

OPENING SUBMISSION: MODULE 3

The main subject-matter of Module 3 of your Inquiry is the *'contacts and the relationships between national newspapers and politicians, and the conduct of each'*. The principal focus of your Terms of Reference is, and always has been, the culture, practices and ethics of the press. Thus, the laser of scrutiny is primarily directed at the conduct and mores of the press - in the context of Module 3 national newspapers - rather than the conduct and mores of politicians. Having said that, it would be idle to assume that the conduct of politicians is not being brought within scope, and as I have already pointed out the Terms of Reference are explicitly concerned with the 'conduct of each', namely the conduct of both sides of this equation.

Even so, this remains an Inquiry into press standards, and the conduct of politicians, both collectively and individually, should not occupy centre stage.

To borrow from Mr Rupert Murdoch's own terminology, the Inquiry has already had a 'taster' of evidence relevant to this module. Some of the Module 1 and 2 witnesses were asked module 3 questions towards the end of their evidence (viz. Lord Patten, Mr Dacre, Lord Prescott, Mr Simon Hughes M.P. – I

mention but four), and it would not have escaped anyone's notice that the evidence of Murdoch father and son covered much Module 3 terrain. However, your modules have never been hermetically sealed caskets, and we have taken a pragmatic approach to the timetabling of evidence as well as to these opening submissions.

For the avoidance of any doubt, though, it should be made clear to everyone that it was your decision to sequence the proprietors' evidence before the politicians. This was obviously right in principle, because the politicians needed to know what the proprietors were saying more than the other way round.

I hope that it may be thought to be of some value if I were to outline the issues which in my view occupy the heartland of Module 3. There are also some hinterland issues which I will touch on and which the evidence you will receive will address.

In some important respects, there are themes common to Modules 2 and 3. During the course of opening the previous module, I explained that a healthy relationship between the press and the police was essential to the sound workings of a mature democracy, and the same observation may surely be

made with even greater force to this module. The role of the press is to inform, to communicate, to facilitate public debate, to comment, and, perhaps most importantly, to hold power to account in the public interest. Although the printed word of Fleet Street, whether literally printed on newspaper or electronically delivered, is less important now than it was in the past for the obvious reasons many witnesses have explained, the press still provides an essential function as a disseminator of news and comment. Politicians also need an outlet to get their message across, and the press needs to understand and reflect the range of their readers' views. The fact that particular titles may not provide a politically balanced or neutral viewpoint on events is irrelevant to this issue. Newspapers are entitled to be partisan in a democracy, to campaign in favour of causes, policies and political parties; and were the State to legislate otherwise that would be undemocratic, as well as, under our current settlement, an abrogation of human rights. The only boundaries on free comment are those imposed by the criminal law, the law of defamation, and broadly analogous constraints, themselves imposed in the interests of democracy and the public at large.

Informal contact between journalists and politicians 'off the record' can also be a function of the healthy relationship I am describing. Here, as some witnesses

will explain, there may be differences between government ministers and party politicians, although the former will be wearing two hats. Save in limited circumstances, politicians unlike the police are not generally required to act in a capacity which demands independence and impartiality, and the sort of considerations you were investigating in Module 2 do not usually apply. These things having been said, the relationship becomes less healthy if – for whatever reasons, and whether as a result of the behaviour of journalists or of politicians – the public is misled, or cannot assess for themselves the truth or accuracy of what is reported. Or, put another way, if journalists seek to *make* the news rather than to report it, or politicians pay more attention to the reporting of a policy than its benefit to the country. In the words of one Module 3 witness whose statement I have studied but who is remaining anonymous for the time being:-

Of course there are risks in this (although the risks of politicians being detached from the media – and therefore the public – are greater for all involved). The key risks are that the relationships become incestuous, manipulative, and self-serving; that politicians allow themselves to be influenced by agendas generated by media organisations in order to secure favourable coverage for themselves, their party, and their government.

These are some of the hinterland issues which I will touch on later.

The healthy relationship I am describing is not free from the risks of contagion. These risks are in danger of maturing when the fair balance of power between the press and politicians is distorted. For example, if politicians had the ability to control the political content of newspapers, this would be the consequence of the fair balance of power having shifted decisively to one side of the equation. Such a press would be subservient, unable to hold political power to account, and quite unrecognisable in fact from the press which has thrived in this country since the Second World War.

