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Statement by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport

### BSkyB Takeover

**Mr Tom Watson (West Bromwich East) (Lab):** As head of Operation Abelard, John Yates would be aware of paperwork showing convicted private investigator Jonathan Rees discussing the use of covert surveillance techniques, including computer hacking, with a close associate of Rebekah Brooks, Mr Alex Marunchak. Rees, while serving time in prison, discussed his contact with reporters from *The Sunday Times*. Far from this scandal being about wrongdoing at the *News of the World*, it is a story of institutional criminality at News International. John Yates' review of the Mulcaire evidence was not an oversight. Like Andy Hayman, he chose not to act. He misled Parliament. He misled readers of *The Sunday Telegraph* only yesterday. Does the Secretary of State agree that his position is untenable?

**Mr Hunt:** With great respect to the hon. Gentleman, who I commend for his tenacious campaign in this area, I do not think that that is a judgment that I, as Culture Secretary, should make. However, all the practices that he describes must be dealt with properly, in terms of both the specific criminal acts and the changes necessary to make sure that they do not happen again. He made one very important reference, in particular, when he pointed out the issue of computer hacking. We have to be very careful to act with sufficient thoroughness to make sure that we do not find that e-mail hacking becomes the next big scandal.