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the department for Enterprise

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The Rt. Hon. Lord Young of Graffham
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP
Secretary of State for Home Affairs
Home Office
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*MBM in the office
resped.*

*REC
26/9*

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Paul,

*I have not
shown this to be PN.
Need to await Home
Sec's reply?*

N

Direct line 215 5422
Our ref DW4AOC
Your ref
Date 23 September 1988

John Taylor,

BROADCASTING WHITE PAPER

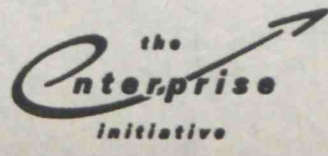
with DM/news?

I have seen your minute of 14 September to the Prime Minister and the draft attached on which I shall be commenting separately in greater detail.

I have no difficulty with the line taken in it on the frequencies available for MVDS. However, I wish to point up the implications this may have for our aspirations on the DBS front. There is also a recent development in the margins of the current geostationary satellite orbit conference in Geneva of which you and colleagues need to be aware.

The 12 GHz band, advocated for MVDS by the Home Affairs Committee among others, has strong technical advantages of receiver compatibility with DBS. But unfortunately it is also the band in which we would have to seek additional DBS channels if we wanted them at the same orbital position as BSB's. Moreover, if pressure built up internationally to replan the DBS band an MVDS service located there might face relocation in the late nineties.

It is true that there are other frequencies around 12 GHz which might be considered for MVDS, but considerable uncertainties still attach to them and besides they might not have the same advantages of compatibility with DBS technology.





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Following my letter to you of 7 June we agreed to review the question of additional DBS allocations after the orbit conference. However, the issue has come to a head in the margins of the conference with indications that the Spanish Government may have had the same idea. Since Spain has the same orbital position for DBS as we, a Spanish request to the IFRB for additional channels would be likely to pre-empt our chances.

Nevertheless, I do not think we should ourselves make a pre-emptive move. It would involve taking a decision now, publicly, to introduce a further five DBS channels not later than 1993. Such a radical proposal would surely have to figure in the White Paper, where it would be seen as inconsistent with the preference implied in para 37 for placing MVDS at 12 GHz. We will therefore have to take the risk that the Spaniards may foreclose a possibility which we might yet - though I now believe it unlikely - want to return to.

If we do want additional DBS channels there is always the alternative of seeking them at a different orbital position, adjacent to Astra's rather than BSB's. Although Astra may at least initially use different transmission characteristics from DBS satellites, giving less technical synergy than would be the case with BSB, a major advantage is that at this orbital position we might secure additional channels in the lower subband which would not be affected by the introduction of MVDS in the upper subband. Alternatively, there might be the possibility of an accommodation with the Irish Republic in respect of its channels.

To sum up, I believe that

- a. the White Paper is right to speak with caution about the choice of frequency for MVDS and to stress, as it does, that we have not yet taken firm decisions; a 12 GHz solution is attractive but could prove incompatible with international developments on the DBS front;
- b. the Spaniards may well apply for additional DBS channels and so foreclose our chance of securing another five at BSB's orbital position (though they would not interfere with our prospects for 12 GHz MVDS nor with our prospects for additional DBS channels in the lower subband at an orbital position adjacent to Astra); however, we should not seek to pre-empt them and we should review



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the question of additional DBS channels in the context of our further studies into the correct location for MVDS.

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe MISC 128 colleagues and to Sir Robin Butler.

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

23.11
AM88