The fearlessness and vibrancy of our press is something of which we should be enormously proud, and which we cannot take for granted. Why the British press possesses these attributes is capable of being explained in a number of ways, but at root the reasons are historical and cultural. I could elaborate here, but I will not.

Module 3 of this Inquiry is not about the balance of power having shifted in favour of the Executive; it is primarily concerned with the consequences of that balance arguably having shifted in favour of the press, in particular the

potential harm to the democratic process, and what some have called the democratic deficit.

The concentration of political influence in the hands of a few press barons has, it is true, always been a feature of political life in this country since the mid-nineteenth century. We have just heard from the current Viscount Rothermere (the 4th), but with respect to him the influence exerted by his great-grandfather the 1st Viscount Rothermere in the second and third decades of the last century was probably much greater (I will not dwell on aspects of his performance during the 1930s). Lord Beaverbrook became the first Minister for Information towards the end of the First World War and Minister of Aircraft Production and later Minister of Supply in the Second. Whether this was a manifestation of some sort of 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine' phenomenon is now only of historical interest.

If powerful newspaper moguls have always been a feature of the British political landscape, what then is the problem? Or, put another way, is the problem an inevitable by-product of the fact that the State does not own national newspapers, which we would all agree would be undesirable, leaving political power free to follow the concentration of economic power?

At the heart of the problem is, putting the matter at its lowest, a perception that the press is capable of influencing voter choice or public opinion on key issues or personalities, and that the trade-off for political support is the deliverance by government of media policies which favour by act or omission the commercial interests of newspapers in general or of particular newspaper groups; or, put more broadly, the espousal by government of other policies which correspond with the world or political views of influential newspaper proprietors or editors, whether or not they are presented as personal views or the views of their readers.

I use the noun 'perception' because I suspect that it could never be proved that press support for a political party has in fact influenced the outcome of an election. Taking the example of the 1992 election, it is arguable that the *Sun's* support for the Conservatives, or more accurately its hostility to the Labour party, was causative of the result – but it is also arguable that such support was reflective of public opinion which would have delivered the same result in any event. We will never know. However, Mr Murdoch's own reaction to the '*It's the Sun Wot Won It*' headline ('the biggest bollocking of my life': Mr Kelvin MacKenzie) speaks volumes, and politicians must still believe that newspapers

are capable of making a difference. If they did not, why else would they go to such lengths to cultivate support, and afford such access to men such as Mr Murdoch? Either his insights are such that anyone would want to hear them for no other reason, or it is envisaged that he can deliver something which politicians want.

Mr Murdoch denied the charge that there were any express deals. His account when he was giving evidence in April, suggested that it was all a matter for the politicians, many of whom he criticised. He told us many times that politicians want his support, which is understandable, but that he asked for no favours in return and received none.

It is for you to decide on the evidence you have already heard and will hear whether any explicit request for favours was either made or offered, but the *modus operandi* of sophisticated people is likely to be far more subtle. It is implausible that Mr Murdoch would have asked Baroness Thatcher for express favours at that lunch at Chequers on 4th January 1981, and Mr Ingham's no doubt carefully crafted memorandum indicates that no such request was made. Nor would Baroness Thatcher have offered any regulatory favours either, and the memorandum shows that as well. However, it is arguable that

we are witnessing here the interplay between two extremely powerful individuals where messages are being transmitted by and to finely-tuned antennae and implied understandings reached. Mr Murdoch invited himself to that lunch; Baroness Thatcher did not know what was on the agenda; he pushed lightly on the door, and it sprung open. The initial talk was all about the new US administration and what Mr Murdoch described as the 'New Right'. Mr Murdoch stressed that the problem lay with the print unions, and by implication that their power needed to be reduced. He and Baroness Thatcher were altogether on the same page. Mr Murdoch used this opportunity to get his message across to the Prime Minister, in like manner as modern politicians so often hope that the press will avail them. By 'getting his message across', it is arguable that what he was doing was advertising his personal qualities to Baroness Thatcher. That is why face to face interaction mattered. Instinctively, he knew which buttons to press.

