

<p>1 Wednesday, 30 May 2012</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, Mr Jay.</p> <p>4 MR JAY: Sir, the first witness today is the Right</p> <p>5 Honourable Dr Vince Cable, please.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.</p> <p>7 DR JOHN VINCENT CABLE (sworn)</p> <p>8 Questions by MR JAY</p> <p>9 MR JAY: Your full name, please, Dr Cable?</p> <p>10 <b>A. John Vincent Cable.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Thank you. You kindly provided us with a witness</p> <p>12 statement dated 30 April, signed and dated under the</p> <p>13 standard statement of truth. Is this your formal</p> <p>14 evidence to the Inquiry?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, it is.</b></p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Dr Cable, thank you very much for the</p> <p>17 statement and the obvious work that's gone into</p> <p>18 preparing it. I'm conscious that you, as indeed many</p> <p>19 others, have other duties and this has been an unwelcome</p> <p>20 distraction from those duties. I'm grateful to you.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Thank you, sir.</b></p> <p>22 MR JAY: Dr Cable, in terms of your career, you've enjoyed</p> <p>23 various careers in economics, then as a special adviser,</p> <p>24 then of course in politics. You're also a Fellow of</p> <p>25 Nuffield College, Oxford. You were, I think, a Glasgow</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 <b>There were well-known figures in the city, publicans and</b></p> <p>2 <b>property developers, quite controversial, who made their</b></p> <p>3 <b>views well known, and you had to navigate your way</b></p> <p>4 <b>through that in order to make impartial decisions.</b></p> <p>5 <b>I recall on one occasion feeling rather pressured</b></p> <p>6 <b>and going along to see the council leader, explaining</b></p> <p>7 <b>the difficulties, and he responded rather briskly,</b></p> <p>8 <b>"Well, if you can't ride two horses at once, you</b></p> <p>9 <b>shouldn't be in a circus", and I've always seen that as</b></p> <p>10 <b>being a good definition of quasi-judicial</b></p> <p>11 <b>decision-making, that on the one hand you have</b></p> <p>12 <b>a political world and you have your views, often</b></p> <p>13 <b>publicly expressed views, and the pressures that come</b></p> <p>14 <b>from that, but on the other hand you set this aside when</b></p> <p>15 <b>you have to make decisions and you judge on facts and</b></p> <p>16 <b>evidence.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Thank you. Before 21 December 2010, as Business</p> <p>18 Secretary, you had reserve powers, quasi-judicial</p> <p>19 functions, if you will, under the Enterprise Act 2002 as</p> <p>20 amended, and you explain those more specifically at</p> <p>21 paragraph 10 of your statement and following, Dr Cable.</p> <p>22 That's at 01353.</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes. I think the starting point is that most mergers</b></p> <p>24 <b>and takeovers do not involve a political process. They</b></p> <p>25 <b>are dealt with by the competition authorities either at</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 city councillor, we'll touch on that, and currently</p> <p>2 you're the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation</p> <p>3 and Skills, and have been since 12 May 2010 in the</p> <p>4 Coalition government.</p> <p>5 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>6 Q. In terms of your experience as a Glasgow city</p> <p>7 councillor, did you ever undertake any quasi-judicial</p> <p>8 functions?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, I did. I was city councillor from, I think, 1971</b></p> <p>10 <b>to 74. I had a senior position in the -- it was then</b></p> <p>11 <b>the Labour group of the council, but I did have planning</b></p> <p>12 <b>responsibilities and I was conscious at that stage about</b></p> <p>13 <b>what quasi-judicial responsibilities meant. I can</b></p> <p>14 <b>enlarge a little on some of the lessons from that if you</b></p> <p>15 <b>like, but that was the context in which I dealt with</b></p> <p>16 <b>them.</b></p> <p>17 Q. What were the core lessons that you learnt from your</p> <p>18 experience, in the context of quasi-judicial function,</p> <p>19 please?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes. I think, like other councillors involved in</b></p> <p>21 <b>planning, and there are thousands up and down the</b></p> <p>22 <b>country, I think we're conscious of the need there was</b></p> <p>23 <b>at that time of the need to be independent, and to put</b></p> <p>24 <b>aside one's views in order to make a fair decision based</b></p> <p>25 <b>on evidence, and that context was quite a difficult one.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 <b>a national level or at a European level.</b></p> <p>2 <b>There is one exception, which is in the case of</b></p> <p>3 <b>public interest cases, and these are defined under</b></p> <p>4 <b>I think the 2002 competition legislation and further</b></p> <p>5 <b>amended in the 2003 Communications Act legislation, and</b></p> <p>6 <b>these relate to national security, to financial</b></p> <p>7 <b>stability, which was the case of HBOS Lloyds, and in</b></p> <p>8 <b>relation to media, and there are several tests in</b></p> <p>9 <b>relation to media, including, I think, broadcasting</b></p> <p>10 <b>standards, but the one that was relevant in this case</b></p> <p>11 <b>was plurality and my task in that context was to judge</b></p> <p>12 <b>whether there was an issue in relation to plurality</b></p> <p>13 <b>arising from the proposed takeover.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Indeed, the specific issue is, if you look at the top of</p> <p>15 page 01354, the bullet point at the top of that page,</p> <p>16 I think that's the one we're alighting on:</p> <p>17 "The need in relation to every different audience in</p> <p>18 the UK, or in a particular area or locality of the UK,</p> <p>19 for a sufficient plurality of persons with control of</p> <p>20 media enterprises serving that audience."</p> <p>21 Is that the right one?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes, that is correct.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I think that one is section 58(2C)(a) of the</p> <p>24 Enterprise Act. I think a few days ago I said the</p> <p>25 relevant one was section 58(2B), but that was an error,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 I think this is the right one, at least at the stage you 2 were considering the matter.</p> <p>3 If you exercised the powers you did on 4 November 4 2010, to which point we'll come in a moment, expert 5 advice is obtained from the OFT and Ofcom; is that 6 correct?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes. If I judge that there is a threshold to be 8 crossed, quite a low threshold, that there is 9 potentially a plurality issue, I have the option of 10 referring it to the regulator Ofcom. That was the 11 decision that I had to make. That was the first stage 12 of the process and that was the first decision I had to 13 make.</b></p> <p>14 Q. At the stage you were considering it, in legal parlance 15 there's a double discretion, a double "may", which 16 creates a low threshold to be attained, and you explain 17 that in paragraph 14 of your statement, in particular 18 two lines from the top of that page, 01355.</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Have I correctly summarised it?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, that's correct. There has to be a reasonable basis 22 to suspect that a major situation may exist to which 23 a specified public interest consideration may be 24 relevant.</b></p> <p>25 <b>There was some controversy in this case actually as</b> Page 5</p>	<p>1 You also make the point -- and this may be relevant 2 to tomorrow's evidence -- in paragraph 16:</p> <p>3 "If the Secretary of State decides there are grounds 4 to refer a merger to the Competition Commission, it 5 becomes possible to accept statutory undertakings in 6 lieu of making such a reference."</p> <p>7 Was that the advice you received at the time, 8 although of course it wasn't a decision which you ever 9 came to make?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, it was, but as you say, I wasn't involved in that 11 stage of the process.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Then the final stage, but this final stage was never 13 attained in the events which happened, that if there is 14 a reference to the Competition Commission, they then 15 make a report, decide the public interest question, or 16 at least advise on it, but the final decision would be 17 for the Secretary of State on the basis of that advice?</p> <p>18 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Is that your understanding?</p> <p>20 In terms of quasi-judicial, you expand on that, 21 Dr Cable, at paragraph 19 of your statement.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes. I think the key phrase is that an intervention 23 decision must be taken with an independent mind, and 24 I have given illustrations earlier in my political 25 career of having encountered quasi-judicial</b> Page 7</p>
<p>1 <b>to whether a low threshold or a high threshold applied. 2 I understood that News Corp, through their lawyers Hogan 3 Lovells, took the view that a high threshold had to be 4 met, but the view I was advised to take, and I think 5 subsequently corroborated by independent counsel, was 6 that a low threshold was what was necessary.</b></p> <p>7 Q. And that's correct, the low threshold arises for 8 a number of reasons, but in particular the double "may" 9 test.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Once the intervention notice is served, as it was on 12 4 November 2010, and Ofcom reports, you deal with this 13 in paragraphs 15 and 16, that if Ofcom considers that 14 a public interest consideration arises, then 15 a discretion falls to the Secretary of State as to 16 whether or not to refer the merger to the Competition 17 Commission. At that stage, the threshold is a little 18 higher, as you said, than at the first stage, which is 19 the intervention notice stage?</p> <p>20 <b>A. That is my understanding, but I didn't deal with that 21 stage --</b></p> <p>22 Q. You never got that far since the Ofcom report was 31 23 December?</p> <p>24 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Which was 10 days after a relevant event. Page 6</p>	<p>1 <b>decision-making before. I think with an independent 2 mind doesn't mean with a blank mind. Most people in 3 public life have views, opinions. Probably if they're 4 politicians, those opinions and views have been on the 5 record, and the requirement on me and people in this 6 position is to set those on one side for the sake of 7 making this decision, to consider representations, the 8 evidence, the facts, and decide on that and only on 9 that.</b></p> <p>10 Q. The concept of quasi-judicial probably also -- it does 11 also entail the avoidance of an appearance of bias.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Save for arguably the possibility of cleansing your mind 14 of all anterior political and policy views, which would 15 be impossible, how would the appearance of bias 16 otherwise be avoided?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Well, I think that situation arose in relation to any 18 meetings or conversations with the parties, either those 19 who favoured the takeover, News Corp, or those who were 20 opposed to it. I don't know whether you wish me to 21 explain this now or I can come to it later, the 22 decisions I made as to who I should meet and who 23 I should not meet, because any meeting would have to be 24 circumscribed in terms of the content of the 25 conversation, so that one shouldn't refer to it, refer</b> Page 8</p>

<p>1 <b>to the merger explicitly, because if that happened, that</b>  2 <b>would be perceived as bias.</b>  3 Q. So there are certain procedural constraints which you  4 felt operated to avoid precisely that vice, the  5 appearance of bias --  6 <b>A. Yes. I think one of the key points about this process</b>  7 <b>is that there are legal checks and balances built in at</b>  8 <b>every stage. All my actions in the department were</b>  9 <b>subject to advice from officials and departmental</b>  10 <b>lawyers, because they were conscious that if a decision</b>  11 <b>was made with bias or perceived bias, then legal action</b>  12 <b>could be taken, in this case through a Competition</b>  13 <b>Appeals Tribunal, the equivalent of judicial review.</b>  14 Q. Thank you. Before we look at the detail of what  15 happened between the relevant dates, there is some  16 guidance to which you drew our attention on the  17 operation of the public merger provisions in the  18 Enterprise Act relating to newspaper and other media  19 mergers. It's a guidance which came out of the previous  20 administration in May 2004. It's under your tab 3,  21 starts at our page 01375.  22 There are only two paragraphs of the guidance which  23 I think are relevant. They are not free from  24 complexity, but we will look at them nonetheless.  25 01411, section 8, Dr Cable.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 to serious public interest concerns in relation to any  2 of the three considerations. During Parliamentary  3 debate of these provisions, ministers suggested that  4 these might include circumstances where a large number  5 of news or educational channels would be coming under  6 single control ..."  7 And then a separate point. It's that last sentence  8 which was relevant here, wasn't it?  9 <b>A. Yes, because plurality was a new concept introduced by</b>  10 <b>the 2003 Communications Act, and this paragraph gives</b>  11 <b>some illustration about what plurality might mean as</b>  12 <b>opposed to conventional definitions of monopoly.</b>  13 Q. Thank you. Looking at the detail now of what happened,  14 this is paragraph 27 of your statement, Dr Cable, 01357,  15 the announcement of course came on 15 June 2010; did you  16 receive any warning of it, save the conversation you had  17 with Mr Murdoch on the day, to which we will come?  18 <b>A. No. That was my first intimation that the takeover was</b>  19 <b>to take place.</b>  20 Q. So it triggered the EU merger regulation provisions, and  21 therefore the parties were required to notify the  22 European Commission, which they did. You then -- this  23 is paragraph 28 -- in reaching a decision to intervene,  24 you took into account the submissions and information  25 received, advice of officials and counsel, and you did</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Section 8. Section 8 I have, yes.</b>  2 Q. Under 8.2:  3 "The Secretary of State's policy is that, save in  4 exceptional circumstances, she will consider  5 intervention only in cases where media ownership rules  6 have been removed by the Communications Act 2003."  7 Now, what was your understanding of that? Your  8 statement covers this, but in your own words?  9 <b>A. I think in common sense terms it's essentially there</b>  10 <b>were -- previously mergers could have been subject to</b>  11 <b>a public interest intervention under a variety of</b>  12 <b>criteria, but there were new circumstances that arose as</b>  13 <b>a result of the 2003 legislation, the new definition of</b>  14 <b>media intervention, which were not covered by the</b>  15 <b>previous legislation, and the criteria had to be met</b>  16 <b>that exceptional circumstances applied in those.</b>  17 Q. Thank you. And then there's a further gloss on  18 exceptional circumstances in paragraph 8.8 on the next  19 page, 01412:  20 "In exceptional circumstances, the Secretary of  21 State may consider it necessary to intervene in mergers  22 in areas where there continue to be media ownership  23 rules or where there have never been such rules. The  24 Secretary of State will only consider intervening in  25 such a merger where she believes that it may give rise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 this during the period prior to the formal notification  2 of the merger to the Commission by News Corp and BSkyB  3 on 3 November 2010.  4 Why did you do that before that notification?  5 <b>A. Well, the -- and I had been notified by James Murdoch of</b>  6 <b>his intention to proceed, and it seemed sensible to take</b>  7 <b>submissions, but at the same time we took the view that</b>  8 <b>there was no urgency about this process, that it was</b>  9 <b>important to complete the European investigation before</b>  10 <b>a decision was made on the intervention notice, because</b>  11 <b>it may well have been that the European competition</b>  12 <b>decision stopped the merger on competition grounds, in</b>  13 <b>which case an Ofcom reference would have been</b>  14 <b>superfluous, so that explains the timing.</b>  15 Q. Thank you. During this period, which was about four  16 months, five months, you were obtaining advice, you were  17 receiving representations from a range of quarters, and  18 as you explain in paragraph 29, the vast majority of  19 those urged you to use the powers available to you under  20 the Act to intervene on public interest grounds?  21 <b>A. Yes. There were a large number of submissions and</b>  22 <b>I think there were varying degrees of relevance. Some</b>  23 <b>of them directly addressed the issue of plurality.</b>  24 <b>Others were less focused. But there were a large number</b>  25 <b>of submissions.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

