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From the Private Secretary

21 November 1987

Dear Robert,

EXTERNAL TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Thank you for your letter of 20 November conveying the Foreign Secretary's further views on the question of external television broadcasting.

The Prime Minister still takes the view that the Foreign Secretary's proposals would give the BBC an unfair advantage over ITN in this matter. She thinks it is a case where competition should apply and would wish to see both BBC and ITN invited to submit proposals. She would also wish to see more details of what the Foreign Secretary has in mind when he says that he 'does not exclude support for distribution of the ITN product'.

From earlier correspondence, there seems to the Prime Minister to be considerable support amongst colleagues for an even-handed approach between BBC and ITN. She hopes therefore that the Foreign Secretary will not be ready to invite tenders for the proposed service from both of them.

I am copying this letter to Alex Allan (H M Treasury), Philip Mawer (Home Office), Tim Walker (Department of Trade and Industry) and Peter Smith (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

Yours sincerely,

C. D. POWELL

R. N. Culshaw, Esq., M.V.O.,
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