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Dear Mr Webb

Thank you for your recent letter about Red Hot Television. I have been asked to reply.

There are clearly different views on this subject. However Red Hot Television is still subject to legal action and I can do no more than enclose a copy of the statement Peter Brooke made to the House of Commons on 19 March.

Yours sincerely


MARVA ST PAUL

RECEIVED 16 APR 1993

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Mr. Key: The English tourist board has no plans to extend the scope of its accommodation classification and grading schemes at the moment. Whether or not it does so in the future will depend on its assessment of whether such extension is necessary to meet the needs of both the industry and its customers.

Radio Licences

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many local radio licences it is estimated will be issued by the Radio Authority by 2000.

Mr. Brooke: The number of local radio licences to be issued is a matter for the Radio Authority to decide, taking account of its responsibilities under the Broadcasting Act 1990.

Red Hot Television

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what steps he plans to take in connection with the television service Red Hot Television formerly known as Red Hot Dutch.

Mr. Brooke: The Government have today notified the broadcaster of the television service "Red Hot Television" and the European Commission that they propose to take action against this service under article 2.2 of the EC Broadcasting Directive (89/552/EEC). Article 2.2 provides for a member state to take action against a service coming from another member state where that service manifestly, seriously and gravely infringes article 2.2 of the Broadcasting Directive, which deals with the protection of minors, because of the content of its programme material.

Article 2.2 lays down a 15-day period for consultations with the transmitting State and the Commission. If it is not possible to reach an amicable settlement during this period, the Government will take steps to restrict re-transmission of the service within the United Kingdom. To this end, I propose to make an order under section 177 of the Broadcasting Act 1990 proscribing "Red Hot Television". The Independent Television Commission notified me on 15 October 1992 and 1 February 1993 that it considers this service to be an unacceptable foreign satellite service within the meaning of section 177 of the Broadcasting Act 1990. Subject to the outcome of the consultations required by the directive, I am satisfied that the making of such an order would be in the public interest and compatible with the international obligations of the United Kingdom. The making of an order under section 177 would have the effect of activating, once the order was in force, the criminal offences of supporting a proscribed foreign satellite service specified in section 178 of the Broadcasting Act 1990.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Iraq (Sanctions)

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the companies and individuals currently being investigated by his Department in connection with breaches of sanctions against Iraq.

Mr. Heseltine: It is not the Government's practice to discuss any investigations, on-going or otherwise, in which DTI is involved.

Oil Exploration

Mr. Wigley: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make it his policy to hold a public inquiry into any proposals from oil exploration companies for development and exploitation of oil resources under the sea in Caernarfon Bay or Cardigan Bay.

Mr. Eggar: Any company seeking to develop offshore reserves must apply to my Department for development consent under the Petroleum and Submarine Pipe-lines Act 1975, and obtain other approvals and clearances as necessary from the relevant authorities, e.g. planning approval for onshore terminals. It would not be appropriate for me to pre-judge the application of these procedures. Obviously I am well seized of the environmental sensitivities surrounding these areas and in any licence award I will be imposing strict conditions on the licensees. Any development plan for such areas must also be accompanied by a satisfactory environmental impact assessment.

Crescent International Petroleum

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what representations his Department has received concerning the role of Crescent International Petroleum in trading with Iraq.

Mr. Heseltine: I am aware of allegations that have been made against Crescent International Petroleum concerning trading with Iraq. If any evidence is found to substantiate allegations that the company has acted unlawfully the proper course of action would be to pass it on to the appropriate authorities. The issues raised fall within the remit of Lord Justice Scott's inquiry and he is free to consider them if he thinks it appropriate to do so.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran

Mrs. Bridget Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the threat to regional stability posed by the current economic situation in Iran.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We keep all developments which could affect regional stability under close review, including Iran's economic difficulties.

Mrs. Bridget Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding the current state of diplomatic and economic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We recognise Iran's regional importance and seek to develop our bilateral relationship with Iran. But as was made clear at the European Council at Edinburgh in December last year, the extent to which closer relations with and confidence in Iran can be developed will be determined by improvements in Iran's behaviour in a number of areas, in particular: the fatwa against Salman Rushdie; terrorism; and human rights.

We welcome the recent increase in trade between Britain and Iran. British exports to Iran in 1992 were £568.1 million; Iran's exports to Britain were £164.5 million.