3 (Pages 9 to 12)

<p>1 Q. Can I ask you though specifically, Dr Cable, to deal 2 with paragraph 31 of your statement.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Mm.</b></p> <p>4 Q. You say you actively sought the views of Liberal 5 Democrat colleagues who had acted as spokespersons in 6 this area of policy. May I ask you: why did you do that 7 if this was a quasi-judicial decision for you?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Well, because I just wanted background understanding of 9 the legislation and how it had originated. I had no 10 background in media policy, I dealt with economic 11 affairs before taking on this job. I didn't understand 12 how this issue had originated in Parliament, what was 13 the context, and I felt it was helpful to have 14 background briefing, particularly Don Foster, who had 15 been our media spokesman for some years and was a useful 16 source.</b></p> <p>17 <b>I wasn't seeking their opinion on whether the merger 18 was good or bad or whether I should intervene, but I did 19 think it was useful to have a background understanding 20 of the kind of questions you have just been asking me.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Can you explain the status of the --</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's just to understand not merely 23 the history but also the rationale behind the policy?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, exactly.</b></p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: To get your brain into the right</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 speak to either Simon Hughes MP or Chris Huhne MP about 2 these issues?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No, I didn't.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Presumably for the same reasons?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Exactly.</b></p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could you explain, Dr Cable, what you 7 felt your Liberal Democrat colleagues could give you, 8 which you didn't feel your officials could give you?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Well, what I felt they could give me was an 10 understanding of the context in which I think it was 11 Lord Puttnam's amendment to the legislation was 12 introduced. I think it was never envisaged that this 13 amendment would come before Parliament by the government 14 of the day. It was brought in as an amendment. I know 15 my party had been active in the debates around it, and 16 I just wanted to understand the context of what they 17 were trying to achieve.</b></p> <p>18 MR JAY: May I pick that up in this way: were you told 19 anything by the business advisory group which you had 20 not been told by your officials, which was relevant to 21 the context?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Not about the B Sky bid, no. I mean what we did discuss 23 was the broader question of public interest 24 intervention, in which I had an interest. I had a broad 25 view that the public interest test should actually be</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 place?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, exactly, yes.</b></p> <p>3 MR JAY: Yes, because media issues weren't sort of your 4 shadow brief --</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, I was a -- we call it a shadow chancellor. I dealt 6 with Treasury, finance, tax, banking issues.</b></p> <p>7 Q. The business advisory group presumably is an ad hoc 8 group within the -- well, in your own words could you 9 explain what it is?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I asked Lord Oakeshott just to assemble a group of 11 people, a mixture of economists and people who were 12 broadly sympathetic to my party with business 13 backgrounds to give me general advice on economic and 14 business-related policy. It had actually only just got 15 under way. We actually had one formal meeting in that 16 year before the group was dissolved. That was the 17 purpose of it. It was an informal ad hoc arrangement.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Although media issues generally were discussed and 19 specifically their context within the Enterprise Act as 20 amended, did you discuss the B Sky B bid specifically at 21 this business advisory group?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No, it wasn't raised, and everybody present realised 23 that it wasn't appropriate to discuss it so it wasn't 24 discussed at all.</b></p> <p>25 Q. I've been asked to put this to you, Dr Cable: did you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 <b>widened, and there were what you might call economic and 2 strategic activities which should perhaps be governed by 3 a public interest test and I was interested in that 4 aspect of policy and I didn't -- certainly wasn't 5 talking to that group at the meeting we had about the 6 B Sky B bid.</b></p> <p>7 Q. So was it the view generally within the party that 8 section 58 of the Enterprise Act should be broadened to 9 include wider and different categories of intervention?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I don't think there was a party view. It was a personal 11 view that I formed, mainly from economic analysis. 12 I had seen the evidence that takeovers in general tended 13 to have a deleterious effect on the economy and indeed 14 reduce shareholder value in general, so I was sceptical 15 of takeover activity in general, and I also judged, and 16 increasingly I think having seen what happened over the 17 last few years, that there were cases where valuable 18 national technologies, for example, could be put at risk 19 by takeovers and I was interested in exploring the idea 20 of widening the public interest test in that domain.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Although all this would be relevant to amending the law, 22 but not necessarily --</p> <p>23 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. -- applying the law as you found it?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, the issues of policy, which we're now discussing,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

4 (Pages 13 to 16)

<p>1 <b>I saw as quite separate from the quasi-judicial decision</b> 2 <b>I had to make.</b> 3 Q. Okay. In paragraph 32 you say you were approached by 4 numerous people during this period who wanted to discuss 5 the bid: 6 "But I always maintained the view that I could not 7 discuss it further." 8 Without necessarily naming anybody, could you put 9 them into categories of person for us, please? 10 <b>A. Well, certainly I know I was aware that James Murdoch</b> 11 <b>wished to meet me to discuss it. If you like, I'll</b> 12 <b>explain why I chose not to.</b> 13 Q. We'll come to that. 14 <b>A. We'll come to that. But there were others. Lobby</b> 15 <b>groups, I think 38 Degrees was one that specifically</b> 16 <b>sought a meeting, which I declined in writing.</b> 17 Q. Thank you. In terms of the representations you 18 received, you pick this up first of all at paragraph 34 19 of your statement. It's fair to say that you received 20 quite a few. The TUC, that's page 01431, we're not 21 going to turn it up. There was a reply at 01460 from 22 Enders, 01469 the Guardian, 01467 various other 23 individuals or entities you identify in paragraph 35. 24 In each case it's clear from the documents that 25 a formal reply was furnished in your name, but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 Q. As you said, some of the representations were more 2 focused than others. This is inevitable in this sort of 3 case. You explain in paragraph 37 that you received 4 representations from a range of individuals, which 5 raised quite broad concerns but did not necessarily 6 always focus on the strict legal test which you were 7 required to consider. 8 <b>A. That's right.</b> 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Presumably it's not merely that you 10 need not take into account, but you should not take into 11 account, because if you took into account irrelevant 12 considerations, that itself would create a risk of 13 potential challenge, either way. 14 <b>A. That's correct. And indeed some of these submissions</b> 15 <b>made broad political points or broad points about the</b> 16 <b>economic benefits or otherwise of the merger, which</b> 17 <b>were, as you say, sir, irrelevant.</b> 18 MR JAY: In paragraph 38, Dr Cable, you explain that the 19 advice initially from within your department was that an 20 intervention appeared unlikely to be appropriate, and 21 this flowed from the fact that BSKyB was already 22 effectively controlled by News Corp, with the 23 39.1 per cent stake, but over the course of time, your 24 view changed. As you put it, you began to believe there 25 were genuine substantive concerns about the merger.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 presumably on the basis of advice you received from 2 officials in your department, which was -- 3 <b>A. That's correct.</b> 4 Q. -- playing it, as it were, with the straight face of the 5 bat? 6 <b>A. But I did see the submissions.</b> 7 Q. Thank you. In terms of -- we can take just one example, 8 perhaps, to demonstrate this. The Enders reply is 9 01531. It should be under your tab 4. It's just an 10 example because the replies are very similar in each 11 case. Do you have this one? It's dated 31 August 2010. 12 <b>A. Sorry, I'm on a different part of the -- yes, I have</b> 13 <b>that.</b> 14 Q. It speaks for itself. You say you're grateful for the 15 submission: 16 "... which I will take into account when considering 17 whether to intervene in this case." 18 You explain, I paraphrase, that your power to 19 intervene is tightly constrained by the law. You refer 20 to the guidance. Well, we've just seen the guidance. 21 And then you refer to the fact that the matter is going 22 to be notified under the ECMR, which took place on, 23 I think, 3 November 2010. Have I broadly speaking 24 correctly summarised this? 25 <b>A. You have.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 These are set out in paragraph 40 of your statement, 2 but in your own words, could you tell us what those two 3 primary concerns were? 4 <b>A. I can explain how my views evolved. I was aware that</b> 5 <b>there was an argument which -- based on commentary in</b> 6 <b>the Court of Appeal. I think it was in the case when</b> 7 <b>BSkyB were acquiring a small shareholding in ITV, where</b> 8 <b>I think the statement had been made that at that point</b> 9 <b>BSkyB were controlled -- I think that was the word -- by</b> 10 <b>News Corp.</b> 11 <b>When I first heard this argument, I challenged it,</b> 12 <b>not from a legal understanding, I'm not a lawyer, but it</b> 13 <b>seemed to me to clash with basic common sense, that what</b> 14 <b>we do know about company ownership is that once</b> 15 <b>a company progresses to 50 per cent, the majority</b> 16 <b>shareholders can replace the board. Once one progresses</b> 17 <b>to 75 per cent, a special resolution can change the</b> 18 <b>Articles of Association. Once you progress to</b> 19 <b>100 per cent, a fundamentally new situation arises,</b> 20 <b>because the 100 per cent owner is responsible to the</b> 21 <b>shareholders of the whole group and there are no more</b> 22 <b>minority shareholders whose rights need to be</b> 23 <b>considered.</b> 24 <b>So I felt from the outset that, although I say I'm</b> 25 <b>not a lawyer, it did seem to me that that argument about</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

5 (Pages 17 to 20)

<p>1 <b>39 per cent representing control seemed to be a very</b>                  2 <b>weak argument, and this was submitted to test but</b>                  3 <b>eventually, I think, the independent counsel agreed with</b>                  4 <b>the judgment that it was a change.</b>                  5 <b>Your question is: what was changed? I think there</b>                  6 <b>were a couple of respects in which 100 per cent-owned</b>                  7 <b>BSkyB would have presented a problem for plurality. One</b>                  8 <b>was that it simply reduced arithmetically the number of</b>                  9 <b>outlets under different owners. But I think the other</b>                  10 <b>argument, which is that once there were 100 per cent</b>                  11 <b>ownership it would have been possible for the new owners</b>                  12 <b>to replace the management, who in turn would have</b>                  13 <b>influenced the choice of editors, and in these two</b>                  14 <b>different ways plurality could be affected. So that</b>                  15 <b>seemed to me, taken together and with the benefit of</b>                  16 <b>legal advice, to merit the low threshold test which</b>                  17 <b>I had to apply.</b>                  18 Q. Thank you. The external advice, we have reference to it                  19 in the bundle. 01564. Still under tab 4. The advice                  20 is summarised under the third rubric:                  21 "Counsel confirms there would be no strong grounds                  22 to challenge a positive decision to issue an                  23 intervention notice in this case. This is in view of                  24 the low threshold for intervention which requires the                  25 Secretary of State only to have a reasonable basis for                  Page 21</p>	<p>1 And then she gives some reasons. And then in                  2 paragraph 20:                  3 "On the other hand there is a real possibility of BT                  4 or some other party challenging a decision not to                  5 intervene, particularly as such a decision would finally                  6 determine the question of media plurality insofar as it                  7 is relevant to this acquisition."                  8 And then she says at the end:                  9 "The chances of a decision not to intervene being                  10 successfully challenged are higher than the chances of                  11 the opposite decision being successfully challenged."                  12 That's giving you a pretty clear indication of where                  13 the legal balance falls, isn't it?                  14 <b>A. Yes. I mean I thought that particular conference was</b>                  15 <b>decisive on three grounds. One, the threshold test,</b>                  16 <b>secondly on exceptional circumstances, and thirdly on</b>                  17 <b>the balance of legal risk, and that clearly played</b>                  18 <b>a major part in my decision.</b>                  19 Q. Thank you. In terms of the substance, you in paragraphs                  20 43, 44 and 45 give further detail as to your reasons.                  21 You've already succinctly provided us with the two core                  22 reasons, but is there anything in addition you would                  23 like to put before us?                  24 <b>A. I think there's a point made in I think it's</b>                  25 <b>paragraph 44 which is important when we're considering</b>                  Page 23</p>
<p>1 having a belief that the specified public interest                  2 consideration is or may be relevant to this merger."                  3 And there's plenty of discretion.                  4 "In reaching the above view, counsel noted in                  5 particular that the merger could be considered to fall                  6 within the scope of one of the exceptional circumstances                  7 expressly identified in the 2004 guidance on use of the                  8 power [we've seen that in 8.8] and that the guidance                  9 could not reasonably be considered to create                  10 a legitimate expectation that no intervention would be                  11 made in this case."                  12 And then the advice is unpacked further under the                  13 heading "Detail". Express reference is made to 8.8 on                  14 the next page.                  15 The issue on control, which you've touched on, is                  16 also dealt with under that bullet point.                  17 So that's the first piece of advice. There's                  18 further advice at 01576, Dr Cable. This is within                  19 a note of a conference with counsel which starts at                  20 01573, where counsel stated in paragraph 17:                  21 "The possibility of News Corporation successfully                  22 challenging a decision to intervene at this stage cannot                  23 be ruled out, but it is more likely that they will not                  24 challenge a decision by the Secretary of State to                  25 intervene."                  Page 22</p>	<p>1 <b>the concept of plurality, that BSKyB was an independent</b>                  2 <b>news generator, which wasn't just important in itself</b>                  3 <b>but it provided news to commercial radio and Channel 5,</b>                  4 <b>so that a change in ownership and editorial policy could</b>                  5 <b>have quite wide ramifications.</b>                  6 Q. So the decision you took on 4 November by an                  7 intervention notice which I think was issued under                  8 Section 42 of the Act, but the public interest                  9 consideration on which it's based is the                  10 section 58(2C)(a) consideration that we come to in                  11 paragraph 46 of your statement.                  12 <b>A. Right.</b>                  13 Q. I don't think we need see the notice itself, it's 01667,                  14 but you also provided reasons for your decision at                  15 01720. You presumably were advised to do that, were                  16 you?                  17 <b>A. Yes. I mean, one element -- one key element of the</b>                  18 <b>transparency of the process is that the Secretary of</b>                  19 <b>State has to give good reason. My reasons have --</b>                  20 <b>I have to be demonstrated to be reasonable, and by</b>                  21 <b>having a transparent publication of the reasons, this is</b>                  22 <b>open to challenge, should there be objection.</b>                  23 Q. May I address, though, paragraph 47, the third line:                  24 "In my opinion as a politician I also believe that                  25 the Murdochs' political influence exercised through                  Page 24</p>