On 4th January 1981 Mr Murdoch could not predict whether he would be given a rough or an easy ride in the context of the Fair Trading Act 1973, recognising always that the locus of decision-making would reside with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. But he must have been able to surmise that the Labour opposition would oppose his acquisition of the titles without a

reference to the MMC, and there was at the very least the risk that the Secretary of State would take the political line of least resistance: in other words, in the parlance of the 1980s, a 'wet' rather than a 'dry' approach. As it happens, the documentary evidence shows that at their meeting on 26th January 1981 Mr Biffen told Mr Murdoch that he was minded to refer the bid to the MMC, and Mr Murdoch stated that he would not withdraw his bid if that happened, although everyone understood that this would cause delay, uncertainty, and problems with Thompson. Some might say that a direct threat to withdraw the bid might have back-fired. Later that afternoon, at Cabinet Sub-Committee, the merits of a referral to the MMC were discussed, and it was concluded first that the statutory conditions for non-referral were met, and secondly that there were no commercial or political advantages in favour of a referral. Whether there were any private conversations between Baroness Thatcher and Mr Biffen is both unknown and now unknowable; they would not have been recorded if they had taken place. There is no direct evidence that the Prime Minister gave her Secretary of State a nod and a wink, but for present purposes it may be sufficient to state that Mr Murdoch knew that if she were consulted, Baroness Thatcher fully understood and empathised with his position, and that there was common ground between them.

You may think that this vignette affords illuminating insights into the subtle and sophisticated way in which press moguls and politicians operate; you may on the other hand come to the conclusion, which I am sure will be News International's submission, that this whole issue demonstrates the truth of what Mr Murdoch has been saying all along, namely that he does not ask for favours and that politicians ask for none either.

There is a further reason why it is appropriate to think very carefully indeed about the events of January 1981, in particular the luncheon engagement. Until the Thatcher foundation released the relevant papers in March 2012, Mr Murdoch had apparently no recollection of it whatsoever; his evidence to you was that he still does not, 'to be honest', as he put it. One does at least have to ask whether this is selective amnesia. Mr Murdoch told us in evidence that he did not enjoy frequent encounters with Baroness Thatcher. The acquisition of The Times and its associated titles must have been one of the most important in his commercial life; this was a time of heightened emotion. Could an intimate lunch at Chequers really have been forgotten? Human recollection is notoriously patchy and unreliable, we all know that, and the fact that I for example would be 100% certain that I would be able to remember an event such as this occurring 30+ years ago is not going to assist you in coming to a

conclusion either way. If you accept Mr Murdoch's evidence on this topic, the point goes no further; but if you do not the consequences are capable of being wide-ranging. Not merely would the selective amnesia appear to be convenient, but inferences might be drawn as to Mr Murdoch's true motives and intentions in seeking out the Prime Minister's ear in January 1981. Furthermore, this issue is capable of bearing on Mr Murdoch's integrity.

Looking more broadly now at the history of the last thirty years and the inferences to be drawn from it, the proposition that there is an implied trade-off needs to be examined with care. Key to this may well be the observation that Mr Murdoch likes to back the winning party. This enhances the mystique that he has some sort of power or influence over the outcome: this perception, regardless of its foundation in fact, is an immensely valuable asset, and serves to reduce the risk that the winning party be inclined to harm his interests whilst in power. Political endorsement by any newspaper is a commodity of perceived value, and the greater the readership of that paper the greater the value may be. That value is compounded, as it were, if the readership comprises significant numbers of floating voters. Thus, the *Sun* has enjoyed an iconic status in this respect, and politicians will fly half way round the world to win its endorsement. The fact that Mr Murdoch arguably played 'hard to get'

in the run-up to the 1997 election, taking just one example, serves to reinforce the point. His opponents would say that by the time he did confer his support he had won the maximum concessions he was ever likely to in terms of policy. His supporters would say that cause and effect is unproven, and even to the extent that policy may have been modified to reflect the Murdoch world-view that is more likely to have been because politicians were appreciating for independent reasons that the viewpoint was sound and popular, rather than because politicians were acting responsively to Mr Murdoch's wishes.

This is not to say that Mr Murdoch expressly asked for any such concessions; there is little or no direct evidence that he did, and so one is left speculating about private conversations which were never recorded or noted. It would not be safe to base any findings on such speculations. On the other hand, patterns of behaviour may be revealing, and, so the argument runs, politicians would know where Mr Murdoch stands on the big questions of the day and would also know what would be in the interests of his companies: all these things would be made obvious over the years, whether or not his so-called lieutenants or gurus would be communicating his views to those in power.

