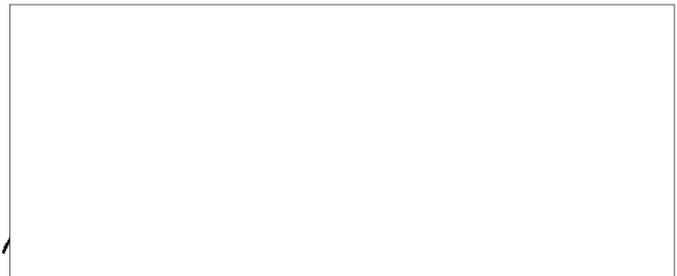


SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF AIDAN S. BARCLAY

1. I am submitting this supplementary witness statement subsequent to my appearance at the Inquiry on 23rd April 2012.
2. In my exchange with Lord Justice Leveson (LJL) about the management of the relationship between the press and the politicians, I promised to come back with further thoughts.
3. LJL asked specifically about how it is possible as a matter of principle to differentiate genuine friendships between journalists or publishers and politicians in general from relationships which are simply about influence. Having thought about it further, I conclude – as I did when giving evidence – that the only way this can be done is to ensure the maximum amount of transparency about meetings that take place, so that the public can make up their own minds about the links.
4. Ministers now publish details about meetings that take place, and I think Shadow Ministers and senior members of the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly should do so as well. I think the fact of those meetings should be made available on a regular basis.
5. I believe that – other than on purely social occasions where there may be a number of people present – civil servants should be in attendance at all meetings and a record kept. I also think minutes of those meetings should be published either with appropriate redactions or after a set period of time if confidentiality of sources is involved. Furthermore, if at a social occasion a matter of public policy is raised, I would expect it to be incumbent on a politician to make a note of that for the record.
6. If the record of those meetings is published accordingly, I think the public will be able to form their own views about the balance in the relationship between the press and politicians.
7. I would like to add two further points. First of all, I was questioned about the meetings that take place between members of the Telegraph team and special advisers, and whether “salient communications” arising from those meetings were “passed up the chain” to me. I said at the time that I was not aware of every particular example. I have now had a chance to look further at the list of meetings – of which

there were not very many - and I am advised that virtually all of them were with special advisers who are press officers rather than policy advisers. I think that is an important distinction to make because it must be right that these political press officers keep in touch with journalists. I would not expect as a matter of course to know about the details of those conversations, except to the extent that I read any reports emanating from them in the paper.

8. Second, we discussed the issue of the purchase of the information relating to MPs' expenses. I made clear that I had not been forewarned about it. I think it worth underlining - as I tried to do in my witness statement - that as soon as I did know about the story, when it was published in the paper, I was informed by Murdoch MacLennan about all the steps that had been taken to deal with the legal, regulatory and data protection issues that arose from the purchase of the disc containing the information. I would draw attention to the passages in the witness statements from Mr MacLennan and Finbarr Ronayne that sum up these various steps very well.
9. I hope these observations subsequent to my appearance are helpful.



Aidan S. Barclay
May 2012