<p>1 their newspapers have become disproportionate."  2 There are two points, really. First of all, was  3 that a factor in the decision or not?  4 <b>A. No. It most definitely wasn't. Going back to my  5 original discussion on what was the meaning of  6 a quasi-judicial decision, I'm acknowledging here  7 frankly that I think like most people in public life  8 I had views and opinions and I'm setting them out here.</b>  9 Q. Thank you. What was the evidential basis for that  10 statement, Dr Cable?  11 <b>A. Well, I wasn't submitting evidence because this wasn't  12 relevant to the decision. I was expressing an opinion,  13 which is loosely based on observing what was happening  14 in political life and what had happened in my 12 years  15 in Parliament, and my views about this company were  16 actually quite nuanced, and then I did think, as I've  17 said here, that there was disproportionate political  18 influence and I thought leaders of major parties had got  19 too close to them, but at the same time I'd never had  20 any bad experiences myself with the News Corporation  21 newspapers and I had some recognition of the economic  22 importance of their company.</b>  23 <b>That's partly why I never publicly expressed any  24 views before I became a minister in the department. But  25 to go back to your central point, this was not a factor</b>  Page 25</p>	<p>1 <b>plurality was significantly less, and given that that  2 was the test, I went in the other direction and took the  3 view that there was no justification for an intervention  4 notice.</b>  5 Q. Thank you. At paragraph 54, which is our page 01364,  6 you address first of all a conversation you had with  7 Mr James Murdoch on the morning of 15 June 2010.  8 I think there is a note of that at 01427, still under  9 tab 4. Can you explain to us how these conversations  10 work? Your officials listen in to the call, that's  11 standard practice, is it?  12 <b>A. That is. I think several officials listened in to the  13 call. It was -- I was clear when I received the call  14 that this was a courtesy call, I was in listening mode,  15 and that it was very important that I made no comment  16 which would indicate prejudice in either direction.</b>  17 Q. So the note we see is evidently taken by an official and  18 presumably typed up fairly soon thereafter. We can look  19 at the note carefully, but there doesn't appear to be  20 anything in there you expressing a view one way or the  21 other.  22 <b>A. That's correct.</b>  23 Q. Do you remember expressing even an off-the-cuff view  24 about this or not?  25 <b>A. No, the conversation was very carefully thought through</b>  Page 27</p>
<p>1 <b>in my decision.</b>  2 Q. It may bear more widely on the Inquiry's consideration  3 of one of its terms of reference. I mean, you make it  4 clear in the fourth line from the end that the  5 perception that both parties had shown excessive  6 deference to their views -- well, the existence of  7 perception may be a matter of opinion but are you  8 seeking to put it any higher than that?  9 <b>A. No, I'm not, no.</b>  10 Q. Thank you. The other circumstance in which an  11 intervention on public interest grounds was considered  12 was in relation to the acquisition of Channel 5 by  13 Northern &amp; Shell. Is there any aspect of that case  14 which you wish to draw to our attention which is  15 relevant to the present narrative or shall we just take  16 that as read?  17 <b>A. Well, it had some parallels. It involved cross-media  18 ownership. It did involve a controversial company. And  19 I had to look at the evidence as I had on the BSkyB  20 takeover.</b>  21 <b>I mean, the crucial factor here was that the share  22 of Northern &amp; Shell in its media ownership was  23 significantly smaller. The company which it was  24 proposing to take over, which was Channel 5, was not an  25 independent generator of news, so that the impact on</b>  Page 26</p>	<p>1 <b>in advance, what I could and couldn't say, and there was  2 no off-the-cuff opinion on the merger, no.</b>  3 Q. Thank you. You say in paragraph 54 as well that you  4 were invited to a News International drinks reception  5 the following night, but you thought it inappropriate to  6 attend, on reflection.  7 <b>A. I did, yes.</b>  8 Q. And then you say you understand that Frederic Michel's  9 office called your private secretary on a number of  10 occasions to try and arrange a meeting, "... but after  11 considering advice, I decided to decline any meeting."  12 So that's information which your private secretary  13 is giving you for the purpose of this statement. Were  14 you told at the time that Mr Michel was trying to get in  15 touch with you?  16 <b>A. Well, the name Frederic Michel didn't register on my  17 radar, but I was aware that there was a request to have  18 a meeting, and I didn't wish to pursue it for a variety  19 of reasons. I mean, I didn't wish to be disrespectful  20 to Mr Murdoch. I do meet major investors. But in this  21 case I thought there were compelling reasons not to meet  22 him. First of all, there was a legal risk because the  23 subject which he clearly wished to talk about was  24 something I couldn't talk about, that if I did meet him  25 this might be perceived by other parties to be partial</b>  Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 in his direction, and I would therefore have to see</p> <p>2 them, and there were a lot of them, so potentially very</p> <p>3 large numbers of meetings which, by definition, couldn't</p> <p>4 have any substance, and -- but I think the key reason</p> <p>5 was I didn't actually think it was necessary, because</p> <p>6 they had an opportunity to, through Hogan Lovells, to</p> <p>7 put their opinions in writing, their submissions. They</p> <p>8 did so on several occasions.</p> <p>9 My office had a line of communication to News Corp</p> <p>10 and made it very clear we were willing to listen to any</p> <p>11 representations they made.</p> <p>12 Q. So you knew his name at the time. Did you know what his</p> <p>13 status was, his role was within the company?</p> <p>14 A. No, I'm sorry, I said at the time I didn't register who</p> <p>15 Mr Frederic Michel was. I knew who James Murdoch was.</p> <p>16 Q. My apologies. But you did have a meeting with</p> <p>17 Mr Harding on 9 December 2010, which you refer to in</p> <p>18 paragraph 55. That's under tab 14.</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Which is also noted. It's our page 03270.</p> <p>21 A. Right.</p> <p>22 Q. There was a brief mention of your intervention, which of</p> <p>23 course by that stage was five weeks extant; is that</p> <p>24 right?</p> <p>25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 I responded to that.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could I just ask, just for interest,</p> <p>3 and I'm not in any sense expressing opinion: you'd</p> <p>4 obviously got a lot of written representations. Were</p> <p>5 these exchanged? In other words, did News Corp have the</p> <p>6 chance to make representations on what the opponents</p> <p>7 were saying and vice versa or not? Just you were</p> <p>8 considering them at face value without getting competing</p> <p>9 contentions?</p> <p>10 A. I honestly don't know how free my officials were in</p> <p>11 exchanging these submissions. I don't know the answer</p> <p>12 to that question.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Fair enough.</p> <p>14 A. I do know that there was an iterative process, because</p> <p>15 I do remember that Hogan Lovells made a legal submission</p> <p>16 responding to the views of Enders. That may be that</p> <p>17 Enders' comments had been in the public domain and they</p> <p>18 were responding to that, I simply don't know.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I remember seeing something that they</p> <p>20 got hold of it in some way.</p> <p>21 A. That's correct.</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But you didn't initiate the process?</p> <p>23 A. No, I didn't.</p> <p>24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You were prepared to consider what</p> <p>25 people said and reach your own views?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 Q. What was the purpose of discussing these matters at all</p> <p>2 with Mr Harding?</p> <p>3 A. Well, I didn't meet him as a News Corp representative,</p> <p>4 I met him as the editor of the Times, and I have</p> <p>5 a general policy of trying to meet newspaper editors not</p> <p>6 frequently but occasionally and I met him in that</p> <p>7 capacity.</p> <p>8 As you quite rightly say, the intervention notice</p> <p>9 had been issued five weeks previously and I merely</p> <p>10 stated at the beginning of the meeting that I couldn't</p> <p>11 enter discussion on the substantive issues, but</p> <p>12 I described the formal position and he responded by</p> <p>13 explaining that he wished to meet me to talk about wider</p> <p>14 political questions and not about the merits or</p> <p>15 otherwise of the merger.</p> <p>16 Q. In paragraph 56, Dr Cable, you deal with the fact that</p> <p>17 Mr James Murdoch asked for a meeting with you but you</p> <p>18 declined. Can you remember when such request or such</p> <p>19 requests were made?</p> <p>20 A. Not precisely. I think in his conversation I think he</p> <p>21 made general reference to the desirability of meeting</p> <p>22 and I didn't respond to it -- as far as I remember,</p> <p>23 I can't remember every word of the conversation. And</p> <p>24 I discovered that he had been seeking a meeting through</p> <p>25 my officials, but that was -- I've explained how</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 A. Correct.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p>3 MR JAY: At this time, particularly in November 2010,</p> <p>4 rumours were abounding that you had met with the</p> <p>5 coalition against the bid. Were those rumours correct</p> <p>6 or not?</p> <p>7 A. No, they were completely incorrect.</p> <p>8 Q. I've been asked to put to you this point, Dr Cable:</p> <p>9 given the scale of the bid and the apparent delay, why</p> <p>10 not accede to a meeting with the relevant parties,</p> <p>11 including News Corporation, principally to offer</p> <p>12 reassurance to them and that their points were being</p> <p>13 fully considered and had been taken on board by you?</p> <p>14 A. I think there are several points in that question.</p> <p>15 There is the issue of delay, but I didn't actually delay</p> <p>16 a decision. The decision to issue the intervention</p> <p>17 notice was made very promptly once the European</p> <p>18 Commission had completed its deliberations, which they</p> <p>19 would have had to do in any event.</p> <p>20 I've explained to you already the reasons why</p> <p>21 I thought a meeting was inappropriate, although I did</p> <p>22 give it careful thought. As I say, I didn't wish to be</p> <p>23 disrespectful to Mr Murdoch.</p> <p>24 Q. Thank you. In paragraph 58, you state that:</p> <p>25 "In all my interactions I sought to uphold the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)



<p>1 principle and perception of an impartial and fair 2 process."</p> <p>3 And I think it's implicit in your last answer that 4 part of that principle and perception of fairness was 5 not to meet with the parties for and against the 6 transaction; is that right?</p> <p>7 <b>A. That's right.</b></p> <p>8 Q. We may come to other aspects of that fair process as 9 well. It came to your attention that a meeting had 10 taken place at the request of James Murdoch and 11 Fred Michel with Lord Oakeshott in the House of Lords on 12 26 November. Can we be clear, who to your understanding 13 were parties to that meeting?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I'm not totally clear. Because Lord Oakeshott had the 15 formal role which I described to you, he did feel it 16 necessary to notify me and I think my officials that he 17 was going to have that meeting, and I think it included 18 James Murdoch and Mr Michel, but I'm not totally sure.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Once that came to your attention, you explain that the 20 business advisory group that Lord Oakeshott chaired 21 should be disbanded, and that took place on 20 December 22 2010; is that correct?</p> <p>23 <b>A. That's correct. Because when we had the report back 24 from the meeting, although Lord Oakeshott had quite 25 properly said that he was speaking entirely in his own</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 <b>particularly in dealings with the media, but with 2 journalists, not in a business sense.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So would Mr Wilkes be the lead adviser in the context of 4 this bid?</p> <p>5 <b>A. There was no lead adviser, and he was not involved in 6 the process. There was no question of designating 7 somebody as lead adviser.</b></p> <p>8 Q. I should have asked this general question first. What, 9 if any, were Mr Wilkes' responsibilities in relation to 10 the BSkyB bid?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Well, he didn't have any. I certainly didn't give him 12 any responsibilities in that respect. He was aware, as 13 Katie Waring was also, of the sensitivity of the issue, 14 I mean he'd attended meetings in my office, he saw the 15 correspondence of our officials, and I believe my 16 private secretary Richard Abel at that time spoke to him 17 and explained that this was a politically very -- not 18 politically, legally sensitive issue and they should 19 approach their dealings with great care.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Is this the position: given the nature of the 21 quasi-judicial role invested in you, it followed that 22 special advisers did have no responsibility in this area 23 because they should not have done?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Well, they had no responsibility to speak for me in this 25 issue, although of course on other issues they did.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 <b>personal capacity, I could see and my officials could 2 see that any views he expressed could have been 3 interpreted as mine, and they weren't, but in order to 4 remove any suggestion that they were, we felt it better 5 to discontinue the formal arrangement.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Were any attempts made by any of your partners in 7 Coalition to contact you and express an opinion about 8 media policy generally or the merits of this bid in 9 particular?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, none at all.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Would you have thought it appropriate proactively to 12 discuss the matter with Mr Jeremy Hunt, who was 13 Secretary of State for the media, amongst other things?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No, I didn't think it was appropriate because I wasn't 15 formulating a government policy. I was formulating an 16 independent judgment which the law required and which 17 rested in me as an individual.</b></p> <p>18 Q. But you were not aware of any attempt by him if there 19 was such an attempt to speak to you?</p> <p>20 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>21 Q. May I understand, please, now, Dr Cable, we're going to 22 look at some other documents. The role of your special 23 advisers now. How many did you have at this stage?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I had two: Giles Wilkes, who was an economist, and 25 Katie Waring, who was a special adviser and helped me</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 <b>That's why they were there.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you know of any interaction that Mr Wilkes had with 3 Mr Michel in the relevant period, particularly November 4 2010?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Well, I was aware that towards the end of the period 6 when the department was responsible, Mr Michel had 7 introduced himself I think by email and had sought 8 through Mr Wilkes to set up an interview, and 9 Giles Wilkes had declined, knowing my views on the 10 matter.</b></p> <p>11 Q. There's documentary evidence of that declining, as it 12 were. Were you told at the time that Mr Wilkes had 13 declined on your behalf?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I don't recall being told the detail, no.</b></p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Presumably it appears there are 16 a number of similar quasi-judicial functions which you 17 have to operate. Have there been any in the period 18 since you'd assumed office?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Well, the Northern &amp; Shell was the other case, but it 20 was a comparable case.</b></p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But nothing outside --</p> <p>22 <b>A. Nothing outside. But there was a long history in the 23 department. The department had been dealing with 24 competition legislation for many years, and so the 25 officials' lawyers were very attuned to the procedures</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

9 (Pages 33 to 36)

