

SS. B 01



From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 21 December 2010 15:50
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: Vince

Hi

Here are Vince's comments.

Thanks
Sue

Cable: "I am picking my fights, some of which you may have seen, some of which you may haven't seen.

nd I don't know if you have been following what has been happening with the Murdoch press, where I have declared war on Mr Murdoch and I think we are going to win".

Cable: "Well I did not politicise it, because it is a legal question," Mr Cable says. "But he [Mr Murdoch] is trying to take over BSkyB - you probably know that."

Cable: "With considerably enhanced..."

Reporter: "I always thought that he had BSkyB with Sky anyway?"

Cable: "No, he has minority shares and he wants a majority - and a majority control would give them a massive stake."

"I have blocked it using the powers that I have got and they are legal powers that I have got. I can't politicise it but from the people that know what is happening this is a big, big thing.

"His whole empire is now under attack... So there are things like that we do in government, that we can't do... all we can do in opposition is protest."

Sue Beeby
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State
DCMS



SS.B.02

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 20 January 2011 16:45
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/>

Sue Beeby
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State
DCMS

SS-B 03

[Redacted]
From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 22 January 2011 09:14
To: 'jeremy' [Redacted]
Subject: Re: Next week

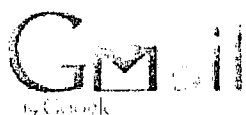
Definitely think we should split them. We need people to see that your initial response was to refer. Also if we don't it looks like we've come up with deals behind closed doors. Doing them separately feels more transparent.

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

From: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]
To: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: Sat Jan 22 08:09:35 2011
Subject: Next week

Hiya
inking through next week I am wondering if presentationally we should publish Ofcom and my minded to refer letter before we publish the planned UIL? Otherwise people may not give sufficient weight to our in principal decision to refer...what do u think?

J.



SS. B 04

Jeremy Hunt

[Redacted]

Next week

2 messages

Jeremy Hunt <j [Redacted]>
To: Sue BEEBY [Redacted]

22 January 2011 08:09

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J.

BEEBY, Sue [Redacted]
To: "jeremy [Redacted]"

22 January 2011 09:14

Definitely think we should split them. We need people to see that your initial response was to refer. Also if we don't it looks like we've come up with deals behind closed doors. Doing them separately feels more transparent.

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From: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]

To: BEEBY, Sue [Redacted]

Sent: Sat Jan 22 08:09:35 2011

Subject: Next week

Hiya

Thinking through next week I am wondering if presentationally we should publish Ofcom and my minded to refer letter before we publish the planned UIL? Otherwise people may not give sufficient weight to our in principal decision to refer...what do u think?

J.

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[Redacted]

SS. B OS

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 25 January 2011 13:43
To: SMITH, Adam; 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: !!

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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 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

SS-B 06

From: BEEBY, Sue
 Sent: 25 January 2011 14:23
 To: 'Jeremy Hunt'
 Subject: Another !! from Dan Sabbagh

Jeremy Hunt buys himself time over News Corp decision

By making up the rules as he goes along, the culture secretary has deferred having to decide if Rupert Murdoch is too powerful

- o [Dan Sabbagh](#)
- o guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 25 January 2011 13.46 GMT
- o [Article history](#)

Jeremy Hunt knows that in the end he is not going to win. Ultimately he can't duck the decision as to whether the News Corp-Sky deal should go ahead – but, luckily for him, he doesn't have to decide just yet. So Hunt can keep everybody happy, by making up the rules as he goes along.

Ofcom's report is pretty clear cut. A combination of News Corp and Sky is problematic when it comes to the question of news plurality.

Ofcom took the step of asking consumers which media outlets people refer to when asked about their choice of news and current affairs providers.

News Corp newspapers the Sun and the Times scored 12%. Sky News scored 10%. ITN (ITV and Channel 4 News, both made by the same company) scored 10%. These are the three "group 2" providers of news in the UK, according to Ofcom, because way ahead of them is the BBC at 37%. Everybody else, including the Guardian at 3%, is stuck at 5% or less – so we can forget about them.

