted box]

[Redacted box]

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Jeremy Hunt [redacted] 4 March 2011 11:48
To: "BEEBY, Sue" [redacted]

Brilliant!

On 4 Mar 2011, at 11:05, [redacted] wrote:

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03-03-11

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Sue Beeby



Special Adviser to the Secretary of State

DCMS

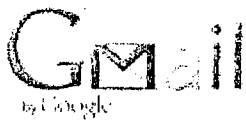
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 SS - Aa 19
 Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Enders Note on the UILs

2 messages

SMITH, Adam <[redacted]>

8 March 2011 15:19

To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Sky News

- The concept of demerging Sky News is evidently a plausible one and we consider it very unlikely that critics of the deal will have much success undermining its appropriateness as a protection of plurality
- However, it is harder to judge whether the proposed implementation secures the channel's independence as fully and clearly as it might
- We outline a series of issues that the information supplied for the public consultation does not appear to deal with. We note, in particular, that the proposed undertakings seem not to block Rupert Murdoch, or members of his family, from buying the 60.9% of the shares in Sky News not to be held by News Corp

[Click here to download the pdf](#)

Jeremy Hunt's announcement on 4 March regarding the separation of Sky News to address plurality issues follows long and detailed negotiations between News Corp, the OFT and Ofcom. The OFT is understood to have seen carefully crafted business plans and been given multiple commitments from News Corp that will ensure the future prosperity of Sky News. However, the undertakings put into public consultation are extremely light on detail, making it difficult for an outsider to assess the degree to which Sky News will be viable, let alone independent, after the transaction completes.

We have now entered a process of public consultation, which completes at midday on 21 March, and we consider it very unlikely that critics of the deal will have much success in undermining any conclusions relating to plurality. If the transaction does not go ahead it is much more likely to be a consequence of disagreement between/with shareholders than between the politicians, regulators and News Corp.

Nevertheless, the independence of Sky News, as described in the undertakings, still looks to us somewhat 'soft'. In this note we articulate some of the issues relating to Sky News' independence that result from the paucity of detail that is publicly available. In other words, while these undertakings are not 'behavioural', with all the obvious weaknesses that this would entail, neither do they represent a truly 'structural' solution that moves a viable and well-resourced Sky News into complete independence.

Overall, the concept of demerging Sky News is evidently a plausible one, but it is harder to judge whether the proposed implementation secures the channel's independence as fully and clearly as it might, for the following reasons:

There is little financial data provided in the undertakings. Two numbers refer to the incidental question of which transactions with News Corp need to be approved by the Sky News board. However, interested parties are not informed of:

- The value of the carriage fee and how it inflates or deflates over time
- The cost to Sky News of continuing to rent space and assets from BSKyB
 - The price Sky News will have to pay for use of the Sky brand

As a result, we cannot know whether BSKyB is demerging a business that can make a profit or one which will be plunged into loss within weeks. Since Sky News will have no balance sheet to speak of – its major assets all being owned by BSKyB – it might reasonably be argued that the channel will be dependent on News Corp's goodwill to survive from week to week. The employees will be reliant on services from BSKyB ranging from access to the canteen to transponder capacity but the price is unspecified. News Corp says that the OFT has approved the numbers but since no outsiders with knowledge of how satellite channels work will ever see the figures, it is impossible to form an independent view on the viability of the channel and therefore its value. As a result of the model accepted by the OFT, Ofcom and the DCMS, while Sky News may have no significant liabilities, it may have no value either. There may be a rapid desertion of outside shareholders in the listed entity.

The majority of the protections contained in the undertakings operate through the articles of association of the new company. These protect, for example, the editorial independence of Sky News. News Corp is blocked from amending the articles, this is very clear. However, the other shareholders can change them whenever they want, and most of the important protections will fall away.

- The majority of BSKyB shareholders may have no interest whatsoever in owning a small stake in a tiny satellite TV station, with a market capitalisation probably in the low tens of millions and perhaps much less.
- The shares can be picked up (cheaply, no doubt) by anybody wanting a guaranteed presence on the Sky EPG and use of the Sky brand name. He or she could then tear up the articles of association overnight, removing most of the plurality protections such as the independent directors and chair.
- Or, perhaps more likely, the shares might be bought by a company or person directly or indirectly affiliated with the Murdoch family. He or she could also remove many of the important protections in the undertakings and let News Corp run the channel exactly as it wished. These are not unreasonable concerns; there are tens of thousands of people who would be able to acquire the shares in an undercapitalised Sky News.
 - We believe that the present wording of the undertakings allows any member of the Murdoch family, including Rupert Murdoch himself, to buy the 60.9% of the shares in Sky News not held by News Corp. Sky News will be a public company traded on a stock exchange. Only very carefully drafted undertakings could protect against the circumvention of their purpose in this way.
 - This is not to say that News Corp is planning any such move, and we are in no way implying intention in this outline. However, a risk attached to the way the undertakings are drafted is that it makes such events possible.

There is no commitment on the part of News Corp to make the demerged company viable.

- News Corp might reasonably argue that it is obviously in its interest to keep Sky News healthy because it owns a 39% stake in the new company, but there is no guarantee of that.
- The current wording of the undertakings appears to allow News Corp to withdraw from acting as the advertising sales outlet for Sky News. News Corp assures us that the intention of the undertakings is to oblige BSkyB to provide ad sales services to Sky News, but the wording doesn't seem to be fully there in the undertakings. Although others would offer to take over the advertising role, there is no guarantee that Sky News would achieve the same prices or ad volumes as achieved by the current Sky sales house, which could create revenue uncertainty.

There is no protection against 'bundling' of news products contained in these undertakings. News Corp may have offered guarantees against 'most favoured nation' treatment of News International newspapers but such promises appear to be absent in the undertakings themselves.

News Corp can terminate the carriage of Sky News if the channel is in 'material breach' of its contractual terms and dispute resolution fails. 'Material breach' isn't defined, nor are the key contractual terms included in the undertakings, nor is the dispute resolution process specified. Could Sky News be removed from the EPG? Once again, the parties assure us that News Corp would only remove the channel after a serious problem but the public is given no indication of what such a problem might be.

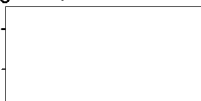
The continued strength of the financial umbilical cord between Sky News and News Corp can be shown by the lack of scrutiny over material transactions between the two companies. BSkyB protects its independence from News International in the UK by forcing all related party transactions over £10m (a tiny fraction of turnover) through a governance committee. For the demerged Sky News the figure is £5m, probably almost 10% of turnover. Only transactions over £12.5m with News Corp businesses will need to go to the board of directors, perhaps equivalent to a season's entire turnover.

Among other problems, the undertakings provide some employment protection for the 'head of Sky News' but for no other employees (unlike, for example, the nominal protections given at the time of the Wall Street Journal acquisition). The undertakings also avoid specifying how independent directors are appointed and rotated and they do not specify how these directors can actually remedy any interference from News Corp in editorial matters.

Regards,

Claire Enders

Chris Goodall



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SMITH, Adam <[redacted]>
To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

8 March 2011 15:37

And News Corp's initial reaction --

My initial reaction is that they still don't seem to understand how the corporate governance provisions (and more generally the UILs) work and therefore the note has a number of inaccuracies, for example:

- a third party can't change the articles without 75% and we agreed to vote against any changes in the articles that would remove the corp gov protections (for as long as we don't own a majority of the voting shares of Sky News, which in itself would be subject to another regulatory review);
- the carriage agreement will be subject to approval by Jeremy (which means also OFT/OFCOM) so all the key terms will have to be blessed by them;
- the financial viability has been assessed by the OFT so it is not up to the third parties to opine on it (and the details of the business plan are confidential business secrets);
- material Transactions (£5m or more) between Sky News and News/Sky need to get the approval of the Audit Committee, which consists exclusively of independent directors; if they involve more than £12.5m, they also need to get approval by the Board in addition to the Audit Committee;
- bundling is a competition issue and has not been raised by OFCOM in the review of the UILs from a plurality perspective.

On the length and detail of the UILs, I attach the examples of UILs given in other cases that show that ours are within standard range.

From: SMITH, Adam
Sent: 08 March 2011 15:20
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: Enders Note on the UILs



Sky News

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advertising role, there is no guarantee that Sky News would achieve the same prices or ad volumes as achieved by the current Sky sales house, which could create revenue uncertainty.

There is no protection against 'bundling' of news products contained in these undertakings. News Corp may have offered guarantees against 'most favoured nation' treatment of News International newspapers but such promises appear to be absent in the undertakings themselves.

News Corp can terminate the carriage of Sky News if the channel is in 'material breach' of its contractual terms and dispute resolution fails. 'Material breach' isn't defined, nor are the key contractual terms included in the undertakings, nor is the dispute resolution process specified. Could Sky News be removed from the EPG? Once again, the parties assure us that News Corp would only remove the channel after a serious problem but the public is given no indication of what such a problem might be.

The continued strength of the financial umbilical cord between Sky News and News Corp can be shown by the lack of scrutiny over material transactions between the two companies. BSkyB protects its independence from News International in the UK by forcing all related party transactions over £10m (a tiny fraction of turnover) through a governance committee. For the demerged Sky News the figure is £5m, probably almost 10% of turnover. Only transactions over £12.5m with News Corp businesses will need to go to the board of directors, perhaps equivalent to a season's entire turnover.

Among other problems, the undertakings provide some employment protection for the 'head of Sky News' but for no other employees (unlike, for example, the nominal protections given at the time of the Wall Street Journal acquisition). The undertakings also avoid specifying how independent directors are appointed and rotated and they do not specify how these directors can actually remedy any interference from News Corp in editorial matters.

Regards,

Claire Enders
Chris Goodall



Enders Analysis Ltd, 46A Great Marlborough Street, London, W1F 7JW
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www.endersanalysis.com

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Jeremy Hunt

SS. Aa 20

Dear Colleague Draft

2 messages

Adam Smith

8 March 2011 18:23

To: Jeremy Hunt

I've tried to capture as much as possible but you'll want to be sure you are completely happy with it. I've tried to make the tone sound like you are responding to some of the concerns expressed in a robust way without sounding like you are ignoring them. Once you are happy I will get lawyers to check it and then pass it to No 10. I'll also ask Will to sort out a date and time for a briefing session for MPs if you are happy to do that?

Dear Colleague

News Corp/BskyB Proposed Merger

I have no doubt that many of your constituents will have been in touch about my announcement last week that I was minded to accept undertakings in lieu from News Corporation rather than refer this proposed merger to the Competition Commission. I thought it would be helpful if I outlined in more detail my reasoning behind this decision to help you deal with any constituents who have concerns about the potential merger.

