



To 1. [Redacted]

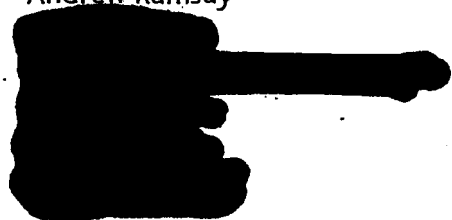
cc [Redacted]

2. Kim Howells

Andrew Ramsay

From [Redacted]

File Ref



Date 23 July 2001

Bill Bush

**NEWS INTERNATIONAL
THURSDAY 26th JULY 10-11 AM, ROOM 207 COCKSPUR STREET**

Issue

1. You agreed to meet Les Hinton, Executive Chairman of News International to meet at 10am on 26 July. He will be accompanied by Alison Clark, the Director of Corporate Affairs at News International.
2. [Redacted] will attend the meeting.

Background

3. Les Hinton has been the Executive Chairman of News International plc since 1995. He is also a Director of the Press Association.
4. News International plc own the British newspapers: The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun, and the News of the World, as well as several educational Supplements and 3 other specialist Magazines. The newspapers account for just under 19% of the total UK newspaper market, ranking second behind the UK's largest publisher, Trinity Mirror. They are part of the global News Corporation set up, whose holdings are listed at Annex A.
5. News International have asked to meet you to discuss "developments in the media industry". Primarily this means the Government's plans for the Communications White Paper. I enclose a copy of their responses to the White Paper and the Select Committee at Annex B, from which you will see that their main concerns are likely to be over cross-media ownership,

foreign ownership restrictions and newspaper mergers.

6. Annex C sets out the current Cross-Media Ownership rules, and at Annex D is a brief on Press Self-Regulation.

Lines to take

- The primary purpose of the meeting is for you to listen to what News International have to say;
- Draft of main Bill will be published early next year for consultation. Will include proposals on media ownership;
- No plans to change the current disqualifications on grounds of nationality. Our current restrictions on foreign (non-EEA & EEA) ownership are reflected across Europe and beyond;
- Paving Bill was published on 13 July allowing for the establishment of OFCOM;
- Well understand the importance to business of getting ahead with changes, but need to get them right;
- Concerns over online regulation are more a matter for the DTI.

