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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 January, 1984

Not read.

A.F.C. 23/1

p.a.

Dear John,

Prime Minister's Visit to France

In view of the developments this week on Direct Broadcasting by Satellite (DBS) you might like to have with you in Paris the attached background.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER TO FRANCE : 23 JANUARY 1984

DIRECT BROADCASTING BY SATELLITE (DBS) : TECHNICAL STANDARD

Background note

1. On 19 January, following increasing domestic pressures for a decision, the Government announced that the C-MAC (Vision)/Packet Sound System, as recommended by the EBU (European Broadcasting Union), would be adopted as the UK technical standard for DBS.
2. We had previously been discussing, with the French and Germans, the possibility of jointly adopting C-MAC as the European standard. These trilateral discussions have however been undermined by a bilateral France-FRG decision (on 5 January) to use the PAL-SECAM standard for their experimental DBS Service. There should, therefore, be no French criticism of the UK announcement. The Home Secretary is, nevertheless, writing to his French and German opposite numbers about our announcement.
3. The French and Germans have indicated that they continue to wish to consider the EBU standard (C-MAC/Packet) for the long term European standard. The Germans have suggested a tripartite meeting in Bonn at the end of February which we have welcomed.

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