Firstly I want to reiterate that by accepting these undertakings I had decided to accept and follow the advice from two independent expert regulators. Both regulators said, in letters that I have published, that they believed these undertakings would address the plurality concerns that could result from this merger. Such advice was the single most important reason for me taking this decision. Opponents of the merger urged me to listen to the advice of the regulators and this is exactly what I have done. More importantly, Labour cannot even decide if they support my decision and the advice of the regulators or not. Until they make up their mind their criticisms are simply not credible.

The process. In all of my considerations regarding this merger I have followed the process that Labour established in their 2002 Enterprise Act. Accepting undertakings in lieu of a referral is quite a common practice in merger cases and indeed both the Office for Fair Trading and previous Labour Secretaries of State have done so. However, I appreciate the particular sensitiveness of this merger and so in order to attempt to address these I have published all reports, advice and correspondence related to this case. Even though I realise many won't agree with my final decision our constituents will at least be able to see that at all times I sought, followed, and published independent advice. This is a first in cases like this.

Even more significantly this was a quasi-judicial decision taken entirely by me as the Secretary of State. A decision like this is pretty unique in that it is not a collective decision by the Government, so it wasn't discussed with Cabinet. I had a very tight set of criteria by which to judge the merger and the undertakings and any other considerations, political or otherwise, absolutely did not come into the decision.

Independent advice. It is worth pointing out exactly what the independent regulators make of the undertakings that I am currently minded to accept.

- Ofcom stated that these undertakings “would address the plurality concerns identified in our report of 31 December 2010”.
- The Office for Fair Trading stated that these undertakings “are likely to be practically and financially viable in the short and medium term (that is, no more than 10 years)”.

This is pretty clear advice and worth reiterating to constituents who have concerns.

Media plurality and competition issues. It is also important to realise just what it is I am actually making a decision on. My remit did not include competition issues which were dealt with by the European Commission in their verdict of 21 December 2010. Nor did it include any type of judgement about the personalities involved. These considerations, whilst highly relevant to commercial competitors and many individuals who hold strong views about News Corporation, were not legally robust reasons to take into account when making this decision. I was making a judgement about what impact the merger would have on the number of different voices in the media market. And about what remedies could be imposed that would mitigate against this impact.

The undertakings. The basic outline of these undertakings means that Sky News will be spun off as an independent public limited company. The shares would be distributed amongst the existing shareholders of Sky in line with their existing shareholdings. This means that News Corp would maintain a 39.1% shareholding in Sky News. In simple terms this means that Sky News will remain as an independent media outlet. As such the number of different voices in the media market would remain as it currently is. There would therefore be no reduction in the level of plurality.

Crucially the undertakings in lieu contain a number of further provisions which I believe would enhance the new Sky News' editorial independence from News Corp. These include -

- **Independent Directors.** The Board of the new company will have a majority of independent directors who have no other News Corp, or News Corp-associated, interest.
- **Editorial and journalistic experience.** The Board, including the independent non-executive directors, will have the appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge, and at least one must have senior editorial and/or journalistic experience.
- **Independent Chairman.** The Chairman will be an independent director.
- **Editorial independence and integrity.** Sky News' services will abide by the principle of editorial independence and integrity in news reporting.
- **Corporate Governance and Editorial Committee.** The Board will have a Corporate Governance and Editorial Committee to ensure compliance with the principles of editorial independence and integrity in news reporting.
- **Financial security.** The new Sky News will have a 10 year carriage agreement with News Corporation together with a 7 year brand licensing arrangement that has the potential to extend for a further 7 years.
- **Reacquisition.** News Corporation cannot buy any further shares in the New Sky News for ten years without the express permission of the Secretary of State.

The result of these undertakings is that, if this deal goes ahead, Sky News will be able to continue its high quality output with greater protections for its operational and editorial independence than exist today. For those who have concerns about plurality of news provision I hope this will be a welcome step forward.

Since this announcement a number of criticisms have been directed at the fact that the new Sky News may not be financially viable. We have yet to agree the final versions of the carriage arrangement and brand licensing contracts that will be in place if these undertakings are accepted. By their nature these contracts are likely to contain commercially sensitive information that it would not be reasonable to publish in full. However, the principles behind these arrangements have been analysed by both the OFT and Ofcom who are content that such undertakings would mean Sky News is a financially viable business in its own right. More importantly I would need to agree these arrangements before the merger goes ahead and once again I would look to the independent regulators for advice before doing so. So although it is not possible to publish more detail about these two crucial elements at this stage you can be assured that they are robust enough to satisfy the regulators and will need final ministerial approval before the merger can happen.

Finally it is worth reminding constituents that this is not the end of the process. Although I am minded to accept these undertakings for the reasons I have set out above I have launched a full public consultation during which everyone can submit their views on them. I will consider such representations very carefully before making a final decision. This consultation is running until 21 March 2011 and more details can be found on my department's website at <http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/7887.aspx>

I am very happy to meet with any colleagues who have concerns about this decision either privately or at a briefing session I am holding on xx March in room xx of PCH. Please let my PPS Rob Wilson know if you would like to attend either this open session or have a one on one catch up.

Best wishes,

Jeremy Hunt

Jeremy Hunt

8 March 2011 21:15

To: Adam Smith

Great thx. Made some changes below. A great letter, nice and snappy! Worth showing Sue to make sure tone feels right and not too defensive.

J.

On 8 March 2011 18:23, Adam Smith wrote:

I've tried to capture as much as possible but you'll want to be sure you are completely happy with it. I've tried to make the tone sound like you are responding to some of the concerns expressed in a robust way without sounding like you are ignoring them. Once you are happy I will get lawyers to check it and then pass it to No 10. I'll also ask to sort out a date and time for a briefing session for MPs if you are happy to do that?

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Firstly I want to reiterate that by accepting these undertakings I had decided to accept and follow the advice from two independent expert regulators. Both Ofcom and the OFT said, in letters that I have published, that they believed these undertakings would address the plurality concerns that could result from this merger. Such advice was the single most important reason for me taking this decision. Opponents of the merger urged me to listen to the advice of the regulators and this is exactly what I have done. Labour has tried to criticise the process (which they actually set up in the 2002 Enterprise Act) but refused to say if they support the decision I took on the basis of independent advice. Until they come off the fence their criticisms are simply not credible.

The process. In all of my considerations regarding this merger I have followed the process established in the 2002 Enterprise Act. Accepting undertakings in lieu of a referral is a common practice in merger cases and indeed both the Office for Fair Trading and previous Labour Secretaries of State have done so. However, I appreciate the particular sensitiveness of this merger and so in order to attempt to address these I have published all reports, advice and correspondence related to this case. Even though I realise many won't agree with my final decision our constituents will at least be able to see that at all times I sought, followed, and published independent advice. This is a first in cases like this.

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PPS Rob Wilson know if you would like to attend either this open session or have a one on one catch up.

Best wishes,

Jeremy Hunt





SS. Aa 21
Jeremy Hunt <

Lib Dem Conference Question on BskyB

2 messages

Adam Smith <

8 March 2011 18:25

To: Jeremy Hunt <

Don has put together a pretty robust defense of his and our position for their conference -

Question to Parliamentary Party by Gareth Epps

Liberal Democrats have long been opposed in principle to monopolies of cross-media ownership such as that handed on a plate to Rupert Murdoch by the Conservative Secretary of State. Given that our policy has not changed, and that no meaningful assurances can be or indeed have been offered by Murdoch, why are our spokespeople outside Government now publicly supporting Conservative and not Liberal Democrat policy?

Answer:

Liberal Democrat policy has NOT changed.

Competition and market power issues surrounding the proposed News Corp. takeover of BskyB were considered by the European Commission on 21st December 2010. The Commission ruled that European Competition (and therefore UK) rules would not be breached by the takeover.

Thus the UK government could **only** consider issues relating to the plurality of news provision.

Liberal Democrat spokespeople outside government supported the deal brokered by the independent regulator Ofcom and the Office of Fair Trading because, if implemented, it would **reduce** – not increase – the involvement in and control over news and current affairs by News Corp.

Response to supplementary

[Assuming Gareth refers to the part of his question that states; “no meaningful assurances can be or indeed have been offered by Murdoch”.]

This is simply wrong. It was a deal brokered by and supported by Ofcom and the OFT.

If implemented it will mean that there will be **legally binding agreements** that;

- Separate Sky News from the rest of BskyB,
- Prevent News Corp from increasing its shareholding in Sky News
- Ensures News Corp has no control over the editorial content of Sky News
- Prevents News Corp from hiring and firing senior staff.
- Ensures the board of the newly independent Sky News has a majority of independent directors and an independent chairman..
- Establishes a new body to ensure compliance with the principles of editorial independence and integrity in news reporting, and

- Enshrines Ofcom's Broadcasting Code in the new company's articles of association.

This means that Sky News would be better protected in terms of editorial independence than it is now – and far better protected than what would have happened if News Corp had made a full take-over.

In short Rupert Murdoch and News Corp will have LESS influence and control over news and current affairs than they do at present.

Jeremy Hunt

8 March 2011 21:05

To: Adam Smith

Good for Don

On 8 March 2011 18:25, Adam Smith <adamsmithih@googlemail.com> wrote:
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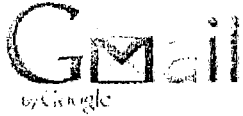
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SS. Aa 22

[Redacted box]

RE: B Sky B

6 messages

WILSON, Rob

9 March 2011 15:39

To: "BRINE, Steve"

Cc: "SMITH, Adam"

Jeremy Hunt

Steve

I have been chasing this today, as I know a number of colleagues require it.

The hold-up is that lawyers have to check it before it can be distributed and are doing so at the moment. It should be out later today (I hope)!

Regards

Rob

From: BRINE, Steve
Sent: 09 March 2011 15:21
To: WILSON, Rob
Subject: B Sky B

Hi Rob,

Unless I am sorely mistaken there has not been a DC letter from JH since the BskyB anno last week?

Can you help so we can go back to these constituents who just love to Murdoch bash via my inbox.

Steve

Steve Brine

MP for Winchester & Chandler's Ford

Website: www.stevebrine.com

Steve Brine TV: www.stevebrine.tv



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BRINE, Steve

14 March 2011 12:54

To: "WILSON, Rob"

Cc: "SMITH, Adam"

Jeremy Hunt

Rob,

Still nothing my end!

Appreciate any help you can give as I am sure will many other colleagues.

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Jeremy Hunt
To: Adam Smith
Cc: Rob Wilson



14 March 2011 14:42

Spoke to John Zeff, I think the least we can do is a letter from me to any MP that writes in that could also be given to PRU. He said he would get on the case this afternoon.



