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From the Private Secretary

10 September 1990

KW  
a/satellite  
b/c Michael  
Fallon  
(PUS DES)

SATELLITE TELEVISION

Earlier today the Prime Minister opened the new headquarters of Millicom UK Limited in Darlington. In the course of his remarks, the Chairman of Millicom, Mr Shelby Bryan, complimented the Government on the way it had established the technical and regulatory framework for personal communications. He felt this had contributed a great deal to the fact that personal communications have developed so successfully in the UK.

He did, however, make one appeal: that the providers of satellite television (he was talking about the people who provide the dishes and connect them with dwellings rather than programme providers) should be given greater freedom to operate in competition with cable licensees. The problem, as I understand it, is that if a cable franchise has been awarded for a particular area, satellite operators such as Millicom using the Satellite Master Antenna Television (SMATV) cannot provide a dish for a block of flats unless the cable licensee gives its consent.

BF // The Prime Minister would like an explanation of how the present rules operate and an indication of what thought is being given to modifying them. One by-product of a change in the regulations would be to eliminate the proliferation of unsightly satellite dishes on blocks of flats.

I am copying this letter to Martin Stanley (Department of Trade and Industry) to whom I am grateful for the briefing material provided on the Company.

ANDREW TURNBULL

Colin Walters Esq  
Home Office

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