The balance of power is, on this narrative, predominantly with the newspaper magnate, although it might wax and wane slightly over the course of an electoral cycle and be disrupted by major events. Of course, if the newspaper magnate is powerful enough, it might not matter overmuch if he backs the wrong horse: five year electoral cycles are short, and the party in power may already be looking ahead to the next election.

Thus far I have solely examined the position of Mr Murdoch. News International, with 35% of the national newspaper market share (as reported in The Times on 25th April 2012), has the greatest potential influence. But Associated Newspapers are scarcely without importance, at 22%, although their influence would appear to derive more from their being a litmus paper for the thinking of Middle England than their ability to impinge on floating voter opinion at election time. Furthermore, in contrast perhaps to News International, their influence is seen as operating more through the personality of their editor than any economic power wielded by their proprietor. I am not excluding from account any influence flowing from other newspapers, nor am I suggesting that influence is directly proportional to market share, but there is likely to be a correlation.

What, if anything, is the vice of all of this? I referred in opening the first of your modules back in November to the alleged subterranean influences operated by the Press on the democratic process, but without full democratic accountability. The issue of implicit trade-offs and tacit *quid pro quos* has nothing to do with the sort of overt campaigning we might see in *The Times* in relation to cycling safety or the NoTW in relation to 'Sarah's Law'. Instead, we are in the realm of possible back-scratching and unspoken reciprocations, with each side of the equation knowing full well the aspirations if not the expectations of the other.

In terms of possible press influence over media policy, the Inquiry will no doubt be examining issues such as the enactment of s.12 of the Human Rights Act, the passage of the Communications Act 2003, the fate of the amendments to s.55 of the Data Protection Act, and, looking more broadly, the failure of successive governments to tackle the issue of press regulation as well as the approach of successive governments to questions of media ownership.

It has also been suggested that the press has been using their contacts, influence and covert lobbying to impact upon the course of wider government

policy. Here, interesting areas would appear to include matters such as criminal justice reform, immigration policy, and European policy.

Related, but subsidiary, questions arise in relation to the press, or powerful sections of the press, intervening in Ministerial or shadow Ministerial appointments, especially to law and order positions.

There is an important theme which I would wish to emphasise, because this is arguably a recurrent theme and one which interlocks with paragraph 1d of your Terms of Reference: namely, the extent to which there has been a failure to act on previous warnings about media misconduct. Over the years, we have seen Royal Commissions, the response to Calcutt 1 and 2, the reaction to the death of Princess Diana, the response to Operation Motorman etc., although in each case where I refer to 'response' or 'reaction' I am also to be interpreted as referring to the lack of it. Questions clearly do arise as to the underlying reasons for this: these might include a genuine disinclination to clip at the wings of the press, and by so doing harm or at least attenuate its power to hold the right people to account, as much as a more concerning lack of political will to interfere with the powers and privileges of those who are well able to do both short- and long-term damage.

In all the various respects I have outlined, it may be difficult to convert rumour, hearsay and surmise into hard fact. The Inquiry has already seen, for example, that the rumours put about by at least one political commentator that Mr Murdoch had some role in Mr Gordon Brown's decision not to call a snap election in October 2007 are unlikely to be true because the Prime Minister's decision was made before the former arrived at Chequers that weekend. Other aspects of the matter may be difficult to prove for this separate reason: that government may well have wanted to pursue policy X or not to pursue policy Y for reasons dissociated with the wishes and objectives of media moguls. In relation to the last Labour government's policy on the Euro, we know that the Prime Minister was more comfortable with entry than was his Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that the latter set conditions which were unlikely ever to be fulfilled, he would say in the public interest. Mr Murdoch's wishes may well have been wholly coincidental.

That said, these are all issues which the Inquiry will need to address within the constraints of its Terms of Reference and the timescales imposed on it by the Prime Minister. At the very least, you may conclude, as many have now accepted, that not merely did governments get too close to News

International, but that human nature being as it is, a clear perception arises that electoral support would receive its reward. Furthermore, the point has already been made that the reward may have been, either in perception or as a matter of reality, the disinclination of governments to intervene in areas which they would otherwise have wished.

Particular attention has been directed in recent days to the Coalition Government's treatment of News Corporation's bid to acquire the remaining publicly-owned shares in BSkyB; and, in particular, the interchanges and exchanges between the Conservative party in opposition and News Corporation in the period leading up to the last election, and the interplay between the bidder and personalities in government once the bid was launched in June 2010. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the 163 pages of emails comprising exhibit KRM18 have attracted close scrutiny both within this room and outside.