Now Hunt could have concluded that Ofcom was wrong – that the BBC is way out in front and so any News Corp/Sky combination, with a 22% "share of reference", should be approved. But Hunt didn't do that – not least because he took on board (at least for now) the point that the BBC is different. Nobody rings up Mark Thompson before the election and asks him to decide whether to back Labour or the Tories; Rupert Murdoch operates in a different way.

This is a fundamental point. Nobody controls the BBC, although Thompson runs it. Newspapers, and increasingly television after Richard Desmond's takeover of Channel 5, are frequently in the hands of wealthy individuals keen to imprint a world view on their readers and viewers. Some will think that is fair enough, but it is more attractive in a democracy to live in an environment where there is a broad plurality of views, not just opinion dictated from a world view at the top.

Nevertheless, Hunt can't afford to antagonise Murdoch. No politician is going to rush to do that. News Corp is bristling, as ever, demanding that it be given a chance to propose a remedy (a fairly modest editorial board or some other kind of safeguard to "protect" Sky News) – and Hunt is probably wise to hear the company out before deciding whether the remedy is good enough, or whether to hand the whole complex case to the Competition Commission for six more months.

Maybe by then he will have been reshuffled out of job. But Hunt knows he has to play by the book, or rather any book he can come up with as this idea to have a dialogue with News Corp over remedies is all a bit new. And he has to pretend he has never met David Cameron – insisting again today that this "quasi-judicial" process means that he can't and won't discuss it with the prime minister, who has been cheerfully dining with James Murdoch over Christmas.

But the question is whether Hunt will he face down the aggression of News Corp, which is in its usual "with or against us" manner was accusing Ofcom of bias (for not allowing the takeover through) and accusing Vince Cable, the former minister in charge, of having "tainted" the whole process by, er, not being in charge any more after he stupidly talked about having a "war on Murdoch".

News Corp, though, never wins awards for charm in these situations, and it remains to be see whether that will be enough to impress Jeremy Hunt. The minister, though, has bought himself a few more weeks, while he offers to hear News Corp out. His indecision cannot be final, but by trying to be transparent he has at least handled himself well for now. Now he has to decide whether Murdoch is too powerful or not.

Ofcom's report gives him enough information to reject the News Corp-Sky deal, but Murdoch's ability to negotiate regulatory deals means that anybody with brains ought to bet on him winning approval in the end.

Sue Beeby
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State
DCMS



JS. B. 07

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 14 February 2011 10:39
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: RE: Exclusives

Hi

I've spoken to Patrick and given him [REDACTED] as his exclusive. This is on the proviso that he writes a bit about how Labour [REDACTED]. He's happy to do that.

Andy will want [REDACTED] before we officially announce it. Shall we chat about this later as it is a bit more sensitive, as is anything on News Corp.

Thanks
Je

From: Jeremy Hunt [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 February 2011 16:00
To: BEEBY, Sue
Subject: Exclusives

Hiya
Both our favourite journalists, Andy Porter and Patrick Foster, have texted me asking for an exclusive on [REDACTED]. Could we think of something exclusive we can give each of them, either on that or perhaps something around NewsCorp? Let's chat tomorrow...
J.

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SS-B 08

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 02 March 2011 17:33
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'
Subject: Peston's blog

Murdochs offer to sell Sky News

[Robert Peston](#) | 17:14 UK time, Wednesday, 2 March 2011

Comments

News Corporation has offered to sell Sky News and also subsidise the channel for years, to allay concerns about News Corp's planned takeover of all of British Sky Broadcasting.

As a result News Corp is likely to get the green light for the takeover from Jeremy Hunt, the Culture Secretary, possibly as soon as tomorrow.

