

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

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File

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 June 1984

Proposed Review of the
BBC External Services

Thank you for your letter of 5 June.
In view of Mr. Beesley's minute of 7 June,
I should be grateful for your comments.

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I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary and Lord Gowrie.

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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MR COLINS ✓

Letter to F.I.C.
M 9/6.

PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE BBC EXTERNAL SERVICES

I am afraid I have only just seen Len Appleyard's letter of 5 June about this proposal; and feel that I ought to point out that it is not wholly correct that the Terms of Reference and the covering letter have been agreed with the Efficiency Unit. I attach a copy of my latest letter on this subject from which you will see there are still some key changes to be made before I could recommend to Sir Robin Ibbs that this be included in the Prime Minister's scrutiny programme. I have asked the Foreign Office to put these to the BBC but I understand they have not yet done so.

Unless we can be sure that the review will be done on scrutiny lines I would be concerned that the necessary independence of mind and radical questioning may not be present. So inclusion of an Efficiency Unit member on the team doing the work - similar to the recent scrutiny of the urban programme - is important to us if we are to lend our name to the final result. Without this I think we would have to reconsider whether it would be a good use of my time to sit on a Steering Committee.

Incidentally, the area is so fraught with political overtones that I should have thought it would be desirable from the BBC's point of view to have a representative of the Efficiency Unit fully involved in the review. If it would be helpful I would of course be prepared to talk to the BBC directly about this. Meanwhile I am a little surprised that the Foreign Office have not drawn this to your attention.

I am copying this to John Redwood, Len Appleyard, John Beastall in the Treasury and Mary Brown in Cabinet Office, MPO.

IAN B BEESLEY

7 June 1984