

Tom Watson MP



House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

02 September 2010

Dear Nick,

In light of David's paternity leave, I write to you regarding the fresh investigation by the New York Times into illegal phone hacking at the News of the World under the editorship of Andy Coulson.

Andy Coulson and Les Hinton assured the DCMS Select Committee last year that they had no knowledge of phone hacking, which they have always insisted was the isolated action of rogue reporters.

The New York Times investigation, however, found that "the litigation (between victims of phone hacking and News International) is beginning to expose just how far the hacking went, something that Scotland Yard did not do. In fact, an examination based on police records, court documents and interviews with investigators and reporters shows that Britain's revered police agency failed to pursue leads suggesting that one of the country's most powerful newspapers was routinely listening in on its citizens."

The New York Times also suggests direct police collusion with a commercial media organisation, an investigator alleging that a Metropolitan Police press officer attempted to suppress investigation in order to protect the police's "long-term relationship with News International".

Please can you confirm that the Independent Police Complaints Commission will investigate this serious allegation from a highly reputable source without delay.

What is more, according to the NYT, "Scotland Yard officials consulted with the Crown Prosecution Service on how broadly to investigate. But the officials didn't discuss certain evidence with senior prosecutors, including the notes suggesting the involvement of other reporters, according to a senior prosecutor on the case. The prosecutor was stunned to discover later that the police had not shared everything. "I would have said we need to see how far this goes" and "whether we have a serious problem of criminality on this news desk," said the former prosecutor, who declined to speak on the record.

That a Crown prosecutor should go so far -- even off the record - as to speculate that the police had not shared everything is remarkable. Even lawyers representing hacking victims have always worked on the assumption that the prosecutors had at least seen everything.

Whereas the testimony given to the NYT is that the police did not share all the relevant information with the CPS. *And that if they had done, the CPS would have reached different conclusions.*

These are clear grounds for a judicial enquiry. Please can you confirm your intention to recommend one.

I know that you will share the widespread distaste for these disdainful and arrogant assaults on our democracy, and will want to see those responsible brought to criminal justice.

When those in the media who boast of defending our freedoms are in fact subverting them, people will expect their Prime Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister, to be on the side of truth.

I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely



Tom Watson
Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East