J.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: BRINE, Steve [redacted]
Date: 14 March 2011 12:54
Subject: RE: B Sky B
To: "WILSON, Rob" [redacted]
Cc: "SMITH, Adam" [redacted] Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

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Gmail - RE: B Sky B

Page 5 of 14

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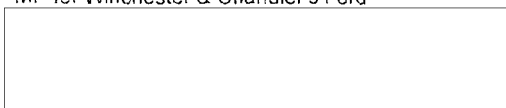
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SMITH, Adam <[redacted]>
To: Jeremy Hunt
Cc: Rob Wilson <[redacted]>

14 March 2011 14:46

There's already a PRU letter which they have had for a few days. So colleagues can use that one.

From: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
Sent: 14 March 2011 14:43
To: SMITH, Adam



Cc: Rob Wilson
Subject: Fwd: B Sky B

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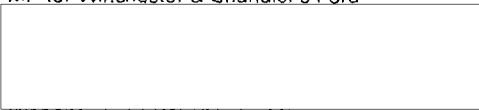
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WILSON, Rob [redacted] 14 March 2011 14:51
To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted], "SMITH, Adam" [redacted]

Jeremy

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Thankfully the influx of letters is well down on before and colleagues don't feel under quite so much pressure on this.

In light of the obvious legal sensitivities, I suggest I keep a close eye on the ground here and I'll make sure I spot any issues early.

Rob

From: SMITH, Adam [redacted]
Sent: 14 March 2011 14:46
To: Jeremy Hunt
Cc: WILSON, Rob
Subject: RE: B Sky B

There's already a PRU letter which they have had for a few days. So colleagues can use that one.

From: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
Sent: 14 March 2011 14:45
To: SMITH, Adam
Cc: Rob Wilson
Subject: Fwd: B Sky B

Spoke to John Zeff, I think the least we can do is a letter from me to any MP that writes in that could also be given to PRU. He said he would get on the case this afternoon.

J.

[redacted]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **BRINE, Steve** [redacted]
Date: 14 March 2011 12:54
Subject: RE: B Sky B
To: "WILSON, Rob" [redacted]
Cc: "SMITH, Adam" [redacted] Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Rob,

Still nothing my end!

Appreciate any help you can give as I am sure will many other colleagues.

Thanks,

Steve

Steve Brine

MP for Winchester & Chandler's Ford



Website: www.stevebrine.com

Steve Brine TV: www.stevebrine.tv



Preserve the environment - please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to

From: WILSON, Rob
Sent: 09 March 2011 15:39
To: BRINE, Steve
Cc: 'SMITH, Adam'; 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: RE: B Sky B

Steve

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The hold-up is that lawyers have to check it before it can be distributed and are doing so at the moment. It should be out later today (I hope)!

Regards

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Hi Rob,

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Can you help so we can go back to these constituents who just love to Murdoch bash via my inbox.

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Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

14 March 2011 15:08

To: "WILSON, Rob" [redacted]

Brilliant Rob thanks so much. Please keep me posted.

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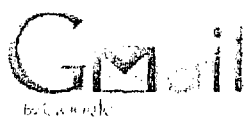
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SS. Aa 23

Jeremy Hunt

Dear Colleague BskyB letter

3 messages

Adam Smith

9 March 2011 18:15

To: Jeremy Hunt

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Firstly I want to reiterate that this is a decision I must take acting in a quasi-judicial capacity. I must not take into account political considerations but reach a decision on the merits of the case. By proposing to accept these undertakings I have decided to accept and follow the advice from two independent expert regulators. Both Ofcom and the OFT said, in letters that I have published, that they believed these undertakings would address the plurality concerns that could result from this merger. I considered this advice very carefully, and it was a very important reason for me taking this decision. Opponents of the merger urged me to listen to the advice of the regulators and this is exactly what I have done. [Labour has tried to criticise the process (which they actually set up in the 2002 Enterprise Act) but refused to say if they support the decision I took. Until they come off the fence their criticisms are simply not credible.]

The process. In all of my considerations regarding this merger I have followed the process established in the 2002 Enterprise Act. Accepting undertakings in lieu of a referral is a common practice in merger cases and indeed both the Office for Fair Trading and previous Secretaries of State have done so. However, I appreciate the particular sensitiveness of this merger and so in order to attempt to address these I have published all reports, advice and correspondence related to this case. This is a first in cases like this. Even though I realise many won't agree with my final decision our constituents will at least be able to see that at all times I sought, followed, and published independent advice.

Independent advice. It is worth pointing out exactly what the independent regulators make of the undertakings that I am currently minded to accept.

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Media plurality and competition issues. My remit did not include competition issues such as cross-promotion, bundling, and distorting the advertising market with cross-platform deals. These were dealt with by the European Commission in their verdict of 21 December 2010. Nor did my remit include any type of judgement about the personalities involved. These considerations, whilst highly relevant to commercial competitors and many individuals who hold strong views about News Corporation, were not legally allowed to form part of this decision. I was, in fact, only allowed to make a judgement about whether the merger would have a negative impact on the number of different voices in the media market and about what remedies could be imposed that would mitigate against this impact.

The undertakings. The basic outline of these undertakings means that Sky News will be spun off as an independent public limited company. The shares would be distributed amongst the existing shareholders of Sky in line with their shareholdings in BskyB. This means that News Corp would maintain a 39.1% shareholding in Sky News. In simple terms this means that Sky News will remain as an independent media outlet. As such the number of different voices in the media market would remain as it currently is. There would therefore be no reduction in the level of plurality.

Crucially the undertakings in lieu contain a number of further provisions which I believe would secure the new Sky News' editorial independence from News Corp. These include -

- **Independent Directors.** The Board of the new company will have a majority of independent directors who have no other News Corp, or News Corp-associated, interest.
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The result of these undertakings is that, if this deal goes ahead, Sky News will be able to continue its high quality output with greater protections for its operational and editorial independence than exist today. For those who have concerns about plurality of news provision I hope this will be a welcome step forward.

I have yet to agree the final versions of the carriage arrangement and brand licensing contracts that will be in place if these undertakings are accepted. By their nature these contracts are likely to contain commercially sensitive information such that it would not be reasonable to publish them in full. However, the principles behind these arrangements have been analysed by both the OFT and Ofcom and they are content that such undertakings would mean Sky News is a financially viable business in its own right. More importantly I must agree these arrangements before the merger goes ahead and once again I will of course seek advice from the independent regulators before doing so.

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9 March 2011 18:22

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Adam Smith <[redacted]>
To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

9 March 2011 18:52

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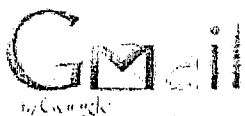
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SS. Aa 24

Jeremy Hunt

FW: JHLetterFinal

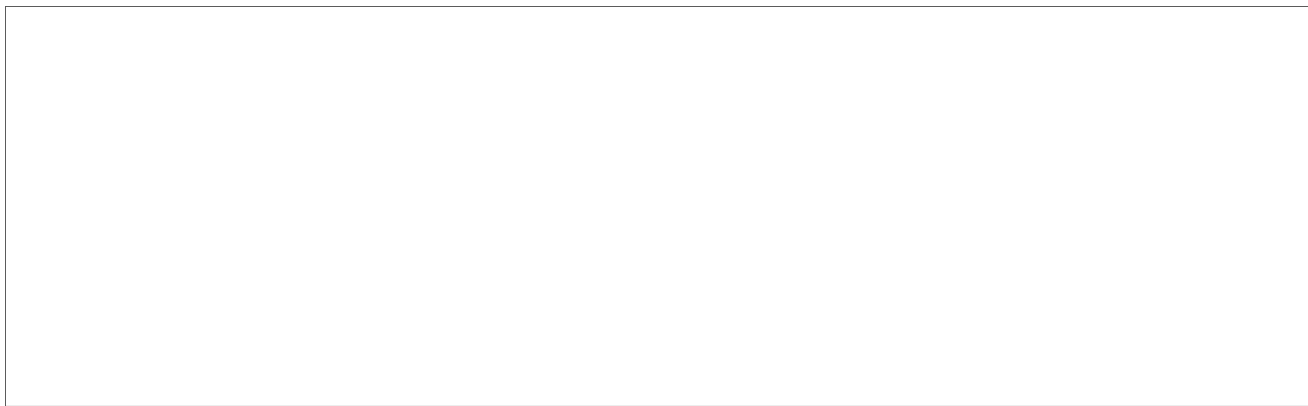
5 messages

Peter Chadlington

11 March 2011 16:52

To:

Jeremy - Here is a private email from [redacted] which I said I would forward to you. Have a look. At some stage I think it would be a good idea for you both to discuss this as he returns to uk on Monday and may start some media interviews [redacted]



2 attachments

JHLetterFinal.doc
45K

ATT444448.txt
1K

Peter Chadlington

11 March 2011 17:41

To:

Here you are

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Chadlington

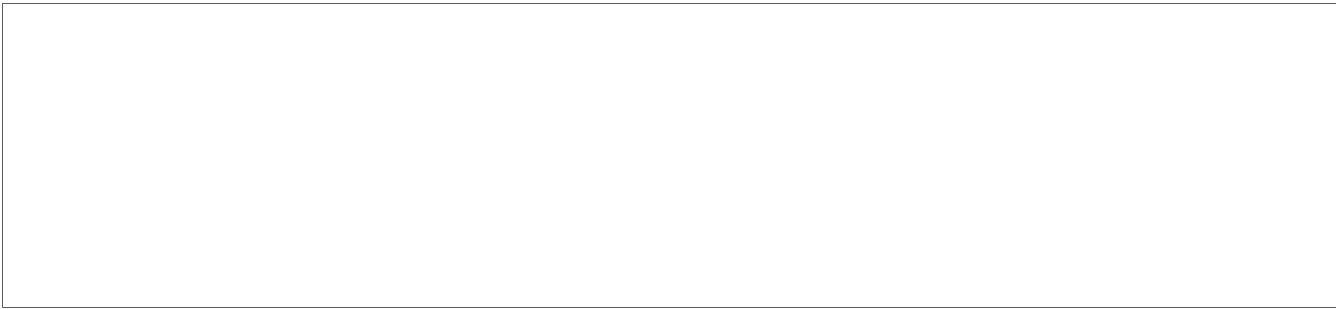
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Subject: FW: JHLetterFinal


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11 March 2011 18:15

To: Peter Chadlington <[redacted]>

He writes thoughtfully and intelligently and I will offer to see him as soon as he is back
J.

