



the department for Enterprise

CONFIDENTIAL

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MBPM
at his steps.

Rec 6
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Nigel

ADDITIONAL DBS CHANNELS

Thank you for your letter of 13 June. I have also seen Geoffrey Howe's minute of 17 June and Douglas Hurd's letter of 20 June. *flap*

You suggest that before deciding whether to seek additional DBS allocations within the existing plan we should review the balance of advantage between that course and supporting early moves towards an international replanning of the DBS allocations. Perhaps the best way forward is for officials to examine the issue first in the light of the outcome of the consideration currently being given to the possibility of transferring TV services to DBS and report to MISC 128 once the outcome of WARC-ORB 88 can also be assessed.

Transfrontier beams undoubtedly hold attractions, as Geoffrey Howe indicates. However, we should have to be very sure that BSB's plans were not put in jeopardy. Besides, there may be other, commercial reasons for favouring national footprints for the time being - for example, the question of film rights.



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We must also not overlook the fact that our geographical position gives us better prospects than most continental European countries of securing additional channels. If the band were radically replanned, we might well find that the total number of English speaking channels was less than we might be able to secure under the present arrangements (though viewers would gain access to non-English speaking ones). In any case, given the ITU conference programme, the earliest prospect for a fresh planning conference is likely to be well into the mid 1990s. In the meantime, the overwhelming international pressures on us would be to put on ice any plans we might have for channels additional to our present allocation of five.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to Geoffrey Howe and the other members of MISC 128 and to Sir Robin Butler.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. C. L. Howe'.

BROADCASTING : DBS PT6