The Terms of Reference of this Inquiry are not such as to require you to determine the immediate political career of the Culture Secretary in the context of alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code or otherwise, and you have

made it crystal-clear that you have no intention of doing so or in being drawn into that political debate.

However, this Inquiry is examining the proposition that the press, or here a section of the press, has exercised excessive influence over government, and correlatively that government or individuals within it have permitted themselves to acquire an excessive degree of propinquity to News International. I am putting this in a deliberately roundabout way; I could I suppose be much blunter.

The issue is whether a Minister of the Crown exercising a quasi-judicial role may have failed to fulfil it because he has demonstrated through his actions that he was too close to News International or News Corporation (these two companies are interchangeable in this respect). Having heard all the evidence, you may conclude that there is nothing to support this proposition, and that the quasi-judicial function was exercised entirely properly. If, on the other hand, you were to conclude otherwise, there is a range of possible findings. The least serious finding is that an appearance of bias arises in relation to the special adviser's dealings with News Corporation's European Head of Public Affairs. The most serious is that the nature of the relationship was such that

the Secretary of State was prepared expressly to authorise his special adviser to conduct what in effect were covert communications with the lobbyist or, put another way, provide a running commentary on the bid – giving assurances along the way that the bid would ultimately be successful. And in between these two poles there is a range of possible findings which would amount to attributions of intermediate severity.

The real point here, and it is the point which needs to be examined if only to be rejected in due course if that is where the evidence leads you, is that the BSkyB bid is really an example in microcosm of an over-cosy relationship giving rise to the appearance if not the fact of past favours being traded in, or the perception that future support may be provided.

In setting out the issues in this way, I should be interpreted as expressing no view one way or another as to where the evidence might lead. However, it is right that I should echo the note of caution you sounded on 26th April. If the emails in KRM18 were direct communications between the Culture Secretary and Mr James Murdoch, the case would be relatively clear-cut. But they are not: what we see, speaking metaphorically, is light refracted through two

intermediate prisms. Inevitably, perhaps, we are seeing not white light but many of the colours of the rainbow.

In addressing the issue of an over-cosy relationship, one must of course recognise that politicians are entitled to be friendly with whomsoever they might choose. The issue here is where the line should be drawn.

These are the principal issues arising from the language of paragraph 1a of your Terms of Reference. There are two subsidiary issues. The first concerns treatment of politicians by or in the press as a means of influencing policy or seeking to determine their political careers. Politicians, it goes without saying, choose to place themselves under public scrutiny, and we have examined in the context of your first module many of the issues raised by the desire of public figures to protect their privacy and reputations while maintaining a public profile. I doubt we need to revisit these issues here. The issue is not 'politician as victim' but the press seeking to interfere with the democratic process by unfair and intrusive means. The second subsidiary issue concerns the whole topic of 'spin', which might be visualised as one facet or function of the relationship between the press and politicians. The former would say that spin leads to public mis-information, and itself justifies the use of more robust

journalistic methods to strike at the truth; the latter would say that presentation is a legitimate response to the way in which the press are constantly manipulating the truth to attain their 'story'. Expressed in these terms, 'spin' is no more or no less than a manifestation of the shifting balance of power between the governing classes and the fourth estate. The reason why it is a subsidiary issue is because it does not inhabit the same sort of terrain as the issue which occupies centre stage in this module and which I have already outlined. Additionally, it is difficult to see what recommendations you might make to address it.

This is a convenient moment to address the issue of recommendations. Under paragraph 2 of Part 1 of your Terms of Reference, you are required, (missing out irrelevant words):

To make recommendations:

a. for a new more effective policy and regulatory regime which supports the integrity and freedom of the press, the plurality of the media, etc;

b. for how future concerns about ... media policy, regulation and cross-media ownership should be dealt with by all the relevant authorities, including Parliament, Government, etc;

c. the future conduct of relations between politicians and the press.

It may be convenient to take these in reverse order.