On 11 Mar 2011, at 17:41, "Peter Chadlington"

[redacted] wrote:

> Here you are

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Peter Chadlington

> Sent: 11 March 2011 16:52

> To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

> Subject: FW: JHLetterFinal

>

> Jeremy - Here is a private email from [redacted] which I said I would

> forward to you. Have a look. At some stage I think it would be a good

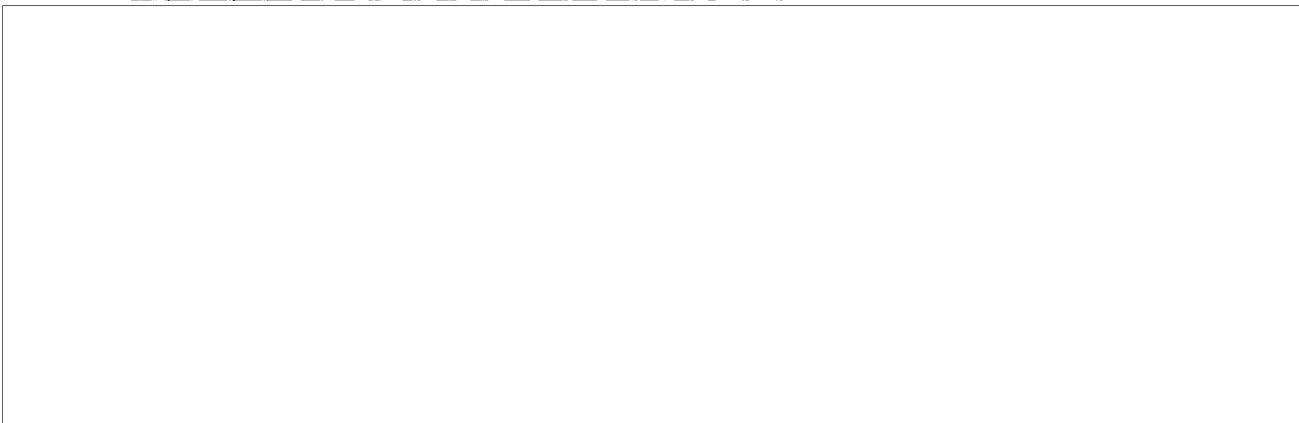
> idea for you both to discuss this as he returns to uk on Monday and may

> start some media interviews. Peter

>

>

>



> <JHLetterFinal.doc>

>

>

>

> Sent from my iPad



Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Cc: Adam SMITH <[redacted]>

11 March 2011 18:17

please arrange mtg with Lord P asap and ask John Z for brief on points he raises
Thx
J.

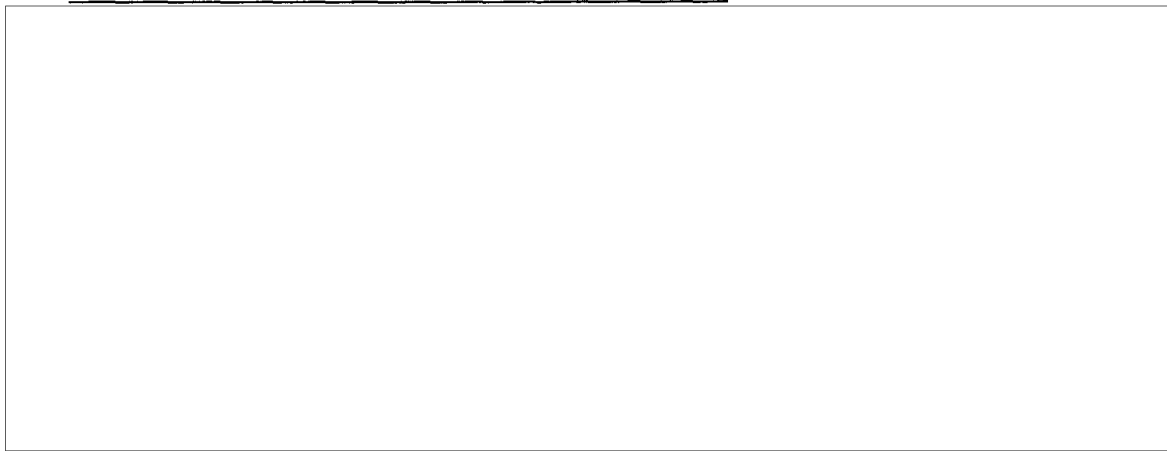
Begin forwarded message:

From: "Peter Chadlington" <[redacted]>
Date: 11 March 2011 17:41:29 GMT
To: <jeremy@[redacted]>
Subject: FW: JHLetterFinal

Here you are

-----Original Message-----
From: Peter Chadlington
Sent: 11 March 2011 16:52
To: Jeremy Hunt ([redacted])
Subject: FW: JHLetterFinal

Jeremy - Here is a private email from [redacted] which I said I would forward to you. Have a look. At some stage I think it would be a good idea for you both to discuss this as he returns to uk on Monday and may start some media interviews. Peter



 JHLetterFinal.doc
45K

Peter Chadlington <[redacted]>
To: jeremy@[redacted]

11 March 2011 20:48

Great.

----- Original Message -----
From: Jeremy Hunt ([redacted])
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2011 06:15 PM
To: Peter Chadlington
Subject: Re: JHLetterFinal



He writes thoughtfully and intelligently and I will offer to see him as soon as he is back
J.

On 11 Mar 2011, at 17:41, "Peter Chadlington"

[redacted] wrote:

> Here you are

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Peter Chadlington

> Sent: 11 March 2011 16:52

> To: Jeremy Hunt ([redacted])

> Subject: FW: JHLetterFinal

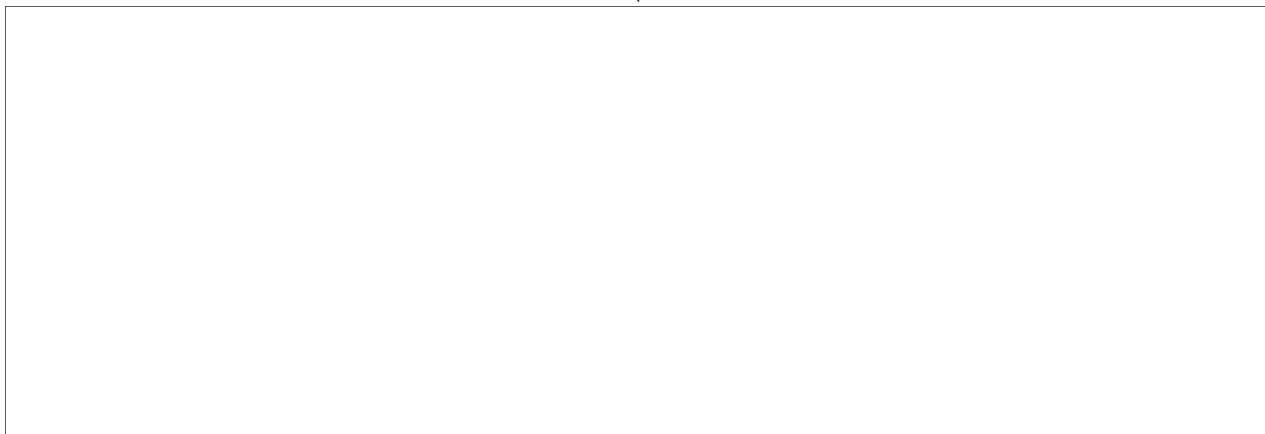
>

> Jeremy - Here is a private email from [redacted] which I said I would forward to you. Have a look. At some stage I think it would be a good idea for you both to discuss this as he returns to uk on Monday and may start some media interviews. Peter

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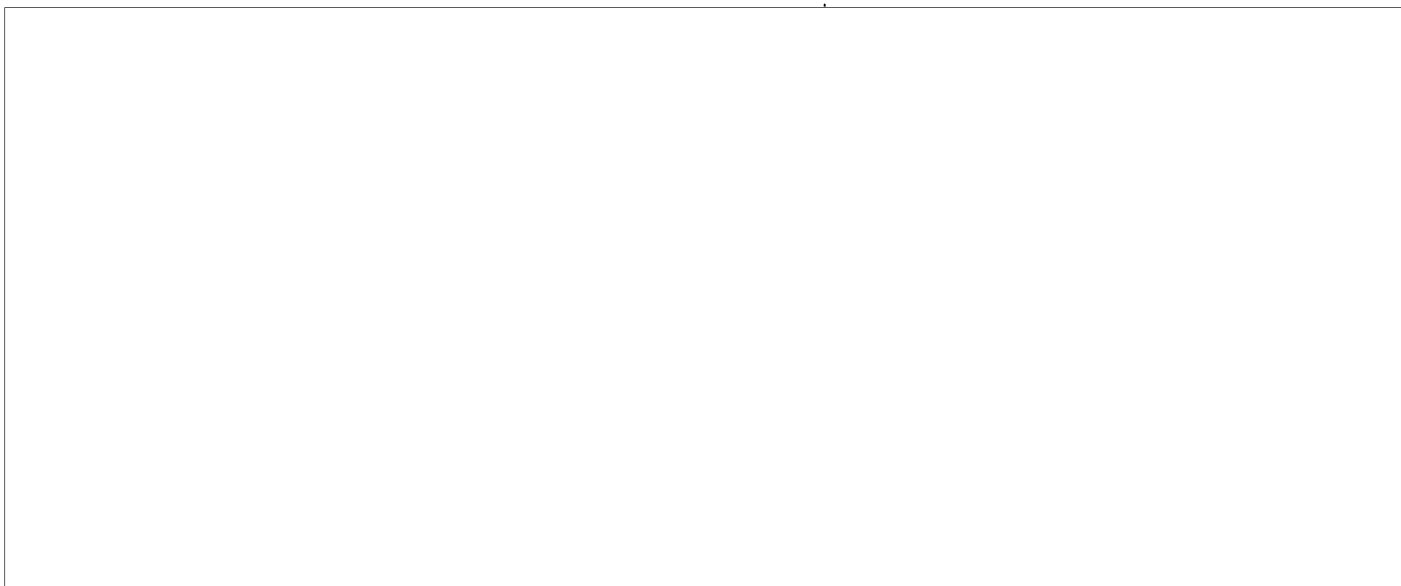
> <JHLetterFinal.doc>

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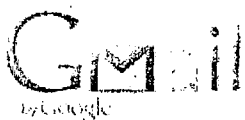
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>

> Sent from my iPad







SS. Aa 25

Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Fortnightly

3 messages

Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
To: Adam Smith

17 March 2011 10:06

Fortnightly 17th March.docx
13K

Adam Smith <[redacted]>

18 March 2011 16:30

To: Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>

Bit anxious about the Chris Huhne bit. Do you definitely want me to include it!?!

On Thu, Mar 17, 2011 at 10:06 AM, Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]> wrote:

Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]>
To: Adam Smith

18 March 2011 16:51

Think so...what's the point of these notes unless they have real info?!

On 18 March 2011 16:30, Adam Smith <[redacted]> wrote:

Bit anxious about the Chris Huhne bit. Do you definitely want me to include it!?!

