

File

BMI

PRIME MINISTER

You said that you wanted to accept Sir Alastair Burnet's invitation, in his letter at Flag A, for his editor and himself to come to brief you on ITN's plans for a direct broadcast by satellite news service.

The Home Office say that you should be aware that ITN are involved with one (BSB) of the applications to the IBA for the direct broadcasting by satellite contract. They say that this would make it very difficult for you to meet Sir Alastair and his editor before the IBA make their decision, which should be announced within the next fortnight.

If BSB, the company with which ITN are involved, are not successful, it would then be open to the winning contractor to choose which new service they would like to use - it is by no means a foregone conclusion that this will be ITN.

In the light of all this, the Home Office's advice is that if you wish to accept Sir Alastair's offer of a briefing, it might be best to wait sometime until the DBS picture is clearer.

I attach a letter for you to send to Sir Alastair in this sense.

N.L. WICKS

9 December 1986

DA(55)

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

8 December 1986

Dear Nigel,

Thank you for your letter of ^{at trap} 2 December about the approach to the Prime Minister from Sir Alastair Burnet on ITN's plans for direct broadcasting by satellite.

The Prime Minister should be aware that ITN are involved with one (BSB) of the applicants to the IBA for the DBS contract. This would make it very difficult for her to meet Sir Alastair and Mr Nicholas before the IBA make their decision, which should be announced within the next fortnight.

If BSB are not successful it will then be open to the winning contractor to choose which news service they would like to use - it is by no means a foregone conclusion that this would be ITN. If the Prime Minister would like to accept Sir Alastair's offer of a briefing it may be best, therefore, to wait some time until the DBS picture is clearer.

Yours

Clare

MS C PELHAM

Nigel Wicks, Esq.,

BROADCASTING : DBS PTG