One of Jeremy Hunt's close colleagues insisted he has not yet made the formal decision to approve News Corp's £7.5bn bid to buy the 61% of BSkyB it doesn't already own, but didn't rule out that Mr Hunt could do so within hours.

If Mr Hunt allows the bid to proceed, which is what I expect, some will see that as a u-turn, because on 25 January he said he was intending to follow the advice of the media regulator, Ofcom, and refer the planned takeover to the Competition Commission for further scrutiny.

Since then, however, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp has made a proposal designed to remedy the harm identified by Ofcom from the deal.

Ofcom was concerned that the combination of News Corp's market-leading newspapers with BSkyB's 24-hour rolling news channel, Sky News, would reduce plurality or choice of news for citizens.

So in what News Corp sees as a significant concession and sacrifice, it has offered to sell Sky News. And because Sky News is lossmaking - to the tune of more than £20m a year according to sources - it has also offered to in effect cover the costs of Sky News for many years through a long-term contract.

Bankers tell me that with such a long term contract in place from BSkyB, Sky News is capable of being sold.

In making his announcement, Mr Hunt would initiate a 15 day period of public consultation.

Critics of the takeover, which include news organisations such as the Telegraph Group and DMGT, owner of the Daily Mail, would complain that News Corporation will become far too powerful a player in the UK media market, if it is able to combine its newspapers (which include the Sun, Times and Sunday Times) with BSkyB's huge, cash-generating broadcasting business.

These opponents of the deal have a problem however, in that their arguments are largely about the impact on competition, not plurality or choice, and the European Commission has already ruled that the combination of Sky and News Corp would not have an adverse impact on competition.

That said, the decision by Mr Hunt to allow the takeover to proceed does not mean the deal will definitely go through - because it is not certain that News Corporation will offer a high enough price to persuade the independent directors of BSkyB to recommend the offer or to persuade shareholders in BSkyB to sell.

Last June, News Corp said it would pay 700p for each BSkyB share, valuing the 61% of the business it doesn't own at £7.5bn.

That was rejected by BSkyB's directors, who said that they wanted more than 800p per share, or around £1bn more in total.

skyB's operations have performed well since then, so it is widely thought in the City that BSkyB's independent directors will now be demanding nearer 850p per share.

It is by no means certain that News Corp - whose BSkyB ambitions are being run by James Murdoch, who runs News Corp's European and Asian operations - will offer as much as that.

Sue Beeby
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State
DCMS



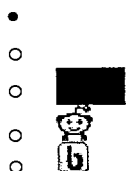
SS. B - 09

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 03 March 2011 08:23
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'

WOW high praise from Dan Sabbagh...

Rupert Murdoch gets his way with Sky News spin off

News Corp will become Britain's biggest media company at a fairly modest regulatory price. Now Murdoch has to actually complete the deal



• [Comments \(0\)](#)



Who's afraid of Rupert Murdoch?

Photograph: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

Rupert Murdoch has pretty much got what he wanted from Jeremy Hunt. He will be allowed to take over all of BSkyB, in return for the relatively modest concession of being held back at a 39.1% shareholding in the newly independent Sky News Ltd. From a Sky News point of view that's pretty much the status quo - News Corp, after all, owns 39.1% of the whole the Sky company today.

The pill he has had to swallow is to concede that the chairman of Sky News Ltd will be independent. Jeremy Hunt will argue that he didn't show much love to the Murdochs the day after Valentine's Day, when he wrote to News Corp telling the company that he wouldn't ratify any regulatory deal unless there was somebody autonomous at the helm. But given that News will be the biggest shareholder and (at least from the start) the sole funder of Sky News Ltd, it will be a tricky balancing act for that individual to pull off.

Essentially what is being created is another ITN (40% owned by ITV, since you asked). Come to think of it Sky News Ltd could continue to chase hard contracts for news supply at Channel 4 if not ITV. So Sky News is hardly suffering. And, given that television news is fairly tightly regulated by Ofcom the extra safeguards are only really reassurance that News Corp won't one day turn Sky News into Fox News Light, or Sun News. But then News Corp wasn't probably going to do that anyway.