<p>1 <b>which needed to be observed.</b></p> <p>2 MR JAY: For how long, approximately, had Mr Wilkes been</p> <p>3 your special adviser?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Well, he joined as I recall at the end of May, shortly</b></p> <p>5 <b>after we came into government.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Had he been working with you in opposition?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Not directly. He was an economist who was working for</b></p> <p>8 <b>one of the think tanks called CentreForum and I knew his</b></p> <p>9 <b>work and had a high regard for his work, which is why</b></p> <p>10 <b>I asked him, but he hadn't worked for me before.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Outside the area of quasi-judicial functions, would you</p> <p>12 expect your special advisers to be, to use metaphors,</p> <p>13 your eyes and ears and your buffer?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes, I think that is a good description, to be eyes and</b></p> <p>15 <b>ears and also to speak for me. There is a long history</b></p> <p>16 <b>of the role of special advisers in government. I was</b></p> <p>17 <b>one of the first, as it happens, and the role has</b></p> <p>18 <b>evolved, but it is to take account of those</b></p> <p>19 <b>responsibilities of ministers which are political, party</b></p> <p>20 <b>political, and where civil servants quite properly don't</b></p> <p>21 <b>wish to engage, and in a Coalition government there is</b></p> <p>22 <b>a lot of discussion between special advisers because</b></p> <p>23 <b>they come from different parties, trying to reach common</b></p> <p>24 <b>positions.</b></p> <p>25 <b>They also act as a challenge. I mean, I encourage</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 <b>day, as I am with my civil servant private office.</b></p> <p>2 MR JAY: Thank you. Now, in the exhibit KRM 18, which you</p> <p>3 have in this bundle I think under tab 1, I have</p> <p>4 somewhere else, there are some documents which appear to</p> <p>5 relate to BIS and it's those documents only which I'm</p> <p>6 going to take you to. The first one, in the file PROP,</p> <p>7 is 01642.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Right.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Which relates back to the conference call on 15 June.</p> <p>10 We'd seen your official's note of that call.</p> <p>11 Mr Michel's report of it was:</p> <p>12 "Vince Cable call went very well. He did say he</p> <p>13 thought 'there would not be policy issue in this case'.</p> <p>14 We should have recorded him."</p> <p>15 Now, I'd just invite you to comment on that,</p> <p>16 Dr Cable.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Well, I almost certainly didn't say that, and I'm</b></p> <p>18 <b>confident that I didn't say it because, as I've</b></p> <p>19 <b>explained to you earlier, there was several officials</b></p> <p>20 <b>listening in to the call. They would have made notes of</b></p> <p>21 <b>that, and almost certainly they would have taken me to</b></p> <p>22 <b>task if I had said it.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Yes. 01645.</p> <p>24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Before we go past 42:</p> <p>25 "He didn't see much on top of it, he'd seen the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 <b>my two special advisers to challenge me, to challenge</b></p> <p>2 <b>officials, in order to think through the implications of</b></p> <p>3 <b>policy.</b></p> <p>4 Q. But in their engagement with third parties, as you said,</p> <p>5 they are speaking for you?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>7 Q. How and why does that come about?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Well, in the case of detailed discussions with another</b></p> <p>9 <b>government minister to try to arbitrage, to come to</b></p> <p>10 <b>a common position on a policy, this will often be dealt</b></p> <p>11 <b>with at official level, but quite often -- an example</b></p> <p>12 <b>would be immigration policy, where ministers from</b></p> <p>13 <b>different parties would have a different political view,</b></p> <p>14 <b>and then the SpAds, the special advisers, would be</b></p> <p>15 <b>engaged in order to try to find common political ground,</b></p> <p>16 <b>so they would have quite an important role in the</b></p> <p>17 <b>decision-making.</b></p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So they have to have a very clear</p> <p>19 understanding of where you are on every issue with which</p> <p>20 they have to deal?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Very much so.</b></p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Because otherwise --</p> <p>23 <b>A. They are actually part of my private office with the</b></p> <p>24 <b>officials. They sit together, it's an open plan</b></p> <p>25 <b>situation, and we're interacting continually through the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 newspapers but not the announcement."</p> <p>2 That might mean no more than you won't say much</p> <p>3 about it, which is rather different.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: "JRM told him re size of our group.</p> <p>6 UK jobs growth Cable appreciated. JRM indicated he</p> <p>7 would get back to his team to debrief them on the</p> <p>8 details. We discussed it would not be necessary for him</p> <p>9 to see Cable too soon ... Cable said he was coming as</p> <p>10 planned tomorrow evening."</p> <p>11 Would that be right?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I think I -- he did ask if I was going to the reception</b></p> <p>13 <b>and I think I said I probably would. I hadn't at that</b></p> <p>14 <b>stage thought through --</b></p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand. I'm merely getting to</p> <p>16 grips with whether the rest of this email is a fair</p> <p>17 reflection, from their perspective obviously --</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b></p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- of the conversation.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes, I think the rest of it is broadly correct, but</b></p> <p>21 <b>there's a quote which is not.</b></p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, I've got the point.</p> <p>23 MR JAY: 01645:</p> <p>24 "I had discussions this morning with people very</p> <p>25 close to VC."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

10 (Pages 37 to 40)

<p>1 I didn't ask Mr Michel, I believe, to identify who 2 those people were, so I'm afraid we're in the dark, 3 Dr Cable. But what is attributed to those people in the 4 sense of as well being your view: 5 "He is keen to be seen as the most pro-competition 6 SoS and as we know he is very much anti-regulation. On 7 our particular issue, he strongly believes the deal 8 doesn't change the market situation or would have any 9 impact on media plurality." 10 Do you have any comment on that? 11 <b>A. Well, the first statement is a caricature, but not 12 wholly wrong. The second is wrong. There was 13 absolutely no reason why anybody should have come to 14 that judgment at that stage.</b> 15 <b>Would you just allow me to make a general comment on 16 this reference to people close to me, because there's 17 are continued references to so-called advisers, people 18 who are close to me. I have no idea who these people 19 are. Nobody was authorised to speak on my behalf, and 20 there are whole sets of comments like this which I don't 21 recognise, so -- just so I don't have to repeat that in 22 response to every question.</b> 23 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's not unimportant, Dr Cable, 24 because I'm sure you will appreciate that there are 25 emails addressed to other people in which statements are</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 stages, did that happen? 2 <b>A. Not to my knowledge. I have no idea what his sources 3 are. There was a great deal of media speculation 4 amongst business correspondents at the time about what 5 the decision would be, and I wouldn't actually attach 6 a great deal of importance to it.</b> 7 Q. At best it's a rumour, but at that point your view was 8 evolving? 9 <b>A. Yes, correct.</b> 10 Q. And you've told us with reference to the chronology 11 we've looked at? 12 <b>A. I think at that stage, for example, I hadn't yet seen 13 the independent counsel's judgments.</b> 14 Q. 01648. Maybe, sorry, we should look at 01647 as well. 15 I don't know whether you have a comment on that. 16 Mr Michel is claiming to have had a conversation with 17 Don Foster, who is the DCMS spokesman for Lib Dems, 18 "this morning. Very relaxed about the bid and can't see 19 plurality review taking place." 20 <b>A. I don't really have anything to say. I know that 21 Don Foster was a very knowledgeable commentator and 22 spokesman for the party on media issues, but of course 23 he wasn't involved in the bid decision, so whether or 24 not he was relaxed about it, I don't know.</b> 25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And didn't care?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 made which are said not to represent concluded views, 2 and you know precisely what I'm talking about, so it's 3 quite important to test the accuracy of those emails, 4 which are not now as it were at the very core, just to 5 see what we think about this method of reportage. 6 <b>A. No, I understand the reason why you're asking me and I'm 7 happy to answer. I'm just saying that my answers may be 8 a bit representative.</b> 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I can live with that. 10 <b>A. Okay.</b> 11 MR JAY: There are about a dozen of these, that's all, but 12 it is important that we go through them for several 13 reasons. 14 <b>A. Sure.</b> 15 Q. 01646. There's a report through Robert Peston of the 16 BBC you can see there: 17 "James Murdoch's hopes of keeping News Corporation's 18 planned takeover 100 per cent of British Sky 19 Broadcasting away from the scrutiny of the media 20 regulator Ofcom looks set to be dashed. I have learned 21 that the Business Secretary Vince Cable is likely to 22 issue what's known as an intervention ..." 23 It's cut off, but it's "intervention notice". 24 Mr Peston is purporting to report on something either 25 you or someone close to him told him. Taking it in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Not -- yes, indeed.</b> 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Judicially didn't care. 3 <b>A. Didn't care, no.</b> 4 MR JAY: 01648. So this email, I'm afraid, is out of 5 sequence chronologically. It should have been earlier 6 in this bundle, because it's dated 23 June 2010, so 7 we're only eight days after the announcement of the bid. 8 It says: 9 "Vince has been advised by his team it would be 10 better to meet with you once things have settled down on 11 the Sky process in order to avoid any media questions on 12 the purpose/content of the meeting. Vince is keen to 13 meet for a catch-up as you both discussed on the phone. 14 Let me know if that's okay with you." 15 Well, the last sentence is not something you can 16 comment on, but the earlier sentences, can you assist us 17 on those? 18 <b>A. I can't assist you beyond repeating what I said earlier 19 about my approach to meetings with Mr Murdoch.</b> 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But would you have been interested -- 21 put BSKyB entirely to one side. Were there aspects of 22 your remit which would have meant that it would be 23 sensible to meet somebody like Mr Murdoch in the course 24 of your work? 25 <b>A. Yes. If the whole issue of the takeover had been</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

11 (Pages 41 to 44)

<p>1 settled and I wasn't dealing with it, he was a major 2 investor, there were other areas of common interest, 3 including broadband policy and potentially copyright, 4 which I would have been very happy to talk to him about. 5 MR JAY: 01649 now, Dr Cable, email of 27 September 2010. 6 This relates to a conversation Mr Michel told us he had 7 with Lord Oakeshott. That's in the transcript, Day 77, 8 am, page 72, line 23. First of all, was the fact of 9 that conversation ever communicated back to you by Lord 10 Oakeshott at about this time? 11 <b>A. Yes, I think it is Lord Oakeshott, but he wasn't my main 12 economic adviser. It could also be a composite of 13 a discussion with him and Lord Newby, who was our main 14 economic spokesman in the House of Lords and who they 15 also spoke to.</b> 16 Q. The second bullet point -- 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Before you get to the second bullet 18 point, was either Lord Newby or indeed Lord Oakeshott 19 leading on this for you? 20 <b>A. No. No, they weren't. They were clear -- I certainly, 21 when I spoke to Lord Oakeshott, he made it very clear he 22 was speaking entirely in a personal capacity.</b> 23 MR JAY: I should deal with the first bullet point: 24 "He doesn't see any strong competition issue -- 25 feels it should be looked at by the EU -- he knows where Page 45</p>	<p>1 <b>I don't know if you're going to my views as opposed to 2 my quasi-judicial role -- I don't think anybody had any 3 quarrel with Sky News, as such. There were problems 4 with News International newspapers, but Sky News was 5 a politically neutral television channel.</b> 6 MR JAY: What about the second point? 7 <b>A. As I've said earlier, that was simply wrong. I wasn't 8 briefed by Simon Hughes or Chris Huhne, let along on 9 a daily basis.</b> 10 Q. And the third point? 11 <b>A. Well, I think this probably goes into the broad 12 political context in which this whole debate was taking 13 place, but it is quite separate, different, from my 14 quasi-judicial functions.</b> 15 Q. The reference to constructive discussions with the 16 Deputy Prime Minister, again it's unclear whether those 17 are Lord Oakeshott's discussions or your discussions, 18 but it may be intended to embrace your discussions. 19 Were there any such discussions, constructive or 20 otherwise? 21 <b>A. I didn't discuss the merits of the merger with 22 Nick Clegg, but I certainly briefed him on the process 23 because there was clearly a great deal of interest, he 24 was my party leader and I needed to give him an 25 appropriate level of briefing.</b> Page 47</p>
<p>1 his officials stand on it and is aligned with Hunt's 2 view." 3 Do you have any comment on that? 4 <b>A. I didn't know what Mr Hunt's view was, so I don't know 5 where that came from.</b> 6 Q. "He is thinking through the media plurality aspects of 7 the transaction, influenced by three main issues which 8 are colouring his judgment: [first] the way Sky News 9 handled the General Election coverage and the quality of 10 the news debate." 11 Of course, that may or may not be Lord Oakeshott's 12 view, but you're not party to this conversation, but to 13 the extent to which it might indicate that this is also 14 your view, was that your view? 15 <b>A. Well, as I said earlier, there are issues on which 16 I have views, and I think I did mention this in 17 a general sense, but that was quite different from my 18 exercising my decision-making function.</b> 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's not merely quite different, it's 20 100 per cent wrong, because you've told me that your 21 general political views, which might include the way Sky 22 News handled the General Election coverage, were 23 absolutely not part of the judgment. 24 <b>A. Yes, they were not part of the judgment. As I've just 25 reread that passage, actually I don't think anybody --</b> Page 46</p>	<p>1 Q. Then there's reference to you seeing the Financial Times 2 leader on Monday morning at the conference, and you 3 apparently saying it was very unhelpful as you didn't 4 think they would join the bandwagon on it. Do you have 5 any evidence you can give us about that which may be 6 relevant? 7 <b>A. I don't recall this at all, actually. I think the 8 Financial Times was critical of the takeover, but 9 I don't remember expressing a view on that. And that's 10 certainly not in the terms expressed here.</b> 11 Q. And the final point, he, this is Mr Michel apparently, 12 "... was told there is absolutely no reason to believe 13 he would want a referral. We are keeping lines of 14 communication open in coming weeks and I am sharing with 15 him our arguments." 16 That may be an inference, perhaps an incorrect one, 17 rather than anything more than that. Is there anything 18 you would like to say about that? 19 <b>A. No, I can't say anything to that.</b> 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Although it may be no more than 21 Mr Michel is saying to Mr Murdoch, "I'm going to keep in 22 contact with the main economic adviser", whether it be 23 Lord Oakeshott he's talking about or Lord Newby, and 24 therefore he's hoping to feed arguments in to them which 25 he hopes in turn will be passed through to Dr Cable. Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 <b>A. Mm.</b>  2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.  3 MR JAY: 01651 now, 8 October 2010. The adviser that's  4 referred to wasn't identified by Mr Michel, so we're  5 left in the dark as to who he might be, but could you  6 assist us from your own inquiries?  7 <b>A. No idea.</b>  8 Q. Some of the points are repetition of earlier points, so  9 I don't think it's necessary to look at those again, but  10 about the fifth bullet point down:  11 "It was made clear to me that the good thing about  12 VC is that he takes competition issues very seriously  13 and will get some straight official advice."  14 So that part you don't --  15 <b>A. Well, that's a correct statement, but this wasn't</b>  16 <b>a competition issue. As we discussed earlier, plurality</b>  17 <b>public interest decisions are distinct from conventional</b>  18 <b>competition policy but as a statement that seems fair.</b>  19 Q. A couple of points later down:  20 "The adviser was very clear that if we try to  21 aggressively push Cable, it will have a negative impact.  22 But changing the narrative in the main media would help  23 him politically a lot and help him inside the Cabinet."  24 Is there anything one might make of that or not?  25 <b>A. I don't know what it means. I mean, the quasi-judicial</b>  Page 49</p>	<p>1 represent a sentiment which you can recognise?  2 <b>A. Well, it does, actually, yes, and the main</b>  3 <b>preoccupations at that time were the comprehensive</b>  4 <b>spending review, which is what CSR means, and with the</b>  5 <b>whole tuition fee debate, and then it was coming to</b>  6 <b>a peak at that time.</b>  7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Political issues?  8 <b>A. Mm.</b>  9 MR JAY: The third bullet point down doesn't take it very  10 much further:  11 "He is aware of our desire to make sure Vince/JRM  12 speak at the right time and also to get detailed update  13 briefing from the team in coming weeks."  14 That may or may not be so but it doesn't take us  15 anywhere.  16 "He had one strong advice (as mentioned previously):  17 the most influential person for Vince now is Lord  18 Oakeshott."  19 Pausing there, is that correct or not?  20 <b>A. Not on this issue, no. I consulted him on other issues,</b>  21 <b>banking for example, but certainly not on this issue.</b>  22 Q. But on other issues, would that be a correct  23 characterisation of Lord Oakeshott or not?  24 <b>A. Sorry, what would be correct?</b>  25 Q. The most influential person.  Page 51</p>
<p>1 <b>decision was never discussed in the Cabinet, and I can't</b>  2 <b>imagine circumstances in which it ever would be, and</b>  3 <b>I wasn't following the media narrative in any event.</b>  4 Q. I'm not sure you can really help us with the rest,  5 because a lot of it is comment, a lot of it it's unclear  6 what the source might be.  7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But do I gather you don't recognise  8 any of this -- I'm not talking about you identify who he  9 might have been talking to, but you don't recognise any  10 of this as part of the material that was going through  11 your mind at the time?  12 <b>A. Well, not in formulating the quasi-judicial decision,</b>  13 <b>no. I mean, some of the comments like the one you've</b>  14 <b>quoted are both anodyne and reasonably correct.</b>  15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh yes, yes.  16 MR JAY: 01657, Dr Cable, is the next relevant email. We're  17 on 12 October 2010. Again:  18 "Just spoke to Vince's main adviser."  19 I can't help you with who that might be. Could you  20 help us?  21 <b>A. No, I don't know.</b>  22 Q. Apparently:  23 "They are completely stuffed with the CSR, tuition  24 fees and the rebellion, et cetera."  25 First of all, apart from explaining CSR, does that  Page 50</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No, I don't think so. He's one of several people I rely</b>  2 <b>on for general advice.</b>  3 Q. Whether or not he's a difficult character is not  4 something I'm going to ask you to comment on.  5 "He hates lobbying (and doesn't like our empire  6 either)."  7 From your own knowledge is that correct or not?  8 <b>A. He has been publicly critical of both, I think.</b>  9 Q. One factor, one fact, if it's a true one, which  10 Mr Michel wouldn't know unless he was told:  11 "... and he talks to [you] more than ten times  12 a day."  13 Is that factually right or not?  14 <b>A. No, it's wildly inaccurate.</b>  15 Q. Penultimate bullet point:  16 "The referral decision will be a political one,  17 especially if tuition fees debate gets nasty in [your]  18 party."  19 <b>A. It did.</b>  20 Q. It did but was the referral --  21 <b>A. It wasn't relevant to this issue.</b>  22 Q. It wasn't relevant.  23 "He also recommended to keep briefing senior Lib  24 Dems and key Cabinet members as we have started to do,  25 to push things with Vince."  Page 52</p>

