



FCS/86/297

CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER

World Television Service

1. Thank you for your letters of 21 November and 4 December about this subject. I have also seen Nigel Wicks' letter of 19 November recording the Prime Minister's views, and Douglas Hurd's letter of 28 November ruling out the use of licence fee revenue by the BBC External Services.
2. We have given preliminary consideration to this subject within the FCO. It is clear that a good deal more preparatory work is needed before I will be in a position to make recommendations to colleagues about the feasibility, desirability or possible role for Government in any external TV broadcasting service. I have therefore set work in hand within the FCO to identify the various issues we need to address - i.e. whether there is a case for an external TV service at all, if so who should do it, and whether there is any case whatever for Government involvement. Once we have identified all the issues I will minute colleagues seeking their views early in the New Year. Obviously if there is any question of Government involvement including funding this would have to be considered in the normal PES round.
3. We have of course been careful to avoid giving the BBC any indication as to how we might view their proposal.

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4. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Douglas Hurd, Nigel Lawson, Paul Channon and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

9 December 1986

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BROADCASTING : Finances pt 3.