On Thu, Mar 17, 2011 at 10:06 AM, Jeremy Hunt <[redacted]> wrote:



SS. Aa 26

FORTNIGHTLY 17TH MARCH

Nothing huge to report on in the last fortnight. The Newscorp/Sky issue seems to have died completely. Looking back, the fact that we had independent advice at every stage seems to have been decisive in heading off any threat of judicial review. Certainly none of the newspaper groups are talking about it now. I did hear that Chris Huhne was apoplectic and advocated going to the media to criticise it – but partly because Don Foster was onside Nick reined him in. The point to make to Nick (which I have also made to Chris) is that if I *had* referred it to the Competition Commission it would almost certainly have been judicially reviewed by Newscorp as being unreasonable, given that Ofcom and the OFT had given it the all clear.

SS.Aa 27



Jeremy Hu

Fwd: URGENT - NEWS INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT

1 message

Adam Smith <

8 April 2011 14:59

To: Jeremy Hunt

News International statement with regard to voicemail interception at the News of the World during 2004-2006:

Following an extensive internal investigation and disclosures through civil legal cases, News International has decided to approach some civil litigants with an unreserved apology and an admission of liability in cases meeting specific criteria.

We have also asked our lawyers to establish a compensation scheme with a view to dealing with justifiable claims fairly and efficiently.

This will begin the process of bringing these cases to a fair resolution with damages appropriate to the extent of the intrusion.

We will, however, continue to contest cases that we believe are without merit or where we are not responsible.

That said, past behaviour at the News of the World in relation to voicemail interception is a matter of genuine regret. It is now apparent that our previous inquiries failed to uncover important evidence and we

acknowledge our actions then were not sufficiently robust.

We continue to co-operate fully with the Metropolitan Police. It was our discovery and voluntary disclosure of this evidence in January that led to the re-opening of the police investigation.

With that investigation on going, we cannot comment further until its completion.

News International's commitment to our readers and pride in our award-winning journalism remains undiminished.

We will continue to engage with and challenge those who attempt to restrict our industry's freedom to undertake responsible investigative reporting in the public interest.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michel, Frederic [redacted]
Date: Fri, Apr 8, 2011, at 2:57 PM
Subject: URGENT - NEWS INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT
To: "Adam SMITH" ([redacted])
"adamsmi" ([redacted])

Adam

Please call to discuss.

Fred.

"Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail"


The Newspaper Marketing Agency: Opening Up Newspapers:

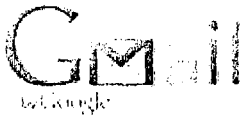
www.nmauk.co.uk



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 **meafinal.docx**
15K



Jeremy Hunt

SS.A 29

Ivan Lewis on News Corp

3 messages

SMITH, Adam

10 June 2011 09:49

To: "BEEBY, Sue"

jeremy

Ivan Lewis, Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary. **"The serious admissions of culpability by News International aren't relevant to the News Corp-BSkyB media plurality issue," he said.**

"However, the continued delays in Jeremy Hunt reaching a decision begs the question why he did not refer the deal to the Competition Commission in the first place".

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Jeremy Hunt

10 June 2011 10:25

To: "SMITH, Adam"

Classic :-)

On 10 June 2011 09:49, SMITH, Adam wrote:

Ivan Lewis, Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary. **"The serious admissions of culpability by News International aren't relevant to the News Corp-BSkyB media plurality issue," he said.**

"However, the continued delays in Jeremy Hunt reaching a decision begs the question why he did not refer the deal to the Competition Commission in the first place".

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SMITH, Adam

10 June 2011 10:28

To: Jeremy Hunt

Great to throw back at Tom Watson etc!

From: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
Sent: 10 June 2011 10:26
To: SMITH, Adam
Subject: Re: Ivan Lewis on News Corp

Classic :-)

On 10 June 2011 09:49, SMITH, Adam [redacted] wrote:

Ivan Lewis, Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary. **"The serious admissions of culpability by News International aren't relevant to the News Corp-BSkyB media plurality issue," he said.**

"However, the continued delays in Jeremy Hunt reaching a decision begs the question why he did not refer the deal to the Competition Commission in the first place".

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SS. Aa 30

Jeremy Hunt



Oral Questions Notes

1 message

SMITH, Adam

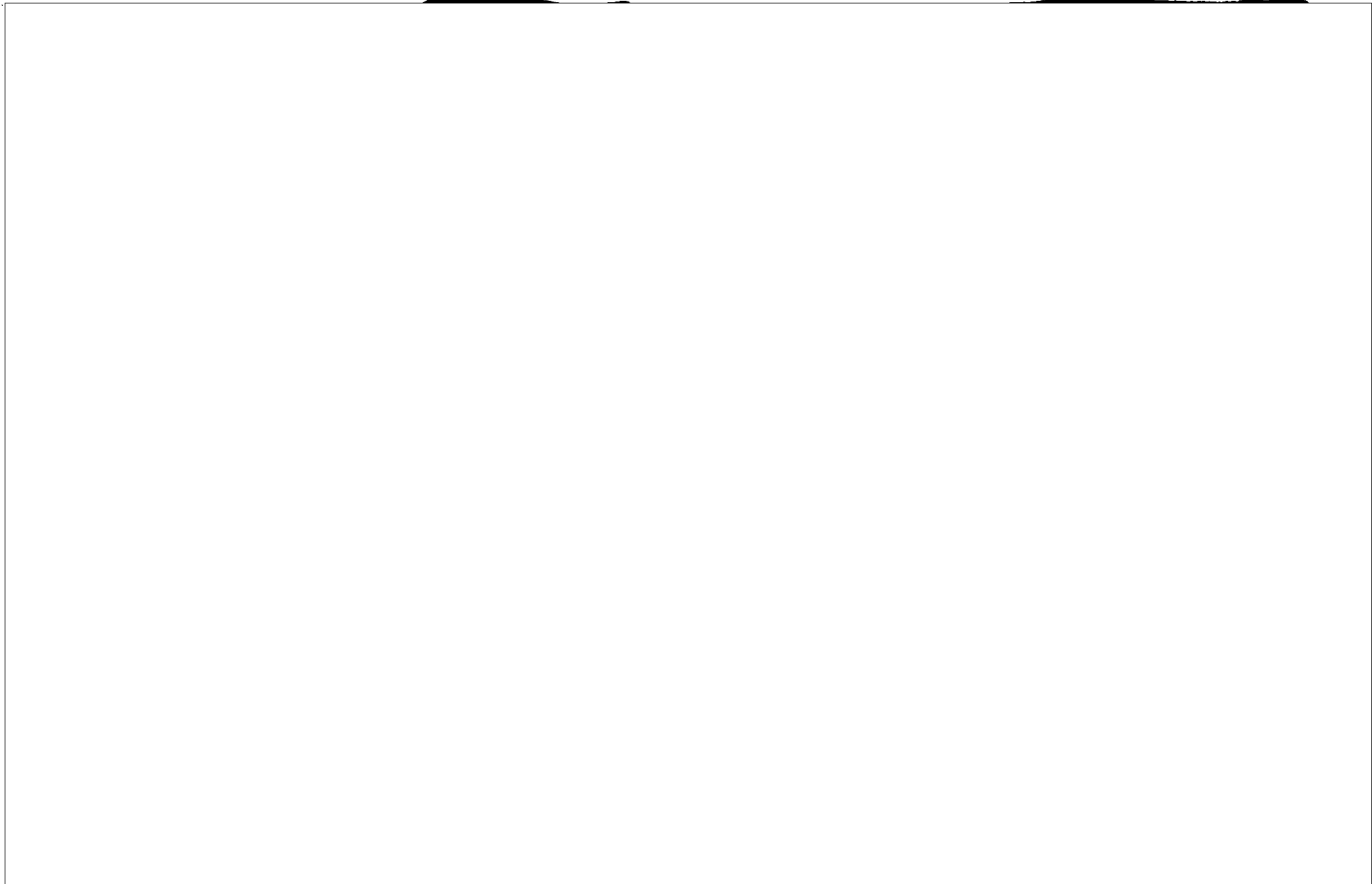
To: "jeremy|

BEEBY, Sue"

15 June 2011 12:45



Oral Questions



News Corp/BskyB

When I announced I was minded to accept the undertakings in lieu the honourable member told this place that "In the days ahead I will be engaging with interested parties before deciding whether we believe referral to the Competition Commission remains the most appropriate course of action."

So rather than calling on me to rush through the legal agreements he should appreciate the fact I've given him more time to make up his mind about what he actually thinks of the merger.

"The serious admissions of culpability by News International aren't relevant to the News Corp-BskyB media plurality issue"



Redacted (1 page)



Jeremy Hunt <

SS.Aa.31

UILs

1 message

Jeremy Hunt <

28 June 2011 08:43

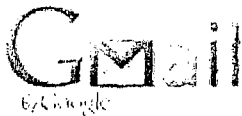
To: Adam Smith <

Hiya

Those new UILs are pretty thorough...feels like the world doesn't trust the Murdochs further than they can be thrown! What was the resolution on the issue of Murdoch family members buying shares in Newco?

Thx





Jeremy Hunt

SS.Aa 33

FW: Ed Miliband on phone hacking (verbatim)

1 message

SMITH, Adam

5 July 2011 13:20

To: "jeremy"

From:

Sent: 05 July 2011 12:13

To:

BEEBY, Sue; SMITH, Adam

Subject: Ed Miliband on phone hacking (verbatim)

Ed Miliband MP

Sky News-11:05 05/07/11

<http://tinyurl.com/43qe5ys> (clip)

EM: Well as a parent, as a member of the public, I am appalled by what has happened, Milly Dowler's parents were in a tortured state worried about the fact that she had been abducted, she had gone missing and it is absolutely awful that they were given false hope, by this sort of criminal activity that seems to have been going on and I think members of the public right up and down this country will be appalled by what has happened and will say, British journalism known for its high standards, known for its history, has had one of its lowest days with these revelations.

Interviewer: Many people are calling for Rebekah Brookes to resign, it is well known that she was in charge at the time, should she see resign?

EM: Oh of course she should consider her position but this goes well beyond one individual, this is about the culture and practices that were obviously going on at that newspaper 'The News of the World' over a sustained period. This wasn't a rogue reporter, it wasn't just one individual this is a systematic series of things that happened and what I want from executives at News International is for people to start taking responsibility for this, people to saying why this happened. Now of course the police investigation needs to take its course and that needs to get right to the bottom of what happened. It needs to get to the bottom of who, who committed these offences and who knew about them. But there's something else as well, we also need and every newsroom in the country should know this, that this is a stain on the character of British journalism, because the culture, the practices of some parts of the industry, bring into question the rest of the industry and that's why we need, after the police inquiries are complete, a proper inquiry into the culture and practices which allowed these things to happen and we need to look at the press complaints commission and self regulation. I'm a supporter of self regulation, I continue to be a supporter of self regulation of the press, but it hasn't been working because these things were allowed to carry on and happen and I think this is the very least that is needed, to restore the reputation of British journalism which all of us have an interest in.

