

Dr Julian Lewis MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

11 July 2011

Dear Julian

News Corp and BskyB

I understand you have a Commons vote on the BskyB issue this Wednesday. I hope you will vote to halt the takeover.

There has been much said by Jeremy Hunt and others that there are procedural or legal reasons why he cannot intervene. Apparently some constraints arose because of the way conditions were established by Vince Cable. Unfortunately Vince Cable lost his job because of the clear view he expressed that the deal should not go ahead: Commons sense frustrated. ***Stop Press: Jeremy Hunt is now writing to Ofcom and the OFT 'seeking advice'. Get some spine man! You are the minister! Don't wait for 'advice'. Stop the deal!***

Plainly the deal should not go ahead whilst investigations into phone hacking. More importantly than that, Rupert Murdoch's (and News Corp's) suitability as a media owner has to be questioned. In my view Rupert Murdoch has done some good things, particularly freeing the British press from union stranglehold and risking his capital on satellite broadcasting. On the other hand, his chequebook journalists have had a material influence, a very bad influence, on the moral scaffolding of our country. I would argue that much of our society's present malaise—uncaring selfishness, over-emphasis on vacuous celebrity, choice of poor role models by the young—can be ascribed to Rupert Murdoch's over-weening presence as a mass communicator. Of course there are others one could name: he is not alone. But he is powerful and we—you—must not allow him to continue the trend to complete destruction of societal values. It is at last admitted by both Conservative and Labour leaders that Rupert Murdoch has had far too much influence on them: Margaret Thatcher kowtowed, Tony Blair famously kowtowed, David Cameron kowtowed. Now the leaders begin to see a chink between the leviathan's scales: Murdoch has been rumbled. For goodness sake don't lose the chance to stop him now, or you will live to regret it.

Even if you disagree with me about the balance of Rupert Murdoch's influence on our Country, surely you have to agree that no-one should be allowed to control the most of the press and all of satellite television: not HM Government, not News Corp, nor anyone else. That must be blindingly obvious even to people who have up till now been cowed by this big beast. If you listened to Any Questions last week you'll have heard Ken Livingstone remind us that in his first mayoral election campaign, no newspaper except (I think) The Guardian and The Observer did other than support Ken's rival. Despite that, the people voted for Ken. MPs can now take the same view: Murdoch ***is not able to*** corral the whole voting population: to think that insults us all; it is a myth, and it has now once and for all to be exploded.

BANG. There you are. Don't you feel a lot better now?

Please can you assure me you will vote to prevent Rupert Murdoch's takeover of BskyB?

Yours sincerely, as ever

John Dexter