13 (Pages 49 to 52)

<p>1 <b>A. Well, there was a lot of this going on, and I was going</b>  2 <b>to come on to that later in explaining what happened in</b>  3 <b>my constituency office, but I have nothing to add on</b>  4 <b>that at this stage.</b>  5 MR JAY: Might that be time for a short pause?  6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, certainly. We have a break to  7 allow the shorthand writer to recover.  8 <b>A. Sure.</b>  9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.  10 (11.23 am)  11 (A short break)  12 (11.34 am)  13 MR JAY: 01658 now, Dr Cable, apparently refers to a meeting  14 with Lord Clement-Jones, described as the treasurer of  15 the Lib Dems and culture/media spokesman at the Lords.  16 <b>A. Sorry, could you just give me a second to catch up?</b>  17 Q. Sorry.  18 <b>A. So the number was what, sorry?</b>  19 Q. 01658.  20 <b>A. I have it. Thank you.</b>  21 Q. That's an accurate description of Lord Clement-Jones'  22 status, is it?  23 <b>A. Yes, that's correct. I think he was treasurer at the</b>  24 <b>time.</b>  25 Q. About eight lines down:  Page 53</p>	<p>1 <b>part of my role as being Secretary of State is to be</b>  2 <b>open to people with opinions, and to engage with them.</b>  3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Because one of the -- I mean, in part  4 what's going on here is a subset of the issue of  5 lobbying. I'm not trying to increase the terms of my  6 reference, but it is, isn't it? Have I understood that  7 correctly?  8 <b>A. Yes, I think that is correct, and I suppose Mr Michel</b>  9 <b>was an example of a lobbyist at work. I'm not making</b>  10 <b>judgments about him and how he operated, but that is</b>  11 <b>commercial lobbying indeed.</b>  12 MR JAY: 01659. This refers to a conversation Mr Michel  13 says he had with a Liberal Democrat MP, a former Sky  14 employee. Do you know who that might be?  15 <b>A. I dont, actually. I didn't realise we had one.</b>  16 Q. Besides what is attributed to that individual, did you  17 have any conversation with anybody after 1 November 2010  18 which might chime with what we read here?  19 <b>A. No, I certainly don't recognise that, nor did I speak to</b>  20 <b>Alex Salmond, who is also referred to.</b>  21 Q. 01660, the next page, still on 1 November:  22 "His adviser [again that person hasn't been  23 identified in evidence] has just suggested I send him  24 all the relevant documents for him to read on Wednesday  25 and he will probably want to meet us later this week on  Page 55</p>
<p>1 "... confirms it is impossible for us to make people  2 understand that this is a News Corp deal and not  3 News International. We had a good chat in relation to  4 the key influencers around Cable. He has a little set  5 of people around him he will call to ask for opinion and  6 many Lib Dem/Labour MPs will be writing to him to apply  7 further pressure."  8 Do you recognise that statement?  9 <b>A. No, I don't think any Lib Dem or Labour MPs wrote to me</b>  10 <b>about this subject.</b>  11 Q. And the little set of people around you to ask for an  12 opinion?  13 <b>A. Well, I mean on this particular issue, the set of people</b>  14 <b>were my officials and lawyers.</b>  15 Q. Yes. 01659.  16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is this legitimate in general  17 lobbying? I'm not talking about the quasi-judicial side  18 of this responsibility, and it may be a real question  19 that the whole approach is misconceived because the  20 responsibility you're exercising is a judicial one, set  21 out by statute, but have you experience of this type of  22 approach from various different people for general  23 lobbying purposes?  24 <b>A. Yes. I mean, lots of this happens, and one just has to</b>  25 <b>learn to recognise it for what it is. But yes, I -- and</b>  Page 54</p>	<p>1 Monday. He asked me when we were going to file, I said  2 very shortly."  3 The filing was actually on 3 November, this is  4 filing in Europe, Dr Cable, so that bit is probably  5 right. But what about the meeting later this week or  6 Monday? Can you help us on that?  7 <b>A. No, I certainly gave no indication I was preparing to</b>  8 <b>have a meeting. The same considerations apply as</b>  9 <b>I referred to earlier.</b>  10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I don't actually think that means  11 that you were to have a meeting. What it seems to be  12 suggesting is that somebody who is advising you is  13 asking that he, Michel, send him, the adviser, the  14 relevant documents, so that he, the adviser, can read it  15 all and meet up.  16 <b>A. Well, I don't know who the adviser is and I don't know</b>  17 <b>who we're referring to here, so I'm really baffled, as</b>  18 <b>I think you are, by it.</b>  19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But as I understand your evidence,  20 and I appreciate that it is becoming repetitive, don't  21 mind about that, it is that there was nobody at all who  22 was fulfilling a role of being your adviser or  23 confidante on the issue of the bid?  24 <b>A. Unless he's referring to the department's lawyers and</b>  25 <b>officials who did engage with News Corp.</b>  Page 56</p>

14 (Pages 53 to 56)

<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Of course, of course.  2 <b>A. It may be that officials and political people are being</b>  3 <b>mixed up here, I don't know.</b>  4 MR JAY: That interpretation of the email is borne out by  5 the next one, 01662:  6 "Vince adviser just called me unprompted. We  7 discussed the state of the process. He promised to make  8 sure he has read the BIS submissions by Thursday. He  9 will then schedule a face-to-face chat."  10 That suggests a face-to-face chat between Mr Michel  11 and the adviser, I think.  12 <b>A. Yes, although I'm totally mystified as to who this is.</b>  13 Q. There is a text message the next page, 01663, attributed  14 to the adviser:  15 "Put a very strong case which will stand you in good  16 stead on this."  17 Can you assist us at all on that message?  18 <b>A. No, but whoever was trying to help Mr Michel wasn't</b>  19 <b>being very helpful because that was the day I issued the</b>  20 <b>intervention notice.</b>  21 Q. Hm. 01664.  22 "Just had a private call with Vince's main adviser."  23 Mr Michel was asked about this email and can confirm  24 that this was a special adviser. Day 77 in the morning,  25 page 75, line 18. But what we read here may not cause  Page 57</p>	<p>1 <b>and we'll look at it." I'm sure that was the message.</b>  2 MR JAY: 01670. Reading forwards in time to 01669, these  3 are a series of emails between Mr Wilkes and Mr Michel,  4 where Mr Michel was seeking a meeting and Mr Wilkes was  5 telling him there can't be a meeting.  6 <b>A. Yes. Mr Wilkes is behaving entirely consistently and</b>  7 <b>properly, as I would have expected him to do.</b>  8 Q. 01672, Dr Cable. Mr Michel didn't confirm this was  9 Mr Wilkes, although he's using the same terminology  10 throughout, your "main adviser":  11 "... regarding meetings they might have had with the  12 complainants to the transaction, given rumours we hear.  13 He said that as it happens, he doesn't think he has  14 talked about this issue with any of the complainants."  15 Is that right or not?  16 <b>A. That is correct. I did meet a couple of them, not for</b>  17 <b>this purpose, but as I think I gave in my personal</b>  18 <b>evidence, I had dinner at party conference with a senior</b>  19 <b>team from the Telegraph and they did raise this issue</b>  20 <b>and I said, "I am sorry, I can't discuss it." I think</b>  21 <b>that was the only face-to-face contact I had with any of</b>  22 <b>the other parties.</b>  23 Q. And then towards the end:  24 "He said he was very keen for me to keep our  25 agreement that we are both equally interested in staying  Page 59</p>
<p>1 any difficulty:  2 "He said he believed there were huge risks for me to  3 meet with him to talk about anything that has to do with  4 the Ofcom business, which he rules out completely. Too  5 much scrutiny. They also want to be able to say they  6 took an independent view. Asked me to be in touch  7 regularly in coming weeks, if only to provide him with  8 any evidence/materials we would like Vince/him to read."  9 Do you have any comment on that?  10 <b>A. Well, that seems very consistent with the role which my</b>  11 <b>two special advisers played, and I think was borne out</b>  12 <b>with earlier comment that they were not authorising or</b>  13 <b>facilitating meetings with themselves or with me.</b>  14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But it rather looks as though, given  15 the preceding emails, that there is a consistency of  16 approach. The adviser asks to see stuff, he says he'll  17 look at it, and then he's using the same phrase, "main  18 adviser". Now, you're confident that your special  19 advisers were not involved in this sort of access? I'm  20 not going to inquire into it further.  21 <b>A. Well, they were not -- I'm quite confident they were</b>  22 <b>consistently saying that they did not wish to meet or</b>  23 <b>wish me to meet, but it seems entirely plausible that</b>  24 <b>they said to Michel, if he was in contact with them,</b>  25 <b>"Look, if you have anything to say, put it in writing</b>  Page 58</p>	<p>1 within the bounds of proper conduct during the process,  2 keeping each other closely informed and forgive his  3 caution but Vince is very disciplined about this."  4 <b>A. Well, I like to think I was, and it's very clear that</b>  5 <b>whoever he was talking to understood the constraints</b>  6 <b>under which we were operating.</b>  7 Q. "I told him I was happy to take his words but we were  8 hearing otherwise."  9 The hearing otherwise is the rumours that you were  10 speaking behind the scenes to the coalition and your  11 special adviser denied that?  12 <b>A. I had no meetings with the coalition, and the only</b>  13 <b>face-to-face contact is the one I've just described.</b>  14 Q. 01679, Dr Cable. I'm not sure you can assist too much  15 on this, save for the email at the top, a reference to  16 seeing Mr Foster.  17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Sorry, I've just seen something which  18 I hadn't previously noticed. It's abundantly clear that  19 when we're talking about "main adviser" we are talking  20 about Mr Wilkes, because on 2 November, 16.71, it is an  21 email to Mr Wilkes sending him the documents, which is,  22 of course, what the subject matter of the earlier emails  23 was.  24 MR JAY: (Nods head).  25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. Well, I understand.  Page 60</p>

15 (Pages 57 to 60)