I: Can I just clarify your comments there, you're calling then for Rebekah Brookes to resign?

EM: I am saying she should examine her conscience and I'm sure she will because this did happen on her watch. But I'm also saying that this goes beyond an individual because it's not about one individual, it's about what was happening systematically at a newspaper and why was that allowed to happen? And executives at news International need to start explaining why that was allowed to happen, what was the culture of the organisation that allowed these practices to go on.

I: Do you support Lord Prescott's claims and his strong views that the BSkyB takeover should now be put on the backburner?

EM: I, I think that BSkyB is a separate issue, that is a separate issue about the operation of competition law, I don't think Jeremy Hunt has handled this the right way, I believe strongly that he should have gone to the competition commission, he should have had that proper inquiry, that proper process that was necessary and we've always said that and I continue to think that he should do that. But this is a separate issue, this is about a pattern of criminality that took place at an organisation, and that needs to be treated properly as its own issue, the police inquiry needs to take place without fear or favour and also we need a much wider inquiry to restore the reputation of British journalism.

I: You say it's a separate issue, but it's obviously been established that Rebekah Brookes spent her Christmas break with the Prime Minister, is that relationship too close?

EM: The Prime Minister answers for his own relationships with executives and British newspapers, but again that's not the biggest issue here, the biggest issue here is: what are members of the public feeling here today? They're buying newspapers, they're relying on those newspapers to yes be producing information for them, yes to be telling them things they didn't know, but to be doing it in a, in a fair and upstanding manner and they would be horrified that the parents, that the grieving parents of an abducted child, were made to go through further torture that somehow she was alive because her voicemail messages were being retrieved or deleted and people will be asking you know, where have we got to that that was thought to be an acceptable way for parts of the British press to operate?

I: How would you react to claims from within your own party that you, like all political leaders, are scared of Murdoch, you need him on your side?

EM: I; I think I've been pretty clear, throughout this process both about the need for the police inquiry to take its cause and then the need for a further review or inquiry to take place after the police inquiries are complete. I think that nothing less than that will ensure the reputation of British journalism, that we all have an interest in.

I: Should there be a public inquiry now, into this?

EM: Yes there should be a public inquiry and I think it will probably have to take place after the police inquiries are complete but we can look at that issue. Why is that public inquiry so important? Because we need a, people to feel that they can rely, not just on what they're reading in British newspapers but on the standards and practices of British newspapers and as I say the revelations about the hacking of Milly Dowler's phone are one of the lowest days for British journalism and I honestly say to newspapers

and editors around this country, they have an interest in, making self-regulation work yes but accepting that the current system doesn't work because these abuses were going on when we had a press complaints commission and you've got to ask what was the press complaints commission doing about it? Why weren't they stopping this happening? That's why we need a proper look at the culture and practices of the industry so we can ensure that these kinds of things never ever happen again.

I: And lastly, there are some reports, I stress reports not firm evidence yet that other crimes were investigated in this way, particularly the Soham murders, what's your reaction to maybe a wider spread practice relating to that set of crimes?

EM: Well any further revelations about other crimes were either interfered with or where hacking took place, just adds to the view that there are at least in parts of the industry there is something very wrong. I mean this is immoral what was going on, this was truly immoral what was going on and you know ... my wife said to me this morning "this is sick what was going on" and I think that's going to be the reaction of people up and down this country.

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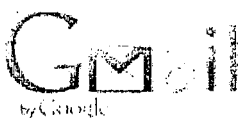
Promoted by Alan Mabbutt on behalf of the Conservative Party, both at 30 Millbank, London, SW1P 4DP

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SS.Aa 34

Jeremy Hunt

one pager on hacking

2 messages

SMITH, Adam <

6 July 2011 11:01

To: "jeremy

How's this look –

Phone Hacking and News Corporation's proposed acquisition of BskyB

- Phone hacking is wrong and illegal. These new allegations are absolutely shocking and appalling.
- The law is quite clear and a criminal investigation is underway. The police must be able to follow the evidence wherever it takes them and pursue such an investigation with vigour.
- These allegations and the wider issue of phone hacking are immaterial to the decision on the potential merger. The Enterprise Act 2002 sets out the process that means the Culture Secretary has to make a quasi-judicial decision about the impact of the proposed merger on media plurality issues alone.
- So however appalling and stomach churning he finds these allegations and whatever he feels about them personally he has to stick to the letter and principle of the law and judge the case on media plurality grounds.

Why can't the Culture Secretary consider these allegations?

The Government is following the process set out by the Enterprise Act 2002.

The intervention notice that was issued by the Secretary of State for Business under this legislation asked Ofcom to consider this merger under a specific public interest test – namely its impact on media plurality.

Once an intervention notice has been made on one basis, the legislation does not permit a second intervention on another basis. Section 67(5) of the Enterprise Act 2002 provides that no more than one European Intervention Notice may be given to the same relevant merger situation.

Therefore the Culture Secretary has to make his decision about the impact of the proposed merger on media plurality issues alone.

No one or no company should be above the law - that is why the police should be able to follow their investigation wherever it takes them. Equally no Minister should be above the law. It would completely undermine this important principle if the Culture Secretary were to ignore due process and take into account factors other than those of media plurality.

Why can't the Culture Secretary pause the process until these allegations have been cleared up?

Pausing the process because of these allegations would link his consideration of the merger to phone hacking. He cannot do this as he has to make his decision based on media plurality issues alone.

The Culture Secretary cannot simply disregard due process and consider immaterial factors however shocking and appalling he finds them.

Political Points

Ed Miliband, 5th July, 2011 – "I think that BSkyB is a separate issue, that is a separate issue about the operation of competition law"

Ivan Lewis, Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary. "The serious admissions of culpability by News International aren't relevant to the News Corp-BSkyB media plurality issue," he said. (Independent, 10 June 2011)

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Jeremy Hunt

6 July 2011 11:54

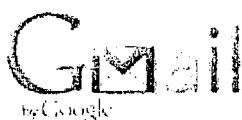
To: "SMITH, Adam"

Great

J.

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



SS. Aa 35

Jeremy Hunt <



Labour and the CC

1 message

SMITH, Adam



6 July 2011 12:54

To: "jeremy"



Now that Labour are saying again we should refer the deal to the Competition Commission again it may be worth highlighting this to a few colleagues. You did originally announce that you would refer it – it was only after receiving advice from Ofcom and the OFT that you didn't need not to that you decided against it.

Why didn't you refer it to the Competition Commission?

When I received Ofcom's first report I announced that I was minded to refer the merger to the Competition Commission. However, under the Enterprise Act 2002 I had to examine any undertakings offered in lieu of a referral. I have considered and accepted the independent advice from Ofcom and the OFT that these undertakings mitigated or prevented their concerns. As such I have followed independent advice at each stage of the process. First when I was minded to refer to the CC and secondly when I decided to accept the undertakings. Surely the honourable member is not saying we should disagree with the expert regulators?

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SS.Aa 36

Jeremy Hunt

PM Speech

1 message

SMITH, Adam <

8 July 2011 09:20

To: "jeremy

PRIME MINISTER: PRESS CONFERENCE

Thank you for coming to this press conference.

Over the past few days, the whole country has been shocked by the revelations about the phone hacking scandal.

Murder victims, terrorist victims, families who have lost loved ones in war, defending our country...

... that these people could have had their phones hacked in order to generate stories for a newspaper is simply disgusting.

I cannot think what was going through the minds of those who did this.

That they could hack into anyone's phone is disgraceful.

To hack into the phone of Milly Dowler, a young girl missing from her parents, who was later found dead, is truly despicable.

But this scandal is not just about some journalists on one newspaper.

It's not even just about the press.

It's also about the police.

And yes – it's also about how politics works and politicians too.

And I want to be very frank about how, as a country, we should deal with it.

People want to know that three things are going to happen.

One: action will be taken to get to the bottom of these specific revelations and allegations about phone hacking, about police investigations and all the rest of it.

Two: action will be taken to learn wider lessons for the future of the press in this country.

And three: that there will be clarity – real clarity – about how all this has come to pass, and the responsibilities we all have for the future.

That's what the country expects at this time of crisis and concern...

...and I will make sure that everything that needs to be done, will be done.

FIRST INQUIRY

First, we need action to get to the bottom of the specific revelations and allegations we have seen.

It's clear that there have been some illegal and utterly unacceptable practices taking place at the *News of the World* – and possibly elsewhere.

There is now a large-scale and well-resourced police investigation.

Of course, in [date] we did have a police investigation— but we can now see that it was plainly inadequate.

This in itself requires investigation.

A separate allegation is that police officers took payments.

That specific allegation is now being investigated by senior officers – and with my full support they have brought in the IPCC to oversee this.

So for those worried about the police investigating the police, this has full and independent oversight.

But let's be clear.

Police investigations only get you so far.

What people want to know is – what happened? And how was it allowed to happen?

That's why when the Deputy Prime Minister and I spoke, we thought it right and proper to establish a full, public inquiry to get to the bottom of what happened.

A judge needs to be in charge so there's no question that it's totally independent and things are done properly.

These are the questions that need answering:

Why did the first police investigation fail so abysmally?

What exactly was going on at the *News of the World*?

And what was going on at other newspapers?

Of course, the bulk of the work of this inquiry can only happen after the police investigation has finished.

That's what the law requires.

But that doesn't mean we can't do anything now.

So we will consult now with Select Committees and others on the terms of reference, remit and powers.

I want everyone to be clear.

Everything that happened is going to be investigated.

The witnesses will be questioned by a judge under oath.

And no stone will be left un-turned.

SECOND INQUIRY

But we need action as well to learn the wider lessons for the future of the press.

And this is something we can get on with straightaway, even while the police investigation is still going on.

That's why I want to establish a second inquiry to begin at the earliest available opportunity, ideally before the summer recess.

This inquiry should be conducted by a credible panel of figures drawn from a range of different backgrounds...

...who command the full support, respect and confidence of the public.

They should be truly independent, without any motive but to seek the truth and clean up the press.

This second inquiry should look at the culture, practices and ethics of the British press.

In particular, they should look at how our newspapers are regulated and make recommendations for the future.

Of course it's vital that our press is free.

That is an essential component of our democracy and our way of life.

But press freedom does not mean that the press should be above the law.

I think it's now clear to everyone that the way the press is regulated today is not working.

Let's be honest: the Press Complaints Commission has failed.

It is hopelessly ineffective, lacking rigour – even, as this case has shown, completely absent.

It is institutionally conflicted, with competing newspapers judging each other.

It lacks public confidence.

So I believe we need a new system entirely.

It will be for the inquiry to recommend what that system should look like.