Any recommendations as to the future conduct of relations between politicians and the press are highly unlikely to be enshrined in any form of general legislative change. When the Prime Minister said last July that the relationship between politicians and the press needed to be re-set, he is unlikely to have been thinking about a new law to do so. At the very least, he may have been referring to the fact that this Inquiry and the ongoing political process would themselves lead to a culture shift amongst politicians so that they would no longer wish to tolerate any risk of being seen as too close to the press. In the context of paragraph 2c of your Terms of Reference, the principal focus you may think is the conduct of politicians rather than the behaviour of the press. Put bluntly, if Mr Murdoch pushes on a door and it springs open, that without more involves no issue which might trouble this Inquiry: bully for him, one might say. As a businessman he is surely entitled to seek to lobby in support of his views as much as anyone else. The fact that Mr Murdoch occupies such power that the door springs open with the exertion of minuscule force *might* involve issues under other sub-paragraphs of paragraph 2 of your

Terms of Reference. So, the focus in this specific context is on appropriate and ethical conduct by politicians, and in this regard you may be considering in due course possible amendments to the Ministerial Code, including in the area of greater transparency.

Recommendations as to how concerns about regulation and cross-media ownership should be dealt with by the relevant authorities fall into the next sub-category, paragraph 2b. Fortunately, the Terms of Reference are not so ambitious that you are required to re-write competition law or the law regarding media plurality. As we saw in relation to the evidence of Mr James Murdoch, the former is largely EU-based and the latter is domestic. But the substantive law is beyond the scope of this Inquiry. What you are concerned with is how *concerns* should be addressed.

If OfCom or any other regulatory body with jurisdiction over these matters wishes to explore the current state of affairs in relation to BSkyB or whatever, that would be entirely for them and outwith the scope of your Inquiry. What would be within scope, however, is whether understandable public concern is being adequately addressed by a system which permits decisions of this nature to be taken by Ministers rather than by regulators free from the biases forged

in the political arena, or less encumbered by them. The phrase 'a Minister carrying out a quasi-judicial function' sounds almost oxymoronic if the nature of that function is correctly understood in this context: that a politician is expected to apply a fair, unbiased, and disinterested mind to a topic which inevitably arouses strongly-felt views either way. Some might say that these problems are capable of being avoided only if decisions of this sort are removed from the bailiwick of Ministers altogether.

I have not overlooked that paragraph 2b of your Terms of Reference also requires you to address how future concerns as to media policy should be addressed by the relevant authorities. I see no difficulty here regarding the role of the independent regulators, and their responsibility for media policy; but much of that policy is determined by government. In order to address the concern that the media policy of government has been generated by an overly close relationship with News International, it might be argued that government should have either no or a lesser role in this area. Having said this, it is difficult to see how constitutionally this could be so. The answer can lie only in greater transparency and accountability.

Under paragraph 2a of your Terms of Reference you are required, I paraphrase, to make recommendations for a better policy and regulatory regime which supports amongst other things the plurality of the media. In this context the policy and regulatory regime being referred to is not a regime which replaces OfCom or the OFT but a regime which either improves or wholly replaces the existing system of so-called press regulation, namely the Press Complaints Commission. Thus, the new or successor body as one of its aims should uphold the plurality of the media as much as the highest professional and ethical standards also referred to in paragraph 2a. It ought not to be overly difficult to achieve this policy objective, since the public will find it easy to accept that you would not want to engineer a state of affairs whereby any enhanced or new regulatory system either impeded the independence of the press or jeopardised the plurality of the media. Only a regulatory system which drove existing publishers out of business would create that jeopardy, and one may be confident that would not be your intention.

In opening the previous module I did indicate in general terms the identities of the witnesses the Inquiry intended to call. Well, the names of some have already entered the public domain, but beyond that I am not providing any further intelligence; it would not be fair to do so. What I will say is that the

Inquiry has done its best to sequence the evidence in a logical and intelligible fashion, but ultimately it has had to defer on occasion to the availability and convenience of busy individuals.

I conclude these short opening remarks by noting the apparent similarity of thinking underlying paragraph 90 of the witness statement of Mr Rupert Murdoch and page 96 of Mr Blair's memoir:

- *'As for the 'value' to me of these meetings [this is Mr Murdoch speaking], my view is that if an editor or publisher is invited or otherwise has an opportunity to meet with a head of government or political leader, you go...'*
- *Again, now, it seems obvious: the country's most powerful newspaper proprietor, whose publications have hitherto been rancorous in their opposition to the Labour Party, invites us into the lion's den. You go, don't you?*