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cc PC

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

6 November 1987

From the Private Secretary

EXTERNAL TELEVISION BROADCASTING

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 29 October to the Home Secretary putting forward revised proposals for external TV broadcasting. She recognises that the assistance which is proposed to make available to the BBC for this purpose from public funds is considerably smaller than originally contemplated and does not involve any new money. Nonetheless she continues to see problems about making any public funds available to the BBC for this purpose without also offering exactly the same facilities to ITN, for instance by allowing them to tender for the project. It must of course be far from certain whether ITN would accept the prescription arrangements which apply to the BBC external services. Nonetheless, the Prime Minister would like further consideration to be given to this point so that Government is seen to be absolutely even handed between the BBC and ITN.

I am copying this letter to Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Philip Mawer (Home Office), Tim Walker (Department of Trade and Industry) and Peter Smith (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

Charles Powell

R.N. Culshaw, Esq., MVO.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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