1 MR JAY: I'm not sure that 01679 needs a comment from you,  
 2 Dr Cable. 01680:  
 3 "Just spoke to Vince's main adviser [we're now on  
 4 14 December]. Neither date I put forward for a meeting  
 5 with Vince (7 or 10 January) is likely to work. Vince  
 6 is out of the country at that time, on current plans."  
 7 Do you recognise that part of this email?  
 8 **A. Well, I had a winter break, but -- I mean, I think we're**  
 9 **talking here about attempts to arrange a meeting**  
 10 **subsequent to the issuing of the Ofcom report, and it's**  
 11 **hardly likely that I would have agreed to set up**  
 12 **a meeting until I knew the outcome.**  
 13 Q. But had the outcome been as it was, would you have set  
 14 up a meeting in due course with anybody?  
 15 **A. Well, I'd have sought advice, but I would have imagined**  
 16 **that the advice would have been the same. We're further**  
 17 **down the road and I hadn't yet gone to the stage of**  
 18 **seeking specific advice on how to handle that process.**  
 19 Q. I understand. So before 21 December 2010, did you have  
 20 any conversations about the merits of the BSKyB bid with  
 21 either or any of Mr Hunt, Mr Osborne, Mr Clegg,  
 22 Mr Cameron?  
 23 **A. Not about the merits, no. In fact, the three**  
 24 **Conservatives had no discussion with me at all on this**  
 25 **subject, and as I explained earlier, I briefed Mr Clegg**

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1 **on the process and the timing, but we didn't discuss the**  
 2 **pros and cons of the takeover itself.**  
 3 Q. Thank you. May we go back now to your witness statement  
 4 and the Telegraph sting operation of 21 December 2010.  
 5 What you are reported as having said -- this is at  
 6 01366 -- the circumstances are well-known and set out in  
 7 your statement:  
 8 "You may wonder what is happening with the Murdoch  
 9 press ... I've declared war on Mr Murdoch and I think  
 10 we're going to win' and 'I didn't politicise it because  
 11 it's a legal question, but he is trying to take over  
 12 BSKyB, you probably know that ... He has minority  
 13 shares ... And he wants a majority. And the majority  
 14 control will give him a massive stake. I have blocked  
 15 it, using the powers that I have got. And they are  
 16 legal powers that I have got. I can't politicise it,  
 17 but for the people who know what is happening, this is  
 18 the big thing. His whole empire is now under attack.  
 19 So there are things like that being in government ...  
 20 All we can do in opposition is protest."  
 21 I mean, those comments you accept you made; is that  
 22 correct?  
 23 **A. I did, but that is, I think, an edited version of quite**  
 24 **a long conversation based on a disembodied voice out of**  
 25 **context, but I don't dispute that I said those things.**

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1 Q. In terms of the background context, you say in  
 2 paragraph 64, and I invite you now to put this in your  
 3 own words, that there were two factors which were  
 4 bearing on your mind at the time; is that correct,  
 5 Dr Cable?  
 6 **A. That is correct. Would you like me to develop it?**  
 7 Q. Please.  
 8 **A. I think it needs -- in order to explain the rather**  
 9 **emotional way in which I dealt with this and the very**  
 10 **strong language, I think it is important to understand**  
 11 **there was, I think, a near riot taking place outside my**  
 12 **constituency office, people were trying to force entry,**  
 13 **we had the police present trying to calm the situation.**  
 14 **In order to prevent the disorder getting out of control,**  
 15 **I invited in some of the protesters into my office. We**  
 16 **had a very long discussion, very angry people upbraiding**  
 17 **me about Afghanistan and Palestine and student fees and**  
 18 **capitalism and other things, and somebody was waving**  
 19 **a camcorder in my face, a few inches from my face, so**  
 20 **I was struggling to keep my temper in this situation.**  
 21 **So at the end of that interview, when I'd finally**  
 22 **seen them out, I was in an extremely tense and emotional**  
 23 **frame of mind, and the two women, who I thought were**  
 24 **constituents coming to see me about a constituency**  
 25 **problem, were the next people that I saw. As I've tried**

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1 **to explain here -- I'm normally very calm in dealing**  
 2 **with different situations -- I did offload onto them**  
 3 **a lot of pent-up feelings, not just about the BSKyB case**  
 4 **that I was dealing with, but about my colleagues in**  
 5 **government and a variety of other issues in language**  
 6 **that I wouldn't normally use, in what I thought was**  
 7 **a private, confidential conversation.**  
 8 Q. The second point you make under paragraph 64b is you  
 9 refer to reports coming back to you of how News  
 10 Corporation representatives had been approaching several  
 11 of your Liberal Democrat colleagues in a way you judged  
 12 to be inappropriate, in the sense they were either  
 13 trying to influence your views or seeking material which  
 14 might be used to challenge any adverse ruling you might  
 15 make.  
 16 Can we be clear, what was the source of those  
 17 reports?  
 18 **A. Well, perhaps preface my answer by saying I was**  
 19 **describing the -- the interview in my office took place**  
 20 **a month after the intervention notice, and I was**  
 21 **describing a series of reports I'd had from colleagues,**  
 22 **often second or third-hand, but nonetheless plausible**  
 23 **reports, of significant numbers of my Parliamentary**  
 24 **colleagues in the Lords and in the Commons having had**  
 25 **interviews with Mr Michel and possibly others, and I was**

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1 concerned, indeed I was more than concerned, I was  
 2 angry, which is what came out in my response, at the way  
 3 this was being dealt with.  
 4 I was concerned on two levels. First, there was  
 5 a systematic attempt to politicise the process, to imply  
 6 that somehow or other the whole process was governed by  
 7 the Liberal Democrats, which it wasn't, and I think in  
 8 his email exchange, Jonny Oates -- it is there, I think  
 9 1681 -- does describe his own interpretation of what was  
 10 going on as a systematic attempt by News International  
 11 representatives to politicise the process.  
 12 And secondly, and actually more seriously, I had  
 13 heard directly and indirectly from colleagues that there  
 14 had been veiled threats that if I made the wrong  
 15 decision from their point of view of the company, my  
 16 party would be -- I think somebody used the phrase "done  
 17 over" in the News International press, and I took those  
 18 things seriously, I was very concerned. I had myself  
 19 tried to deal with the process entirely properly and  
 20 impartially, and I discovered that this was happening in  
 21 the background. I frankly stored up my anger at what  
 22 was taking place, but in that very special and tense  
 23 situation, I rather offloaded my feelings.  
 24 Q. So the veiled threats that your party would be done over  
 25 in the News International press, I mean, are you able to

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1 identify who made that threat?  
 2 A. I believe it was in conversations with Mr Michel, but  
 3 I can't be absolutely certain.  
 4 Q. Was Mr Michel's name expressly mentioned to you or not?  
 5 A. It was at that stage, yes, indeed.  
 6 Q. When you said, "I have declared war on Mr Murdoch and  
 7 I think we're going to win", what were you going to win?  
 8 A. Well, I think -- I mean, we're trying to deconstruct  
 9 language in a rather unusual circumstance that  
 10 I described. I think what I meant by "winning" in this  
 11 context was that I had, by carrying out my legal duties  
 12 impartially, I had referred the matter to the  
 13 independent regulators, which the News Corp were so  
 14 anxious to avoid.  
 15 Q. So "win" in the sense of not succumbing to the veiled  
 16 threats that you've referred to. Is that a correct  
 17 interpretation?  
 18 A. Yes, I think that is fair. I was not being intimidated.  
 19 Q. "His whole empire now is under attack". What did you  
 20 mean by that?  
 21 A. Well, I think I was describing a factual situation that  
 22 there was a great deal of controversy at that time  
 23 around the company and the way it operated.  
 24 Q. Does that go wider than the specific context of the  
 25 BSkyB bid, the attack on his whole empire?

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1 A. Yes. As I say, deconstructing individual sentences is  
 2 difficult. It was something I wasn't giving  
 3 a considered policy statement at the time, but I think  
 4 that is a sensible explanation of what I meant at the  
 5 time.  
 6 Q. Was that just your personal view or was it a view shared  
 7 by others within your party in government?  
 8 A. Well, again we're not talking here about the decision,  
 9 we're talking about the wider context, and yes, I mean,  
 10 there was clearly a very somewhat febrile debate going  
 11 on in my party and more widely, stirred up by this  
 12 controversy.  
 13 Q. Are you able to identify the individual who communicated  
 14 the veiled threat?  
 15 A. No, and I certainly know one individual, but he told me  
 16 in confidence and I don't want to breach that  
 17 confidence.  
 18 There was a separate reference in an article in the  
 19 Observer, which I know you have tabbed here, which  
 20 refers to a Cabinet Minister, but I don't know who that  
 21 is.  
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You've just referred to 1681.  
 23 A. That's correct.  
 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: There was a systematic attempt to  
 25 politicise, which it wasn't, and I think in his email

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1 exchange, Jonny Oates -- it's there, I think, 1681.  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'd just like to pick that up while  
 4 we're talking about that. Where is this?  
 5 A. Yes, the sentence I was referring to, 1681, which  
 6 Jonny Oates, who was the director of communications for  
 7 the -- I can't remember his exact role, but he was  
 8 a central figure in our team, he:  
 9 "... said he was unclear why News Corp is seeking  
 10 out the views of people who have no locus in the  
 11 decision-making process and thinking that their views  
 12 indicate that the decision will be political. For him,  
 13 senior Lib Dems who are going around giving us advice  
 14 and recommendations are not representative of Vince's  
 15 mindset and way of making decisions."  
 16 So he's in a sense explaining how I operate but  
 17 nonetheless pointing out that the News Corp  
 18 representatives were trying to build up a case that it  
 19 was politically motivated and were doing this by  
 20 systematically going around my colleagues, maybe seeking  
 21 their views or putting words in their mouths.  
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Actually there's a phrase there that  
 23 I'd not focused on:  
 24 "Contrary to my assertion, he said ..."  
 25 And this is Mr Michel to Mr Murdoch. So Mr Michel

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<p>1 is there -- is he there conceding that he is asserting 2 that it's political?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Well, he is asserting. He clearly believed it was.</b></p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR JAY: Can I ask you, please, now to move on to 6 paragraph 69 of your statement, page 01369. You 7 acknowledged "the language was excessive and reflected 8 the context".</p> <p>9 "I did however consider that by intervening I had 10 acted in a way that might ultimately prove significant 11 in halting the takeover (as indeed proved to be the 12 case, albeit in ways which I did not anticipate)."</p> <p>13 I mean, was it your intention to halt the takeover?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No. My intention was to have the matter properly 15 reviewed by the regulator because I judged that under 16 the process which I had, it satisfied the necessary test 17 for an intervention. So it wasn't my intention. I was 18 constrained by the press and I fully accepted that, and 19 had acted entirely properly. What I'm describing in 20 this sentence is naturally simply a matter of fact, that 21 by acting properly and impartially, I had put the matter 22 in the hands of the regulator.</b></p> <p>23 <b>As it happens, although I was no longer part of the 24 process, the regulator, Ofcom, did conclude that there 25 were issues of substance in relation to plurality --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 the legal merits, which, as I've just pointed out, was 2 vindicated by Ofcom, but that decision, as it happens, 3 the legal one that you were taking, also married up with 4 your private view, your political view, of what was more 5 widely desirable in the public interest. Is that a fair 6 characterisation?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Well, I was quite deliberately and consciously keeping 8 my private view separate from the decision I had to 9 make, and if the legal advice had been different, 10 I would not have made the intervention notice, whatever 11 my private views about News Corp. I would have followed 12 the advice I was given.</b></p> <p>13 Q. But the decision you made did not, as it were, grate 14 with your private view, did it?</p> <p>15 <b>A. It didn't, but -- sorry, at the risk of being boring and 16 repetitive, I was conscious of the need to keep the two 17 things separate.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Thank you. In relation to the sting operation, there 19 was a complaint, as we know from evidence we've heard 20 already, to the PCC, and the PCC upheld the complaint, 21 which was brought by, I think, the chairman of your 22 party, or rather maybe the party as a whole, it doesn't 23 really matter who.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. But it wasn't a complaint made by you. We have the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is that sentence really what you 2 mean, Dr Cable? Because I'm not sure it actually says 3 that. The sentence appears to me to read that you did 4 consider, ie at the time, that by intervening you had 5 acted in a way that might ultimately prove significant 6 in halting the takeover.</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, that -- well, maybe this sentence written in 8 evidence doesn't convey what I really wanted to say, 9 that I was concerned at all times that I should act 10 properly, and did so, but I was also conscious that by 11 putting the matter into the hands of independent 12 regulators, this was contrary to the interests of 13 News Corp, and indeed what they wanted, and would have 14 repercussions.</b></p> <p>15 MR JAY: You're entitled to point out that the view of the 16 independent regulator expressed on 31 December 17 vindicated ex post facto the issue by you of the notice, 18 because if they were applying a slightly higher test 19 than you, it follows by definition that your notice was 20 issued on a correct basis. Is that right?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, that's how I interpreted it, and I think that is 22 fair.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Can I try and analyse the point in a slightly different 24 way, Dr Cable? You've explained to us that you followed 25 an impartial and fair process and came to a decision on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 decision in the adjudication under tab 6. I don't think 2 it's necessary to look at, but they consider the issues 3 and conclude that this was in the nature of a fishing 4 expedition, because there wasn't enough evidence to 5 suggest that this was your private view, which it was 6 necessary therefore to obtain by subterfuge.</p> <p>7 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>8 Q. I grossly summarise what is in fact a more complicated 9 ruling.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But do we know what the consequence 11 of the adverse adjudication was, if any?</p> <p>12 MR JAY: Published on the front page of the Daily Telegraph.</p> <p>13 Nothing more than that.</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>15 MR JAY: Mr Gallagher gave us some short evidence about it.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p>17 MR JAY: Do you have a view more generally as to whether 18 these are appropriate decisions for politicians?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes, I do. I think it's right that politicians are 20 involved -- elected politicians are involved in the 21 process. As we described the first stage of my 22 interview, there is a series of checks and balances 23 built in, there is a major role for the regulators, but 24 elected politicians, ministers, have a role in the 25 process, and I think that's absolutely right.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

18 (Pages 69 to 72)

