

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

At the end of the last MISC 128 meeting you had a brief word with Douglas Hurd about the handling of announcements.

He has now minuted you (Flag A), proposing that he should make a Commons statement next Tuesday announcing the key decisions now reached. At the same time he proposes to write to John Wheeler as Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee. He attaches drafts both of the statement and the Wheeler letter.

I have discussed the handling with Brian Griffiths and the Cabinet Office. All are agreed that it would be right now quickly to announce the decisions reached - not least given the leaks in the press this week about what has been decided. A further consideration, not known by the Home Secretary, is that Lord Whitelaw has today written to you a personal letter expressing his concerns about the decisions reported in the press. His letter, together with a reply for your signature, is in the folder at Flag B. To judge from his letter, Lord Whitelaw does not seem to have appreciated the safeguards on ITV tenders that are built into the agreed approach - namely the initial quality threshold and the exceptional override.

On the details of the statement, Brian has only two small comments, which I have marked in red on pages 3 and 4.

- (i) Content to agree to Douglas Hurd's proposed statement and letter to John Wheeler, subject to Brian's drafting changes on the former?
- (ii) Content to sign the reply to Lord Whitelaw at Flag B?

Recd.

(PAUL GRAY)

9 June 1989

CONFIDENTIAL