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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 December 1986

Dear Nigel,

at flap.

World Television Service

Thank you for your letter of 19 November setting out the Prime Minister's view on this subject and for your letter of 25 November enclosing one from the Chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

I am enclosing a minute that the Foreign Secretary is sending to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. As you will see, we have had preliminary discussions within the FCO. But a great deal more work needs to be done and the Foreign Secretary intends to minute colleagues early in the New Year.

Against that background the Foreign Secretary recommends that the Prime Minister should reply to Lord Thomson in the terms of the enclosed draft. It aims to reassure him that we will consider any ITN proposals on their merits and that we are not letting the BBC's proposals dictate the agenda of our consideration.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Boys Smith (Home Office), Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Tim Walker (DTI), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

N L Wicks Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

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FROM:

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

The Rt Hon The Lord Thomson
 of Monifieth KT PC
 Chairman
 Independent Broadcasting Authority
 70 Brompton Road, LONDON SW3 1EY

Copies to:

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SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

Thank you for your letter of 24 November. As you can imagine the issues raised by this subject are complicated and we need to consider their long term implications. Geoffrey Howe and his officials are working on the issues raised, but it will be some time before even preliminary decisions can be reached.

I can however assure you that if there were to be any Government involvement in external TV broadcasting, then we would certainly examine proposals from the private sector on their merits.

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Enclosures—flag(s).....