But my starting presumption is that it should be truly independent...

...independent of the press, so the public will know that newspapers will never again be solely responsible for policing themselves.

And independent of government, so the public will know that politicians are not trying to control a press that must be free to hold politicians to account.

This new system of regulation should strike the balance between an individual's right to privacy and what is in the public interest.

And above all it should uphold the proper, decent standards we expect of our press.

I have already spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister about all this – and in the days ahead we will meet with the Leader of the Opposition to discuss exactly what both these inquiries should cover, and exactly how they should be run.

If we're going to discuss the way the press is regulated in future, it would be so much better to do it cross-party.

This is an issue that must be above party politics.

Power, how it is exercised and how it is held to account by the press: these are fundamental questions for this country.

And when decent people have had their privacy invaded in the most shameful manner, they expect politicians to put their differences aside and do what needs to be done to clear up the mess.

POLITICS AND THE PRESS

But there is a third question that this scandal asks of us, and it is not an easy one for me to answer.

But it is my responsibility to try.

How did we get here?

Because as we consider the devastating revelations of the past few days, it's no good just pointing the finger at this individual journalist, or that newspaper.

It's no good just criticising the police.

The truth is, we have all been in this together – the press, politicians and leaders of all parties – and yes, that includes me.

We have not gripped this issue.

During the last government, a police investigation was undertaken, it came to nothing and no one did anything about it.

There were two reports from the Information Commissioner and they went unheeded.

There were two Select Committee reports on phone hacking and there was no follow-up.

Throughout all this, all the warnings, all the concern, the government at the time did nothing.

And frankly, neither did the Opposition.

To be fair, it is difficult for politicians to call for more regulation of the media, because if we do so, we're accused of stifling a free press and even free speech.

But the deeper truth – is that there is a less noble reason.

Because party leaders were so keen to win the support of newspapers, we turned a blind eye to the need to sort this issue, get on top of the bad practices, change the way our newspapers are regulated.

It's a bit like MPs' expenses.

The people in power knew things weren't right.

But they didn't do enough quickly enough – until the full mess of the situation was revealed.

When the scandal hits and the truth is plain for everyone to see...

...there are two choices.

You can down-play it and deny the problem is deep – or you can accept it and deal with it.

I'm going to deal with it.

These inquiries give us a chance for a fresh start and I want us to take it.

Look, it's healthy that politicians and journalists speak to each other; know each other.

Democracy is government by explanation and we need the media to explain what we're trying to do.

But this is a wake-up call.

Over the decades, on the watch of both Labour leaders and Conservative leaders, politicians and the press have spent time courting support, not confronting the problems.

Well: it's on my watch that the music has stopped.

And I'm saying, loud and clear – things have got to change.

The relationship needs to be different in the future.

I'm not going to pretend that there's some nirvana of two separate worlds, relating to each other on the basis of total transparency and ethical perfection.

That's not real life.

But we can do a hell of a lot better than we've done so far.

Because as this scandal shows, while it's vital that a free press can tell truth to power...

...it is equally important that those in power can tell truth to the press.

CONCLUSION

Before I take your questions, let me say this.

For people watching this scandal unfold, there is something disturbing about what they see.

Just think of who they put their trust in.

The police to protect them.

The politicians to represent them.

The press to inform them.

All of them have been let them down.

So when the inquiries are over, the questions have been asked, and the truth found out...

...I want a police that has proved itself beyond reproach...

...a political system that people feel is on their side...

...and a press that is yes, free and rigorous; that investigates and entertains;

...that holds those in power to account and occasionally – even regularly – drives them mad...

...but, in the end, is a free press that is also clean and trustworthy.

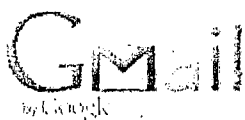
That is what people want.

That is what I want.

And I will not rest until we get it.

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SS. Aa 37

Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Draft statement text

3 messages

Jeremy Hunt [Redacted] 11 Julv 2011 12:32
To: Paul Oldfield [Redacted] Adam Smith [Redacted] Sue
Beeby [Redacted]

Mr Speaker the events of last week shocked the nation. Our proud tradition of journalism, which for centuries has bravely held those in positions of power or responsibility to account without fear or favour, was shaken by the revelation of what we now know to have happened at News of the World. The perpetrators of those acts not only broke the law, they prayed on the grief of families who had lost loved ones either as a result of foul murders or giving their life for their country. I hope the law shows no mercy on those responsible and no mercy on any managers who knowingly condoned such appalling behaviour.

As a result of what happened the Prime Minister last week announced two independent enquiries to examine what went wrong and recommend to the government how we can make sure it never happens again [insert details of two statements]

I now also have to make a decision about the desire of NewsCorp, parent company of News of the World, to buy the shares it does not own in BSkyB. Colleagues on all sides of this House and the public at home understandably look aghast at the prospect of the company which allowed these terrible things to happen being allowed to take control of what would become Britain's biggest media company.

I must however discharge my duties under the Enterprise Act strictly following the due process set out by this House. I will take as long as necessary to reach my decision but according to the legal advice I have received, I am not permitted to pause consideration of the deal on the basis of alleged offences that have not completed their passage through the courts.

However I am permitted and indeed will take as long as necessary to consider all relevant information. For that reason I will consider carefully the [insert] responses I received from members of the public, many of which came after the revelations of activity at News of the World started happening.

I have this morning also asked Ofcom and the Office of Fair Trading whether they stand by the advice offered to me on [insert] that said that their concerns about plurality of media ownership would be addressed if I accepted the undertakings put forward by NewsCorp in lieu of a referral to the Competition Commission. I am seeking independent advice, as I have done at every stage of this process

Protecting our tradition of a strong, free and independent media is the most sacred responsibility I have as Culture Secretary. Irresponsible, illegal and callous behaviour damages that freedom by weakening public support for the self-regulation upon which it has thrived. By dealing decisively with the abuses of power we have seen, hopefully on a cross-party basis, this government intends to strengthen and not diminish press freedom, making this country once again proud and not ashamed of the journalism that so shapes our democracy,

SMITH, Adam

[Redacted]

11 July 2011 12:39

[Redacted]

To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted] OLDFIELD PAUL
[redacted] "BEEBY, Sue" <[redacted]>

Slight tweak

From: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
Sent: 11 July 2011 12:33
To: OLDFIELD PAUL; SMITH, Adam; BEEBY, Sue
Subject: Draft statement text

Mr Speaker the events of last week shocked the nation. Our proud tradition of journalism, which for centuries has bravely held those in positions of power or responsibility to account without fear or favour, was shaken by the revelation of what we now know to have happened at News of the World. The perpetrators of those acts not only broke the law, they preyed on the grief of families who had lost loved ones either as a result of foul murders or giving their life for their country. I hope the law shows no mercy on those responsible and no mercy on any managers who knowingly condoned such appalling behaviour.

As a result of what happened the Prime Minister last week announced two independent enquiries to examine what went wrong and recommend to the government how we can make sure it never happens again [insert details of two statements]

I now also have to make a decision about News Corporation's plans to buy the shares it does not already own in BSkyB. Colleagues on all sides of this House and the public at home understandably look aghast at the prospect of the company which allegedly allowed these terrible things to happen being allowed to take control of what would become Britain's biggest media company.

I must however discharge my duties under the Enterprise Act strictly following the due process set out by this House. I will take as long as necessary to reach my decision but according to the legal advice I have received, I am not permitted to pause consideration of the deal on the basis of alleged offences that have not completed their passage through the courts.

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Protecting our tradition of a strong, free and independent media is the most sacred responsibility I have as Culture Secretary. Irresponsible, illegal and callous behaviour damages that freedom by weakening public support for the self-regulation upon which it has thrived. By dealing decisively with the abuses of power we have seen, hopefully on a cross-party basis, this government intends to strengthen and not diminish press freedom, making this country once again proud and not ashamed of the journalism that so shapes our democracy.

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OLDFIELD PAUL [REDACTED] 11 July 2011 13:05
 To: "SMITH, Adam" [REDACTED] Jeremy Hunt [REDACTED]
 "BEEBY, Sue" [REDACTED]

Now with added dates and PM statement text.

From: SMITH, Adam
Sent: 11 July 2011 12:40
To: Jeremy Hunt; OLDFIELD PAUL; BEEBY, Sue
Subject: RE: Draft statement text

Slight tweak

From: Jeremy Hunt [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 July 2011 12:33
To: OLDFIELD PAUL; SMITH, Adam; BEEBY, Sue
Subject: Draft statement text

Mr Speaker the events of last week shocked the nation. Our proud tradition of journalism, which for centuries has bravely held those in positions of power or responsibility to account without fear or favour, was shaken by the revelation of what we now know to have happened at News of the World. The perpetrators of those acts not only broke the law, they preyed on the grief of families who had lost loved ones either as a result of foul murders or giving their life for their country. I hope the law shows no mercy on those responsible and no mercy on any managers who knowingly condoned such appalling behaviour.

As a result of what happened the Prime Minister last week announced two independent enquiries to examine what went wrong and recommend to the government how we can make sure it never happens again.

First, a full, judge led, public inquiry into the original police investigation. Witnesses will be questioned by a judge under oath and no stone will be left unturned. As The Prime Minister announced on Friday that Inquiry will need to answer the following questions. Why did the first police investigation fail so abysmally? What exactly was going on at the News of the World, and what was going on at other newspapers? The bulk of the work of this inquiry can only happen after the police investigation has finished but we will start what we can now.

Second, a separate inquiry to look at the culture, the practices and the ethics of the British press. In particular, they should look at how our newspapers are regulated and make recommendations for the future. That Inquiry should start as soon as possible, ideally this summer. As the Prime Minister said a free press is an essential component for our democracy and for our way of life. But press freedom does not mean that the press should be above the law and in announcing this inquiry the Prime Minister has invited views on the way the press should be regulated in the future.

I now also have to make a decision about News Corporation's plans to buy the shares it does not already own in BSkyB. Colleagues on all sides of this House and the public at home understandably look aghast at the prospect of the company which allegedly allowed these terrible things to happen being allowed to take control of what would become Britain's biggest media company.

I must however discharge my duties under the Enterprise Act strictly following the due process set out by this House. I will take as long as necessary to reach my decision but according to the legal advice I have received, I am not permitted to pause consideration of the deal on the basis of alleged offences that have not completed their passage through the courts.

However I am permitted and indeed will take as long as necessary to consider all relevant information. For that reason I will consider carefully the 166,000 responses I received from members of the public, many of which came after the revelations of activity at News of the World started happening.