What News Corp has got through is the ability to takeover the rest of Sky - creating a £7.5bn British media giant with access to the vast cashflows of the satellite broadcaster. The critics (including the company behind this newspaper) who warned that this enlarged News Corp would have the financial muscle to gradually steamroller rivals have not been heeded - and the fact remains that News Corp will become, by some distance, the most powerful media group in Britain.

As a check to Murdoch power in the UK, the Sky News deal is only modest. The key sort of question to ask is whether News Corp can, say, buy up sports rights, and make them available online via the Times and Sun websites as well as through Sky. On an initial understanding of the agreement reached, that still looks possible. It will also be possible to bundle Sky News content into the Times and Sun websites, although presumably there will have to be a commercial arm's length agreement.

All this leaves one last hurdle - Rupert Murdoch has to now agree a price to buy the 61% of Sky he does not own. The 700p a share bid has been left behind by the market, but News Corp's efforts to talk down the bid range to 750p-800p look utterly hopeless as the independent directors said they would not roll over for anything less than £8. At last night's 795p, 850p looks like the bare minimum. But nobody thinks a deal won't be done; getting these kind of transactions through is classic Murdoch territory.

Jeremy Hunt has handled a difficult situation fairly well - even keeping out of the Murdoch family's way during the crunch negotiations of the past few weeks. After putting together a quick canny BBC funding deal, and getting Lord Patten into the chairmanship there too, he is a man on the up.

As for Rupert Murdoch, his position as an unofficial member of the British cabinet has barely been threatened. But then, did anybody ever expect that it would?

Sue Beeby
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State
CMS

SS-B 10

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 04 March 2011 11:08
To: 'Jeremy Hunt'; SMITH, Adam
Subject: Coverage

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.

zens 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

SS-B 12

[Redacted]
From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 10 May 2011 16:06
To: jeremy [Redacted]

Here you go... a glowing report!

Hunt's Cable gag

Jeremy Hunt's speech to the press gallery contained some excellent jokes - mostly at himself, but this one stood out.

The Culture Secretary said he had been handling both the privacy debate and the Daily Telegraph PCC ruling this morning.

"One was about two women paid to go into a room to tie an older man in knots," he said.

"And the other was about Max Mosley."

Hunt also made fun of those who claim he is in the pockets of the Murdochs, saying that with James Murdoch being in New York he had had to keep an eye of the time difference when timing his speech.

... his Chinese wife, he added: "She is not related to Rupert Murdoch - but I thought it might help anyway!"

Hunt's was a classy performance: disarming, amusing but confident. He did not run away from any of the questions and he took the super-injunctions story on a notch. A lot of pol eds turned out to hear him, a sign that he is attracting interest.

Joe Murphy

SS. B 13

[redacted]

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 10 July 2011 16:06
To: ZEFF JON; 'jeremy' [redacted] OLDFIELD PAUL
Subject: Re: Newscorp

Are we making clear that we are looking into the legal viability of these options rather than just proposing that this is what we could do. I don't think we want to get into a situation where number 10 think we can go ahead with one option when actually legally it wouldn't be robust.

From: ZEFF JON
To: 'jeremy' [redacted] OLDFIELD PAUL; BEEBY, Sue
Sent: Sun Jul 10 15:35:58 2011
Subject: Fw: Newscorp

Jeremy

Draft briefing note for No10 attached, agreed with lawyers. Am copying to Paul and Sue but if you'd like a word my mobile is [redacted]

Jon

From: [redacted]
To: ZEFF JON
Cc: [redacted]
Sent: Sun Jul 10 15:28:28 2011
Subject: Newscorp

[redacted]
Legal Advisers to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Email: [redacted]

S S. B. 14

[Redacted]

From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 10 July 2011 16:10
To: ZEFF JON; 'jeremy' [Redacted] OLDFIELD PAUL
Subject: Re: Newscorp

I also think it is worth including on the list of options writing to ofcom as a matter of urgency asking them to address the following issues that have arisen over the past week.

