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MR. WHITMORE

NGK.

Broadcasting

J explained to TV

Wynne's letter was minute
covered by the despatch
of my letter of yesterday to
TV Walters. NFA.

15/6

Independent Review of the Radio Frequency Spectrum

TPM

Mr. Walter's letter to you of 10th June seeks the Prime Minister's agreement to the announcement by the Home Secretary next Tuesday (15th June) of an independent review into use of the radio frequency spectrum. This announcement would coincide with the publication of a report by the Home Secretary's Mobile Radio Committee (a mixed group of officials and outside representatives) on present and future requirements for frequency spectrum.

2. The Home Secretary proposes that the review should be chaired by Dr. James Merriman, a former Director of Technology at the Post Office, and currently active in various capacities in the information technology field. He would be assisted by Major-General Sir John Anderson, a former Director-General of NATO Integrated Communications Systems Management Agency, and Mr. Douglas Janes, a retired senior civil servant who carried out a recent Rayner review of the Home Office Radio Regulatory Department.

3. The Home Secretary's proposals were discussed and agreed in the Official Committee on Government Telecommunications, which is chaired by the Cabinet Office. I recommend that the Prime Minister should agree to them. The radio frequency spectrum is a finite resource and as new technology develops there are increasing claims on it (e.g. for new land mobile services). The Mobile Radio Committee's report shows that, although some easement is possible in the immediate future, acute problems of congestion and allocation will continue to face the Government over the next decade and more. I am sure that it is right, therefore, to seek expert independent advice on how these problems might be tackled, and in particular on the future use of TV bands I and III when the present 405-line TV services are withdrawn (at present scheduled for 1986). Announcement of the review will both demonstrate that the Government are responding constructively to the Mobile Radio Committee's findings, and put the Government in a stronger position to justify its major allocation decisions in due course.



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4. I accordingly attach a short draft letter for you to send to the Home Office conveying the Prime Minister's agreement to the Home Secretary's proposals.

RA

Robert Armstrong

14th June 1982

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DRAFT LETTER FROM MR WHITMORE

TO: C J Walters
Private Secretary to the Home Secretary
Home Office

cc PS/to Members of E Committee

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RADIO FREQUENCY SPECTRUM

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 10 June and is content with the Home Secretary's proposal to announce on 15 June the appointment of an independent review, under Dr Merriman, into the radio frequency spectrum from 30-960MHz. The Prime Minister also notes that the Home Secretary proposes to announce the provisional allocation of frequencies for radio telephone services, prior to a statement by the Secretary of State for Industry on his plans for liberalising those services.

2. I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the other members of E Committee.