



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SWIP 3AG 01-233 3000

4 August 1986

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP Secretary of State for the Home Department 50 Queen Anne's Gate LONDON SWIH 9AT

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PEACOCK REPORT

WILL REQUEST IF REGULAGO

I owe you a reply to your letter of 2 July.

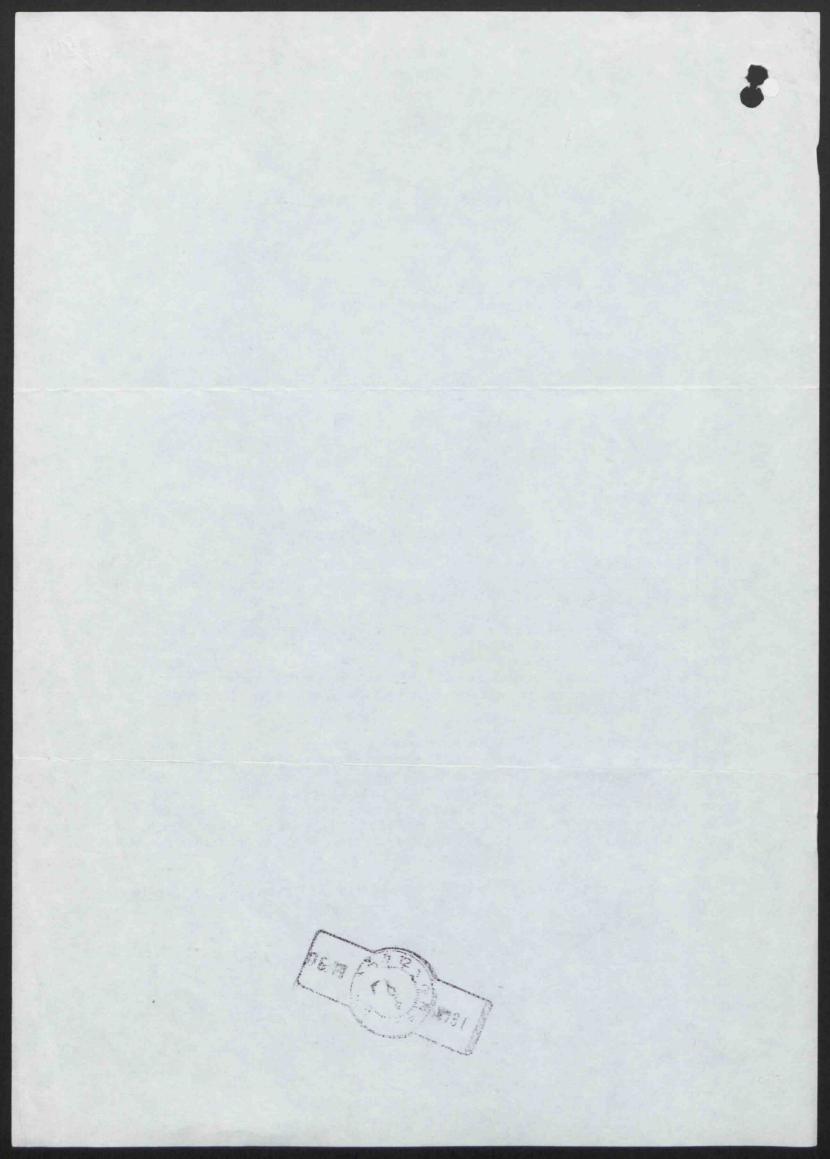
It is essential that we do not fall into the trap of confusing the quite separate problems of obscenity and violence on the one hand and political bias on the other.

The former is best dealt with by subjecting broadcasters to the general law of the land, which may indeed require amending. Nothing could better illustrate the increasing absurdity of a special regime for broadcasters than the rapid growth of videos - including pornographic videos and video-nasties where precisely the same problems arise.

So far as political bias is concerned, the existing system clearly does not work, and indeed will always favour the left. While the transition cannot of course be achieved overnight, the cause of political balance, including a fair crack of the whip for conservative values, stands a far better chance of being secured by the "newspaper" solution of a multiplicity of broadcasters, each enjoying political freedom of expression, but each constrained by the need to win and keep an audience.

I am copying this to the recipients of the previous correspondence.

STORT LAWSON







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PEACOCK REPORT: EXTENSION OF ITV CONTRACTS

I have seen your minute of 30 July to the Prime Minister.

I agree that the awarding of new contracts under the present arrangements would inhibit the introduction of any fundamental changes to the structure of the broadcasting system which we may decide to implement. I would therefore support your proposal to extend the current contract period for up to two years. However, this should not delay the review of contract arrangements in MISC 129 this autumn; nor should we lose sight of the possibility of moving to a levy based on revenue rather than profit for the subsequent contract period.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nicholas Edwards, Norman Tebbit, Paul Channon and John Wakeham, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

NIGEL LAWSON