Letter along the lines of...

Have received numerous consultation responses will of course consult ofcom and ofc once we have processed them but there are further questions that have been raised in light of recent events which I would like to seek your advice on in the meantime.

1. Given the closure of the NOTW to what extent does this impact on your original report on media plurality and how would you propose addressing this in the current merger process.

2. I note your advice to John whittingdale on friday 8th july. Can you let me know whether a potential fit and proper persons test would impact on the issue of media plurality, specifically whether we should be considering whether any potential withdrawal of a broadcasting licence to News Corp would have such a significant impact on plurality in the media that we should be considering it as part of the current merger process.

3. Also in light of your statement on fit and proper persons whether we should also be considering the extent to which the UIL can be taken in good faith and relied upon to be legally robust and enforceable.

From: ZEFF JON
To: 'jeremy' [Redacted] OLDFIELD PAUL; BEEBY, Sue
Sent: Sun Jul 10 15:35:58 2011
Subject: Fw: Newscorp

Jeremy

Draft briefing note for No10 attached, agreed with lawyers. Am copying to Paul and Sue but if you'd like a word my mobile is [Redacted]

.Jon

From: [Redacted]
To: ZEFF JON
Cc: [Redacted]
Sent: Sun Jul 10 15:28:28 2011
Subject: Newscorp

[Redacted]
Legal Advisers to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Email: [Redacted]

SS-B-15

[Redacted]
From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 21 July 2011 08:04
To: 'jeremy' [Redacted]
Subject: Re: BSKyB PM discussions

Hi

Have already been doing it last night. I pointed out that you made no reference to discussions with reb brooks or news int but were talking about discussions in general.

Thanks
Sue

From: Jeremy Hunt [Redacted]
To: BEEBY, Sue
nt: Wed Jul 20 23:58:04 2011
Subject: BSKyB PM discussions

Hiya
You may need to correct any press/make a statement about my apparent admission that DC discussed BSKyB with Rebecca Brooks. I am pretty sure I said "any discussions were irrelevant" but Labour have seized on it as "the discussions were irrelevant." I think the best thing to say is that I couldn't have been confirming that there were discussions because I have never discussed it with the PM and don't know. Hope it doesn't cause an issue.

J.

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SS. B. 16

[Redacted]
From: BEEBY, Sue
Sent: 26 July 2011 17:13
To: jeremy [Redacted]
Subject: Media

Hiya

Hope you are having a good holiday.

We have published the list of meetings you've had with media organisations today and so I've gone through the list to pick out the facts in case you get any hostile questions when you're doing media tomorrow morning.

Basically, there is absolutely nothing surprising about your meetings at all (but that doesn't mean to say people haven't been trying to find something dodgy). Here are some rebuttals

cts on your hospitality – In case of hostile questions

1. Jeremy Hunt met with News Int/ Corp execs 7 times since he became a minister.

During the same period I met with BBC execs 12 times and ITV execs 8 times. There is nothing unusual about the SOS for Media meeting with media organisations.

2. Jeremy Hunt met with James Murdoch twice while he was responsible for the BskyB bid.

These meetings have been a matter of public record since January and in the coming weeks I will publish the minutes of these meetings. I also met with representatives from the media companies who opposed the bid. In fact, it would have been unusual for me not to have met with the parties involved in the bid. During the BBC licence fee negotiations for example I met with BBC execs 3 times.

3. Just before you took over responsibility for the BskyB bid both you and George Osborne had meetings with James Murdoch.

When those meetings took place no one had any idea Vince Cable would say what he did to those Telegraph journos and as a result lose responsibility for the bid. Any suggestion otherwise is just ridiculous.

See you in the morning!
Sue