<p>1 <b>I think it's right because when we're talking about</b>                  2 <b>matters of public interest, we're making qualitative</b>                  3 <b>judgments. We're not following a sort of quantitative</b>                  4 <b>metric, which is what one would normally do with, say,</b>                  5 <b>a competition case, and I think it's right that those</b>                  6 <b>decisions be made by people who are -- have legitimacy</b>                  7 <b>through the democratic process, who are accountable to</b>                  8 <b>Parliament, as I was, and, you know, I think there is</b>                  9 <b>a -- we hear this in many other contexts, that when</b>                  10 <b>controversial, difficult issues are involved, it's often</b>                  11 <b>said, why don't we take this out of the hands of the</b>                  12 <b>politicians? I think that's in a way intellectually</b>                  13 <b>lazy. I think where we do have a genuine public</b>                  14 <b>interest choice to make, I think it is appropriate in</b>                  15 <b>a democracy that we involve the politicians rather than</b>                  16 <b>some kind of platonic guardians who are in some sense</b>                  17 <b>isolated from the political process.</b>                  18 Q. Given the controversial nature of these issues and the                  19 particular circumstances of this case, which added to                  20 the controversy, would you agree that politicians are                  21 likely to have a strong view one way or the other?                  22 <b>A. A strong view on?</b>                  23 Q. On the wider policy considerations which might feed into                  24 the legal merits.                  25 <b>A. I'm not sure I totally follow you. So you're implying</b>                  Page 73</p>	<p>1 the television, lives in our society.                  2 When I come into court and consider by way of                  3 judicial review the exercise of my judicial                  4 responsibilities, then I am focusing on a set of                  5 tramlines which are very constrained, and my personal                  6 view, whatever some newspapers might think about why                  7 judges decide cases, is neither here nor there. There                  8 is room to consider are the right considerations taken                  9 into account, the whole Wednesbury business, but that's                  10 an exercise that's entirely feasible.                  11 Now, if I take your planning example, I could well                  12 understand that local authorities and councillors who                  13 are responsible for their city or their neighbourhood                  14 would be able to take a holistic view against a planning                  15 policy about a particular development, but I have no                  16 doubt that if a councillor lived on a housing estate                  17 that might be specifically affected by a particular                  18 decision, the councillor would probably say, "Maybe                  19 I should be involved in that decision"; would that be                  20 right?                  21 <b>A. That is correct. There is a process in place -- it's</b>                  22 <b>a long time since I was in local government -- by which</b>                  23 <b>councillors I think the phrase is recuse themselves if</b>                  24 <b>they have a personal interest. I think having</b>                  25 <b>a personal interest is different from having an opinion.</b>                  Page 75</p>
<p>1 <b>that politicians might be biased because they have</b>                  2 <b>a policy view? Is that the question?</b>                  3 Q. Yes.                  4 <b>A. Well, it does require self-discipline, and the necessity</b>                  5 <b>to put this -- put one's personal views about the policy</b>                  6 <b>on one side. As I said earlier on, this was an unusual</b>                  7 <b>and very important case, but there are thousands of</b>                  8 <b>local councillors up and down the country who are making</b>                  9 <b>quasi-judicial decisions every day, and I don't think</b>                  10 <b>anybody would seriously suggest that a choice about</b>                  11 <b>planning, which is quasi-judicial, should be wholly</b>                  12 <b>removed from democratic decision-making simply because</b>                  13 <b>councillors have a view about their neighbourhoods.</b>                  14 <b>I think that would be wrong.</b>                  15 <b>I think there's everything to be said for having</b>                  16 <b>elected officials, councillors or MPs, as ministers</b>                  17 <b>making decisions in public interest cases.</b>                  18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I think there's a great deal in what                  19 you say, but could I test it in this way, Dr Cable? Let                  20 me start from not a quasi-judicial position but                  21 a judicial position, because I'm rather familiar with                  22 that territory. I might have a view on wind farms or                  23 nuclear energy or a whole range of topics, on approach                  24 to terrorism, yet that view is a view simply as a member                  25 of the public, as somebody who reads newspapers, watches                  Page 74</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, but I wonder whether it's not                  2 a bit more nuanced than that, because having a personal                  3 interest is clear, and if somebody came in front of me                  4 who I knew or who in some way was linked to issues that                  5 I was personally involved in, then I would recuse myself                  6 and there's plenty of authority for circumstances where                  7 judges haven't and then later have been criticised for                  8 not recusing themselves.                  9 But what concerns me about this type of decision is                  10 that it can be mixed up where, say, the press are                  11 involved, because everybody will have not merely just                  12 a dispassionate view as a member of the public about,                  13 say, News Corp, or one might take a different issue,                  14 when it becomes extremely difficult to separate out the,                  15 if you like, evisceral view from the purely judicial.                  16 Now, it may have been that this decision could have                  17 had to be made by a minister whose party had either been                  18 supported, vigorously, by News Corp, or opposed                  19 vigorously. I just wonder whether we're not asking                  20 rather too much of our politicians, who have gone                  21 through the fire of political campaigning and had to                  22 cope with this sort of publicity, to be able wholly to                  23 put aside the evisceral reaction when deciding the                  24 matter judicially.                  25 The reason I ask you about it is because some may                  Page 76</p>

<p>1 say that for all sorts of reasons, and I understand your 2 evidence, what you came out with on 21 December was an 3 evisceral reaction, which could have remained hidden, 4 but does in fact then create concern.</p> <p>5 Somebody has said I think in this Inquiry, "Well, 6 where will you find a politician who doesn't have a view 7 about Rupert Murdoch, either vigorously against him", 8 and I've heard some politicians who have spoken to that 9 effect from that seat, "or vigorously for him", and I've 10 heard politicians who have spoken from that perspective.</p> <p>11 So that's why I'd be very concerned to hear your 12 view, not in the general run of cases, which I'm sure 13 you're right about, but in the specific case where 14 politicians inevitably will have strong views and may 15 have been affected personally by issues such as this.</p> <p>16 That's a long speech, but do you get the concern I'm 17 trying to raise with you?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I do, yes. I have two responses to it.</b></p> <p>19 <b>I think what you're saying does suggest the</b> 20 <b>importance of politicians with major decisions having</b> 21 <b>considerable self-discipline in putting aside those</b> 22 <b>visceral reactions, and I think mine broke down</b> 23 <b>momentarily in that interview but otherwise was</b> 24 <b>maintained, I think.</b></p> <p>25 <b>But the other answer to your question, I think, is</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 who -- but thereby excludes any risk of what I might 2 call subterranean influence.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Well, I think the direction of policy in the last --</b> 4 <b>over the last generation has been in that direction, and</b> 5 <b>politicians have been progressively removed from</b> 6 <b>competition policy decisions, but there is a small</b> 7 <b>residue where there is a genuine issue of what one could</b> 8 <b>call national -- of public interest.</b></p> <p>9 <b>Let me just take the example which has never been</b> 10 <b>subject to test in practice, which is national security.</b> 11 <b>It's difficult to imagine how one could construct a set</b> 12 <b>of guidelines for people who are totally outside of the</b> 13 <b>political domain and are not accountable to Parliament</b> 14 <b>to make a qualitative judgment about the national</b> 15 <b>interest in cases of security, and I'd have thought that</b> 16 <b>there was, you know -- so in practice, I think the issue</b> 17 <b>is whether we have chosen the right areas to ringfence</b> 18 <b>for semi-political processes.</b></p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Although in relation to national 20 security we do in fact have such a process. The 21 national security implications in relation to certain 22 decisions about a particular cleric are articulated and 23 asserted and then ultimately fall for decision by CIAC.</p> <p>24 <b>A. I'm not familiar with that process as you are.</b></p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So be it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 in your first sentence, where you said that there are 2 tramlines. There is a very clearly prescribed process 3 which the politicians have to follow, they are subject 4 to legal advice at every stage, they are aware that they 5 can be challenged if those visceral views were public or 6 had been expressed. There is ample protection for the 7 parties in the case to bring subsequent action if the 8 politician had behaved unreasonably, and I think that, 9 you know, I was dealing with a process that has 10 a mixture of political input, which I think is important 11 and legitimate, and legal protection, and I wouldn't be 12 comfortable with simply abandoning this quite complex 13 arrangement for something that seeks artificial comfort 14 in a purely -- well, bureaucratic or purely judicial 15 mechanism.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm certainly not encouraging anybody 17 to go the judicial route. We have more than enough work 18 to do. But another possibility may be -- and I raise it 19 for you to consider -- that the politicians provide 20 their policy view in the area that is relevant to the 21 consideration then being taken, but in an open, 22 transparent and clear way, so that that concern, to such 23 extent as it is relevant, can be applied by those who 24 are experts in the field -- in this case the Competition 25 Commission, perhaps, or Ofcom; I'm not trying to decide</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 <b>A. But I think in most of these cases a minister does</b> 2 <b>become involved. I may be wrong in that case, but</b> 3 <b>I think there has to be a role for the democratically</b> 4 <b>elected representative.</b></p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I entirely agree --</p> <p>6 <b>A. But you're suggesting that this should simply be in</b> 7 <b>framing the rules and I can see that --</b></p> <p>8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, I'm going further than that. I'm 9 going further than that. What I'm asking you about -- 10 and I'm not suggesting it, I'm merely seeking to address 11 the terms of reference that I was given, which require 12 me to make recommendations for how future concerns 13 about, among other things, regulation and cross-media 14 ownership should be dealt with by all the relevant 15 authorities, including parliament, government, the 16 prosecuting authorities and the police. So I'm simply 17 trying to do what I've been asked to do.</p> <p>18 What I'm asking you is not that you should merely 19 frame the questions or the rules, but that you should 20 indeed have an ability to make the strongest 21 representations as to the policy considerations that are 22 in your view as a politician important, and then the way 23 in which that fits into the framework of the legal 24 decision is then open and transparent.</p> <p>25 So the decision may be made by somebody else, but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 it's made based upon such relevant policy considerations                  2 as the minister has articulated and which everybody can                  3 see.                  4 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm not suggesting that's necessarily                  6 the right answer, I'm merely asking for your view.                  7 <b>A. No, I can see the argument you're making, and I can see</b>                  8 <b>that in certain circumstances that could produce --</b>                  9 <b>I don't know how to put the correct phrase, but good</b>                  10 <b>quality decisions, but I think you may well achieve that</b>                  11 <b>objective, but you would lose another, which is that in</b>                  12 <b>making an important public policy decision, the</b>                  13 <b>politician is ultimately accountable to Parliament.</b>                  14 <b>In this particular case -- I wasn't, as it happened,</b>                  15 <b>I hadn't reached that stage -- I could be called to</b>                  16 <b>Parliament to explain my behaviour. I could be called</b>                  17 <b>to the Prime Minister to explain my behaviour as</b>                  18 <b>a member of his government. And that does seem to me to</b>                  19 <b>represent a valuable democratic source of checks and</b>                  20 <b>balances in the system, which your process would lose,</b>                  21 <b>although I can see the advantages.</b>                  22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I don't know it would necessarily                  23 lose it, because the articulation of policy in relation                  24 to any challenge to a decision, had you gone the whole                  25 way and made the decision, then questions could still be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 that I've had to deal with this particular issue with.                  2 But given your own experience, your view would be very                  3 valuable to me.                  4 <b>A. Well, thank you. And I certainly understand and respect</b>                  5 <b>that argument. But I think what you're trying to</b>                  6 <b>achieve can be achieved if there are appropriate checks</b>                  7 <b>and balances and legal protections built into the</b>                  8 <b>system.</b>                  9 <b>I know this is taking the conversation in a slightly</b>                  10 <b>different direction, but the major area where I've had</b>                  11 <b>to confront the dilemmas you describe is in terms of</b>                  12 <b>economic policy and whether or not the Bank of England</b>                  13 <b>should be an independent body, separate from</b>                  14 <b>politicians, determining interest rates, and I was one</b>                  15 <b>of the people who argued for that independence when it</b>                  16 <b>was established 12 years ago.</b>                  17 <b>But I think what we are now discovering is that</b>                  18 <b>there are -- you know, a very different economic</b>                  19 <b>environment, that there are very big decisions which</b>                  20 <b>probably are political rather than technical, which the</b>                  21 <b>politicians are no longer able to make, because they</b>                  22 <b>have handed over decision-making to an independent</b>                  23 <b>arbiter constrained with rules, which were devised, as</b>                  24 <b>you say, to reflect the policy environment of that time.</b>                  25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm very pleased that you felt able</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 asked about how you framed your policy, and of course                  2 the decision could or may be challenged judicially. As                  3 I say, I'm not looking for more work, but I am seeking                  4 to try to -- if you like, to some extent protect those                  5 who are responsible for government, those in high                  6 office, from the challenge of subterranean                  7 decision-making. That on the face of it you've ticked                  8 all the boxes, but in reality something else has                  9 happened entirely. There it is.                  10 <b>A. I think the last phrase is a slightly pejorative way of</b>                  11 <b>describing it.</b>                  12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh no, no, no. From the allegation.                  13 I'm not in any sense suggesting that that's what                  14 happened, either in this case or indeed happens in any                  15 case. But what's going through this entire                  16 correspondence is suggestions that other influences are                  17 playing on the decision, and it's quite difficult to see                  18 how you deal with that, other than saying, "They                  19 didn't!" That's the point. Whereas the idea, if                  20 there's anything in it, can mean that you've set out all                  21 your policy concerns, they're there, and therefore                  22 nobody can pretend that there's anything that's not on                  23 the face of what I've thought.                  24 I'm not saying that's where I am, but -- because                  25 this is -- I think you're probably the first witness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 to move the analogy from one with which I am comfortable                  2 to one with which you are comfortable, but I take the                  3 point entirely.                  4 <b>A. Thank you.</b>                  5 MR JAY: Dr Cable, is this right, that your position would                  6 amount to this, that ordinarily people would understand                  7 that politicians could keep their private or publicly                  8 expressed views of a political nature away from a legal                  9 decision of this sort; is that right?                  10 <b>A. Yes. And I think we must assert that.</b>                  11 Q. So, to put it in more legal terms, an appearance of bias                  12 doesn't arise because the public understand, as the                  13 reasonable person in the street, as it were, that this                  14 segregation can occur and ordinarily does occur, is that                  15 fair?                  16 <b>A. Yes, I would hope that we would get to a world where</b>                  17 <b>that was generally understood, but it if it's not</b>                  18 <b>understood, it's important that there are legal</b>                  19 <b>protections built in for the parties, as is the case at</b>                  20 <b>present.</b>                  21 Q. Presumably you would not wish to comment whether in your                  22 particular case the private view, which entered the                  23 public domain in certain circumstances, might give rise                  24 to the perception of bias because of the way in which                  25 you expressed yourself; is that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 <b>A. No, I do understand in my case that the remarks I made</b>  2 <b>did create a perception of bias and therefore made it</b>  3 <b>difficult for me to continue. I fully understand that.</b>  4 <b>It doesn't mean to say I would have been biased;</b>  5 <b>I wouldn't have been. But nonetheless there was</b>  6 <b>a perception issue and that had to be taken into account</b>  7 <b>by the Prime Minister.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Because public lawyers fully understand the difference  9 between a perception of bias and actual bias?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>11 Q. And we know very few cases where actual bias is ever  12 established. They succeed, if they succeed at all, at  13 a much lower level of proof of a perception of bias,  14 which is part and parcel of the concept of  15 quasi-judicial, I believe -- indeed, I know.</p> <p>16 Do you have any observations to make on the, as it  17 were, transfer of responsibilities to another department  18 or not?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Well, I was angry with myself at what had happened, but</b>  20 <b>given what you just said about perception of bias,</b>  21 <b>I understood that there was no alternative in this case.</b></p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Why did you think -- why do you think  23 the Telegraph came after you and your colleagues?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I don't think that's difficult to understand. The</b>  25 <b>Telegraph, like several other newspapers, was very</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 <b>point that Judge Leveson made earlier, that it's helpful</b>  2 <b>to have a framework within which decisions are made,</b>  3 <b>I rather cautiously suggest one way in which it could</b>  4 <b>move.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Dr Cable, you've provided us with information as to your  6 interactions with proprietors, editors and senior media  7 executives over the period 11 May 2010 to 15 July 2011.  8 It's under tab 23. They're not on the copious end of  9 the scale, I think it may be fair to observe.</p> <p>10 <b>A. No. As I said earlier, I try as a matter of good</b>  11 <b>practice to meet, albeit infrequently, the main editors</b>  12 <b>and occasionally proprietors, but I don't want to make</b>  13 <b>a habit of it.</b></p> <p>14 Q. And that's because?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Well, because I think it's important that I know who</b>  16 <b>they are and they know who I am, but I don't want to be</b>  17 <b>in a position where I'm dependent on them or they're</b>  18 <b>dependent on me.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Do you feel, putting it bluntly, that you are at  20 a disadvantage here compared with those in other parties  21 whose lists of a similar sort might be said to  22 demonstrate a more frequent level of interaction with  23 proprietors and editors?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Well, my party hasn't had terribly good treatment over</b>  25 <b>the years, and one can speculate as to the variety of</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 <b>hostile to the Coalition. They didn't want a Coalition</b>  2 <b>government, they wanted a Conservative government, and</b>  3 <b>felt that the Liberal Democrats were compromising their</b>  4 <b>true Conservative values, and so all the Liberal</b>  5 <b>Democrat ministers in the government, not just me, were</b>  6 <b>subject to this intervention in our private and</b>  7 <b>confidential conversations with constituents.</b></p> <p>8 MR JAY: Paragraphs 76 to 78 now, Dr Cable. This deals with  9 the quite complex question of whether the present  10 competition arrangements applicable to media ownership  11 are sufficient and whether there might be improvements.  12 Are you able to summarise for us your position on that,  13 please?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Well, I think in that paragraph I'm trying to move</b>  15 <b>a little bit in the direction that I think Judge Leveson</b>  16 <b>has just described as to whether it with be helpful to</b>  17 <b>set out the policy framework more clearly and explicitly</b>  18 <b>before decisions are made, and one way of doing that</b>  19 <b>would be in the case of cross-media ownership to</b>  20 <b>establish a metric against which plurality as well as</b>  21 <b>competition could be governed.</b></p> <p>22 <b>I recognise that's difficult, and there is this</b>  23 <b>very, very considerable difficulty of the new media and</b>  24 <b>how far they're to be counted in or counted out of such</b>  25 <b>a measurement, but partly because I do understand the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 <b>reasons for that, but I think this level of engagement,</b>  2 <b>which is positive, we're not avoiding senior</b>  3 <b>decision-makers in the press, but nonetheless, but</b>  4 <b>infrequent, I believe that's the right one, and I'm now</b>  5 <b>a minister rather than an opposition politician and</b>  6 <b>I intend to maintain that tempo.</b></p> <p>7 Q. In terms of resetting or recalibrating the relationship  8 between politicians and the press, aside from general  9 words of recommendation, and counselling as to good  10 behaviour, as it were, is there anything specific which  11 you would wish to ask us to consider?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I'm not an expert on media and media policy, so</b>  13 <b>I approach this with some reserve, but I do have a view</b>  14 <b>on the shape that I think the future media regulation</b>  15 <b>should take, and I think the way I would approach it</b>  16 <b>would be to say that there are two kind of archetypes.</b>  17 <b>One is a kind of state-regulated system, like Ofcom, but</b>  18 <b>applied to the press, and I think I would take the view</b>  19 <b>that that is too intrusive and would compromise press</b>  20 <b>freedom and the freedom of people to pursue</b>  21 <b>investigative journalism. I wouldn't want to go down</b>  22 <b>that road.</b></p> <p>23 <b>But equally, a wholly permissive system presents</b>  24 <b>problems of its own and I guess the reason why you're</b>  25 <b>having this Inquiry is partly because a very permissive</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

