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Sent: 09/07/2011 15:12 CET
To: Commons Media <commonsmedia@parliament.uk>
Subject: Letter from Brooks and Coulson's legal reps to Home Affairs Committee Chairman

Home Affairs Committee

9th July 2011

Home Affairs Committee seek further evidence from Yates, NewsCorp and Coulson

The Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee Rt. Hon Keith Vaz MP has received replies from Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson regarding allegations of involvement in phone hacking and payments of police officers.

The Committee is due to receive evidence on the previous and current phone hacking inquiries from Andy Hayman CBE QPM, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations at the Metropolitan Police at the time of the first investigation, Peter Clarke, former Assistant Commissioner Specialist Operations at the Metropolitan Police and Deputy Assistant Commissioner Sue Akers QPM who is leading Operation Weeting on Tuesday 12th July.

The Committee is currently awaiting a reply from Assistant Commissioner John Yates concerning his review of the 2006 police investigation into phone hacking and allegations over the Milly Dowler case.

(1) (1) Letter from Andy Coulson's legal representatives DLA Piper to Chairman:

We act for Andy Coulson who has passed us a copy of your letter to him of 6 July 2011.

We, of course, understand that your Committee would wish to have answers to the questions you pose, particularly as the issue of phone hacking has taken a new turn in the past 48 hours and there is intense media interest in it.

Your Committee was convened shortly before the first police investigation into phone hacking concluded, and just before the CPS advised on the evidence that has been collected. Since then, however, the current police investigation into allegations of phone hacking has commenced (Operation Weeting), led by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Sue Akers, and on Wednesday 6th July a further police investigation (Operation Elveden) was announced to look into new allegations about payments by

the News of the World to police officers. This is also being led by DAC Akers. In fact, by the time you receive this letter Mr Coulson will have attended a police station in London voluntarily to be interviewed.

These allegations, individually and collectively, are extremely serious. A number of direct allegations have been made in the media about Mr Coulson's role in the subject matter of both Metropolitan police inquiries. Because of this, we have advised Mr Coulson that it would be inappropriate to respond to the questions posed in your letter, as they go to the very heart of the issues that the police investigations are looking into. We recognise it is within the prerogative of a parliamentary committee to investigate these matters but it must be important to balance the interests of Parliament against the interests of justice in ensuring that any criminal investigation or process is not prejudiced by a parliamentary inquiry prematurely exploring issues with potential witnesses or suspects before the police have had a chance to complete their inquiries. Of course a claim of parliamentary privilege might be an answer to any concerns that the courts might have about any interference by a Select Committee with the course of justice but we must ask you to reflect on whether it is appropriate for you to pursue the inquiries you make of Mr Coulson at this time.

You will find the answers to some of your questions in Mr Coulson's previous evidence as he has already been questioned in Parliament by the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

There has been much debate about the police investigations proceeding before any public inquiry is commenced, so as not to prejudice those investigations. We would respectfully submit that the same consideration should apply equally to the Select Committees, particularly where they are asking questions of an individual who is in jeopardy of criminal investigation and possible criminal proceedings. To do so would flout the enshrined statutory and common law rights and protections he ordinarily has, in every environment other than a Parliamentary one.

(2) (2) *Letter Rebekah Brooks to Chairman:*

Phone Hacking

Thank you for your letter of Tuesday 5 July, on behalf of the Committee, seeking further information in reference to the allegations surrounding phone hacking at the *News of the World*.

Like everyone I was appalled and shocked when I was informed of the new allegations related to Milly Dowler and her family – and, indeed, the further awful revelations over the course of the last few days. As I said to News International staff on Tuesday, it is almost too horrific to believe that a professional journalist, or even a freelance inquiry agent, working on behalf of a member of the *News of the World* staff could engage in such alleged practices.

In response to the specific questions you raise in your letter, I want to be absolutely clear that as editor of *News of the World* I no knowledge whatsoever of phone hacking in the case of Milly Dowler and her family, or in any other cases during my tenure.

I also want to reassure you that the practice of phone hacking is not continuing at the *News of the World*. Also, for the avoidance of doubt, I should add that we have no reason believe that any phone hacking occurred at any other of our titles.

As you know, there are two major police investigations taking place and we are cooperating fully and actively with both. Indeed, it was News International which voluntarily brought evidence which led to the opening of Operation Weeting and Operation Elveden. This full cooperation will continue until the police's work is done.

We will also cooperate fully with the two public inquiries announced by the Prime Minister this morning. In addition, as you may have seen, we have instructed Olswang LLP to undertake a full review of our policies, practices and systems and to advise us to ensure that journalistic standards are properly maintained in the future.

The hurt and suffering caused to Milly Dowler's family, and the many other alleged crime victims of phone hacking, is horrendous and inexcusable. We will continue to do all that we can, with the police, to discover the truth and face up to the mistakes and wrongdoing of the past.

(3) Andy Hayman and Peter Clarke will appear before the Committee on Tuesday 12th July at 12pm

(4) Sue Akers will appear before the Committee on Tuesday 12th July at 12.30pm

Kind regards

Alex Paterson

Media Officer, House of Commons Select Committees:

Defence, Public Accounts, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, National Security Strategy,
European Scrutiny

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