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QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

4. October 1988

Dear David,

NBRM
RACG
7/12

BROADCASTING WHITE PAPER

Thank you for your letter of ^{11/10} 23 September.

I take your point about the trade-off between MVDS at 12 GHz and the options open to us for securing additional DBS frequencies. We will need to return to this point when we review the options after the orbit conference in Geneva. In the meantime I am glad to hear that you have no difficulty with the way the draft White Paper deals with this point.

I note what you say about the possible ambitions of the Spanish Government to secure additional DBS frequencies in the same orbital position as the UK. Although it would clearly be a pity if this happened (particularly as they are so far less advanced than us in using their initial five channel allocation) I agree that it would be a mistake to try to take pre-emptive action.

You mention the possibility of trying to secure additional DBS frequencies at the orbital position occupied by Astra (19oE). I can see that this option may well have some technical attractions. But we have to bear in mind that the orbital position at which we tried to seek additional frequencies would have implications for the services already operating from that position. If we are faced with a choice between 31oW (which is of course the option we have had in mind so far) and 19oE I would have a strong preference, all things being equal, for the former. This would be the natural option to choose as it would complement the services operating in our initial five channel allocation. To go for 19oE would, in contrast, be perceived, whether we intended it or not, as support for Astra and a vote of no confidence in BSB. Among other things this might prejudice BSB's chances of raising the 400m of capital which they will need after launch next autumn.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, Members of MISC 128 and to Sir Robin Butler.

Young,
David,

The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham

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