22 (Pages 85 to 88)

<p>1 self-regulatory system has not worked well, and that                  2 what we're ideally looking for is somewhere between                  3 those two extreme archetypes, and I did suggest very                  4 cautiously, because I don't have a strong basis of my                  5 own, that my party's view had something to commend it,                  6 and that broadly is that you have a statutory                  7 architecture, possibly by analogy with, say, the medical                  8 profession, under which you have a legal framework in                  9 which it's possible to apply disciplinary sanction, but                  10 within that framework the profession, in this case the                  11 industry, is self-regulating, and it's trying to capture                  12 some the advantages of regulation and self-regulation.                  13 I'm not sure I can pursue that argument in great --                  14 I've seen similar types of models operating in Western                  15 Europe, Germany has a similar kind of model, but their                  16 whole legal system is quite different, so I wouldn't                  17 push that too far.                  18 It's clear that there are issues that do need                  19 addressing at present. I would advocate, for example,                  20 that if people are defamed, that rather than go through                  21 our complex legal system, that they have the right of                  22 reply, would be the kind of innovation I'd like to see.                  23 I think a hybrid structure with a statutory                  24 framework and a self-regulating professional system                  25 within it seems to me to make broad sense.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 be inappropriate to discuss the bid.                  2 Q. Yes. So if the bid was on the agenda, you could not                  3 discuss it?                  4 A. Indeed, and both with parties who were in favour --                  5 there were occasions when I met parties who were against                  6 the bid, and I specifically excluded that subject from                  7 the agenda.                  8 Q. Yes, I understand that. So can I just explore that for                  9 a moment, because it's easy to understand that it would                  10 be quite wrong for you to have a meeting in which you                  11 expressed a concluded view as to what you were going to                  12 do, but would it really be wrong, and was it against                  13 your advice, to have a meeting in which you listened to                  14 the arguments to make sure that you understood them and                  15 indeed to give the party who was very closely affected                  16 the reassurance that you did understand the arguments                  17 and that you had the points on board?                  18 A. Well, as I think I said in my evidence, there's nothing                  19 wrong with that argument in principle, but if I were to                  20 do that, there would be a perception of bias and I would                  21 have to have meetings with all the other parties who may                  22 well take a very different view, and I was confident of                  23 my ability to understand the written documentation and                  24 feel it was unnecessary to have a face-to-face meeting.                  25 Q. Of course the risk in a transaction like this of not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: On a number of occasions over the                  2 last few months I've suggested similar ideas, meeting                  3 different responses.                  4 MR JAY: Thank you very much, Dr Cable.                  5 A. Thank you.                  6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Dr Cable, thank you.                  7 MR DAVIES: I'm sorry, I wonder if I might ask -- these                  8 arise out of the evidence Dr Cable has given rather than                  9 out of what was in his statement.                  10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Right. What are the topics?                  11 MR DAVIES: I wanted to ask him something about meeting with                  12 News Corp and then about what he said about                  13 politicisation and what he said about Mr Michel.                  14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.                  15 Questions by MR DAVIES                  16 MR DAVIES: Dr Cable, my name is Rhodri Davies and I act for                  17 News International and for News Corporation.                  18 To start with the question of meetings for the                  19 moment, as I understood your evidence this morning, your                  20 understanding was that you could not have a meeting with                  21 News Corporation which was specifically about the bid;                  22 is that right?                  23 A. That was -- let me repeat what I said. There were no                  24 fundamental objections to having a meeting, but the                  25 advice I had received from officials was that it would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 having a face-to-face meeting is that a lot of                  2 speculation may build up as to what is going through                  3 your mind.                  4 A. Well, there would have been a lot of speculation if                  5 I had met one party and not others.                  6 Q. But to do that, Dr Cable, you can have the meeting and                  7 you can have civil servants present and it can be                  8 minuted and you can publish the minutes. Does that                  9 not --                  10 A. That's quite right, no, and I didn't rule that out.                  11 I merely said that if I had conceded that to one party,                  12 I would have, in the interests of fairness and                  13 impartiality, had to concede it to others, and there                  14 were a lot of people who potentially wished to talk to                  15 me.                  16 Q. You mentioned in the context of the remarks you made on                  17 3 December the politicisation of the process. Would you                  18 agree that News Corp's preference at the beginning of                  19 this exercise was that it did not want the bid                  20 politicised?                  21 A. I had no idea what their preference was.                  22 Q. Well, Mr James Murdoch gave, I think, very clear                  23 evidence to this Inquiry that his position and                  24 News Corp's position was that they had a very strong                  25 argument on the statutory tests, and that that was the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

<p>1 way they wanted it decided.</p> <p>2 <b>A. That is the way I approached it also.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Yes. And you have no reason to think that that was not</p> <p>4 accurate evidence by Mr Murdoch and that was the way</p> <p>5 News Corp wanted to approach it?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I had no reason to disbelieve him. My reference to</b></p> <p>7 <b>politicisation related to a particular phase of the</b></p> <p>8 <b>process, where the reports came back to me of the</b></p> <p>9 <b>conversations which Mr Michel in particular had had with</b></p> <p>10 <b>my Liberal Democrat colleagues, and I was responding to</b></p> <p>11 <b>that.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Yes. On that, we have seen this morning as Mr Jay took</p> <p>13 you to it, and I'm just taking one of the emails, this</p> <p>14 one is 27 September 2010. If you want to look at it,</p> <p>15 it's your tab 12, and the reference is 01649. That is</p> <p>16 the one where Mr Michel is recording a talk with your</p> <p>17 main economic adviser, who I think we identified as Lord</p> <p>18 Oakeshott, and what Mr Michel says halfway down is that</p> <p>19 one of the things influencing you is a very strong pure</p> <p>20 political pressure from Lib Dems and Labour.</p> <p>21 So what one sees there is that News Corp are being</p> <p>22 told, rightly or wrongly, that the issue is being</p> <p>23 politicised.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Well, if you'll just allow me to go back, I did explain</b></p> <p>25 <b>I'm not totally sure who this was. It could have been</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 <b>I treat it in that way. No, but it occurred within that</b></p> <p>2 <b>period.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Within what period?</p> <p>4 <b>A. The period after the intervention notice. It was in --</b></p> <p>5 <b>I think we're talking here about November, probably.</b></p> <p>6 Q. That's between 4 November and 3 December?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Mm. I didn't make a note of the date, so I can't</b></p> <p>8 <b>confirm that absolutely.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Are you willing or able to say when the threat is</p> <p>10 supposed to have been made?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Well, it was in the context of the conversation that my</b></p> <p>12 <b>colleague had had.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Yes, but do we know when that was?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Well, I've just told you I didn't know when that was.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Sorry, I thought you were -- I hope this isn't confused.</p> <p>16 I thought you were explaining when you came to hear of</p> <p>17 it.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. And that, as I understand it, was between the</p> <p>20 intervention notice and the discussion you had with the</p> <p>21 Telegraph journalists?</p> <p>22 <b>A. But I don't know when the meeting was that my colleague</b></p> <p>23 <b>had.</b></p> <p>24 Q. But you understand, I'm sure, Dr Cable, that without</p> <p>25 knowing who is supposed to have been threatened and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 <b>a composite of two people or it could have been one.</b></p> <p>2 <b>They may have been told that, and I made it very clear</b></p> <p>3 <b>in my reply earlier that that was not how I was judging</b></p> <p>4 <b>the case.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Yes.</p> <p>6 <b>A. And that is what is relevant.</b></p> <p>7 Q. I understand that. All I'm asking you to agree,</p> <p>8 Dr Cable, is that there's no indication here that</p> <p>9 News Corp wanted this bid politicised. They were being</p> <p>10 told it was, but that wasn't what they wanted to hear.</p> <p>11 <b>A. That may be the way -- the thoughts going through their</b></p> <p>12 <b>mind. I can't comment on that. I wasn't dealing with</b></p> <p>13 <b>them myself and I just had to deal with the facts as</b></p> <p>14 <b>they presented themselves.</b></p> <p>15 Q. All right. You went on to say that you had received</p> <p>16 reports that Mr Michel had made veiled threats to,</p> <p>17 I think, Liberal Democrat politicians, and you said</p> <p>18 there was one case where you received that report</p> <p>19 directly; is that right?</p> <p>20 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Do I have this right, you are not prepared to identify</p> <p>22 the source of that report to you?</p> <p>23 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Are you willing to say when you received that report?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No, because I don't have a record of the meeting and</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 when, it's extremely difficult for Mr Michel or anyone</p> <p>2 else to respond to the allegation?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Correct. I think if I take you back, I'm trying to</b></p> <p>4 <b>explain the context in which I made my own comments in</b></p> <p>5 <b>a private and confidential conversation, and what it was</b></p> <p>6 <b>that had made me seriously disturbed about the way</b></p> <p>7 <b>News International were operating. I was explaining my</b></p> <p>8 <b>own reactions and not seeking to build up a case against</b></p> <p>9 <b>Mr Michel. I'm merely explaining how I reacted and when</b></p> <p>10 <b>I reacted.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Because of course as you've explained, you yourself,</p> <p>12 I think, were never in receipt of any such improper</p> <p>13 conduct?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No, because I never met the parties concerned.</b></p> <p>15 MR DAVIES: Thank you very much. Thank you, sir.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you, Dr Cable.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Thank you.</b></p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: 2 o'clock.</p> <p>19 (12.45 pm)</p> <p>20 (The luncheon adjournment)</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>

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