I have this morning also asked Ofcom and the Office of Fair Trading whether they stand by the advice offered to me on 22 June that said that their concerns about plurality of media ownership would be addressed if I accepted the undertakings put forward by NewsCorp in lieu of a referral to the Competition Commission. I am seeking independent advice, as I have done at every stage of this process

Protecting our tradition of a strong, free and independent media is the most sacred responsibility I have as Culture Secretary. Irresponsible, illegal and callous behaviour damages that freedom by weakening public support for the self-regulation upon which it has thrived. By dealing decisively with the abuses of power we have seen, hopefully on a cross-party basis, this government intends to strengthen and not diminish press freedom, making this country once again proud and not ashamed of the journalism that so shapes our democracy.

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Jeremy Hunt

SS.Aa 38

Draft statements

3 messages

SMITH, Adam

20 July 2011 09:21

To: "jeremy"

Attached is the current version of the PM's statement which is worth reading. And below a draft of your winding up speech. I've anticipated Labour being pretty partisan. There is no formal wording that you need to say as this isn't a motion and there won't be a debate so although I've attacked Labour in the middle I've tried to end on a non-partisan point about the House working together to sort things out.

Mr Speaker, we have had an excellent debate. One that justifies both the Prime Minister's decision to ask, and indeed your decision to grant, this additional emergency sitting.

It is right that honourable members from across the House have had another chance to question the Prime Minister and that he was able to announce further measures to improve public confidence in the media and the police to this House.

[insert mentions of various MPs contributions to the debate]

Mr Speaker I said to the House last week that politicians of all parties need to approach these issues with a great deal of humility.

We have all erred.

We have all made mistakes in our dealings with media organisations.

And we all need to learn from these mistakes.

So I was disappointed, although not entirely surprised, by the contributions from the Opposition Front Benches.

They gave the Rt Hon member for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath a run for his money for the greatest rewrite of history this House will have ever heard.

One would assume that phone hacking had actually happened under the Coalition Government...

That Labour politicians had never even heard of News Corporation, Rupert Murdoch or Rebekah Brooks...

Or that it would be inconceivable for ex-News International employees to work for the Labour Party...

Let me remind the House that under the last Government there were two Information Commissioner Reports setting out the scale of trade in personal information.

Two Select Committee reports on practices in the press.

And two convictions for phone hacking.

Yet the Party opposite chose to ignore these warnings.

We learned yesterday that the former Prime Minister never once raised the issue of phone hacking with Rupert Murdoch. Despite seeing him regularly. In Downing Street. At Chequers. And yes, even socially.

We also learned, thanks to the forensic work of members of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, that Rebekah Brooks used to visit him six times a year.

And that he used Chequers to host a slumber party for Murdoch family members.

I have to wonder whether this close relationship was the real reason why there was no judicial inquiry under the last Government.

We know that the Rt Hon Member for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath's Cabinet discussed having such an inquiry. And that he ruled it out.

And according to Mr Jonathan Powell we know that Tony Blair's Government considered reforming the way the press was regulated. But as he wrote in the Guardian yesterday they withdrew these plans

"because of the sustained onslaught we knew we would face from the press and the unreliability of any support...even on our own benches, given Gordon's desperate wooing of Dacre and Murdoch. In the end it was a battle for power and one we could not win".

More shockingly this close relationship seems to have had a direct impact on Government policy. In his 2008 Society of Editors Speech Paul Dacre explained that he, Les Hinton of News International, and Murdoch MacLennan of the Telegraph went to see Gordon Brown about the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill.

They were concerned about Government measures in this legislation that would mean those guilty of obtaining confidential personal data unlawfully could face a two year custodial sentence.

After this meeting these plans were changed. The Bill amended and media executives satisfied.

Incredibly this all happened just months after the Information Commissioner's Report detailed how 305 journalists from more than 30 newspapers had been identified as customers in the illegal trade of personal information.

So not only did the previous Government ignore this report. But in the months after its publication they actually made it easier for such practices to continue.

I'm afraid honourable members opposite cannot hide from this record. The Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Cabinet who chose not to have an inquiry.

He was a member of the Government who failed to reform the press.

And he is the only leader of a political party who still employs an ex-news international journalist who refuses to come clean about what he knows about illegal and immoral practices that may have helped him publish stories.

As with so many problems this country faces it is this side of the House that is cleaning up the mess of 13 years of Labour rule.

Under this Government there are two on-going police inquiries.

One overseen by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

We have greater transparency about meetings the Prime Minister has had with media executives.

Plans to extend such transparency to other Ministers.

And a full judge led inquiry that will not only get to the bottom of all these terrible allegations.

But also make recommendations about how to improve the relationships between politicians and the press and the police and the press. And as my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister said today answer important questions about media plurality.

We should be judged not by who shouts the loudest about the guilt of others.

But on whether we admit our share of the blame. And work hard to ensure nothing like what we have seen recently can ever happen again.


All parties have had issues of excessive closeness to media groups and media owners. And all parties missed the warnings about what was going wrong. And missed opportunities in the past to put things right.

I believe that this House has come together to recognise that we cannot let this happen again.

That is why I welcome the cross-party support for the appointment of Lord Justice Leveson and on the terms of reference for his inquiry.

I'm sure all members will wish him and his panel well. And hope we can continue to work together to sort these issues out once and for all.

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Jeremy Hunt [redacted] 20 July 2011 09:35

To: "SMITH, Adam" [redacted]

Thx please could you send as word doc?

[Quoted text hidden]

SMITH, Adam <[redacted]> 20 July 2011 09:37

To: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]

From: Jeremy Hunt [redacted]
Sent: 20 July 2011 09:36
To: SMITH, Adam
Subject: Re: Draft statements

[Quoted text hidden]

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Draft speech for 20 july.docx
19K



SS.Aa 39

Jeremy Hunt


Speech

1 message

Jeremy Hunt

20 July 2011 11:14

To: Adam Smith

 20 July Winding Up speech.docx
21K

SS. Aa 39a

WINDING UP SPEECH

1,100 7 mins = 157 wpm or 1.5 mins per page

Mr Speaker, we have had an excellent debate. One that justifies both the Prime Minister's decision to ask, and indeed your decision to grant, this additional emergency sitting.

It is right that honourable members from across the House have had another chance to debate these issues and that the Prime Minister was able to announce further measures to improve public confidence in the media and the police.

I want to credit those members, but I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Select Committees of this House that have done so much to demonstrate the critical role this House has in resolving these issues. The Home Affairs Select Committee under the leadership of the Hon Mem for Leicester East published an excellent report today highlighting significant areas of police malpractice that need to be addressed. And the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee under the superb leadership of my Hon Friend for Maldon, handled a difficult job outstandingly well yesterday. No grandstanding, but a huge amount of information about what and how things went wrong at News International. Parliament can be truly proud of its independent select committees.

[insert mentions of various MPs contributions to the debate]

[START 5 MINS TO GO]

Mr Speaker I said to the House last week that politicians of all parties need to approach these issues with humility.

We all need to be much more transparent in our dealings with media organisations.

We all need to give the public confidence that whilst it is right and proper to seek to persuade editors and proprietors of the arguments we are putting to the country, there must be no impropriety or appearance of impropriety in the relationship.

I am afraid that today there has been a huge contrast between the measured contributions made by members on all sides of the House with the attempt to secure partisan advantage from the front bench opposite.

This was a problem that was not just ignored by the Labour Party in office, it was made a great deal worse.

But from listening to the opposition front bench, one could be forgiven for thinking that phone hacking happened under this government and not almost entirely under the last Labour government...

For thinking that Labour politicians had never even heard of News Corporation, Rupert Murdoch or Rebekah Brooks...

For believing it would be inconceivable for ex-News International employees to work for the Labour Party...

Perhaps the Front Bench opposite might ask themselves why they did nothing about the two Information Commissioner

Reports in 2006 setting out the scale of trade in personal information.

Nothing about the two Select Committee reports in 2003 and 2007 on practices in the press.

Nothing in the wake of two prison sentences for phone hacking in 2007.

Nothing except criticise the current government for dealing decisively with issues they chose to sweep under the carpet.

And why did they sweep it under the carpet? The sorry facts are finally becoming clear. A close friendship between Gordon Brown and Rupert Murdoch, closer according to Mr Murdoch than with any other Prime Minister. During the course of which the former Prime Minister never once raised the issue of phone hacking. Not at Downing Street, not at Chequers.

But he did find time to see Rebekah Brooks six times a year.

He did allow Chequers to be used for a slumber party for Murdoch family members.

And he did rule out holding a public enquiry on phone hacking.

And it wasn't just the former Prime Minister. According to Tony Blair's Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell *his* administration also considered reforming the way the press was regulated. But as he wrote in the Guardian yesterday they withdrew these plans

“because of the sustained onslaught we knew we would face from the press and the unreliability of any support...even on our own benches, given Gordon's desperate wooing of Dacre and Murdoch. In the end it was a battle for power and one we could not win”.

I'm afraid that when honourable members on the front bench opposite make partisan attacks, the public will hold them to account for their record too.

The Leader of the Opposition who was a member of the Cabinet who chose not to have an inquiry.

Who was a member of the Government who failed to reform the press despite repeated warnings.

The only leader of a political party who still employs an ex-News International journalist who refuses to come clean about what he knew about illegal and immoral practices that may have helped him publish stories.

This is a sorry tale. But the public can at last have confidence that their government is talking action to sort it out.

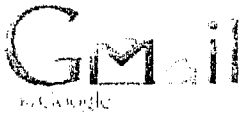
We now have two on-going police inquiries, including one overseen by the IPCC.

We have a full judge-led inquiry that will examine the behaviour of the police, media and politicians and make independent recommendations as to how to sort things out. It will also look at whether our rules on media plurality are fit for purpose.

We have a Prime Minister who has not only published details of his own meetings with media proprietors and executives, but has said that from now on all such meetings by him and his ministers – including social ones - will be made public.

The public will judge us not on who is most effective at securing partisan advantage. But who is most determined to sort out the problems that have shocked the whole nation.

In the extraordinary events that have unfolded in the last few weeks, this House has come together in an unprecedented way. We have recognised that our masters are not media barons, executives or editors, but the people who send us here to represent them. Those people are looking at us now and asking if we are up to the challenge of reforming the way the media, the police and politicians interact. We must not and will not let them down.



SS.Aa 40

Jeremy Hunt

PM discussions on BskyB

1 message

SMITH, Adam

20 July 2011 15:50

To: "jeremy

Q: Did the Prime Minister discuss the BskyB bid with Rebekah Brooks?

Any conversations the Prime Minister had with Rebekah Brooks are completely irrelevant to the BskyB bid. As the Cabinet Secretary has confirmed, the Prime Minister had no role in the BskyB takeover - it was not his decision to make nor did he seek to influence the decisions of Jeremy Hunt the Culture Secretary. Asked this question by the Select Committee, Rebekah Brooks said that she had 'at no time have I ever had any conversation with the Prime Minister that you in the room would disapprove of.'

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