

G. Brown
First Statement
"GB2"
30 May 2012

**IN THE MATTER OF THE LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE,
PRACTICES AND ETHICS OF THE PRESS**

EXHIBIT "GB2"

**This is the exhibit marked "GB2" referred to in the witness
statement of Gordon Brown dated 30 May 2012.**

**EXTRACT FROM SPEECH TO LIBERTY
25th OCTOBER 2007**

**Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP
Prime Minister**

....In my view, the key to making these hard choices in a way that is compatible with our traditions of liberty is to, at all times, apply the liberty test, respecting fundamental rights and freedoms, and wherever action is needed by government, it never subjects the citizen to arbitrary treatment, is transparent and proportionate in its measures and at all times also requires proper scrutiny by, and accountability to, Parliament and the people.

And so I want today to give you some examples of how in accordance with this approach we can, consistent with our security and the other priorities of government, do far more to entrench liberty in our constitutional settlement.

First, it is the British way to stand up for freedom of assembly, speech and press.

Wherever and whenever there are question marks over the ability to express dissent I believe that the balance should be with those taking action to defend and extend the liberty of individuals and their freedoms to express their views within the law.

So as I set out before the summer, I think it right - in consultation with the Metropolitan Police, Parliament, the Mayor of London, Westminster City Council and civil liberties groups - to review the law to ensure that people's right to protest outside the very heart of our democracy - the House of Commons - is not subject to unnecessary restrictions.

And the Home Secretary is publishing a consultation document on this issue today.

Alongside this it is important, as the Government has made clear, that charities are guaranteed the independence and the right to have their voice heard and to campaign on the issues that matter to them.

In addition, there is a case for applying our enduring ideas of liberty to ensure that the laws governing the press in this country fully respect freedom of speech.

The key is to achieve the right balance between freedom of the press, the protection of individual privacy, and public safety and security - and I now

believe there is more we can do to ensure that freedom of expression and legitimate journalism are protected.

We agree with the Select Committee on Culture that a free press is the hallmark of our democracy, that there is no case for statutory regulation of the press, that self-regulation of the press should be maintained and that it is for the publishers themselves to demonstrate by their decisions that they can sustain and bolster public confidence in the way information is gathered and used.

But for our part - and to make sure that in pursuing essential policy objectives like combating terrorism and tackling hate crime any new measures do not curb legitimate liberties to speak and be heard - Jack Straw, the Secretary of State for Justice, will investigate the idea of a freedom of expression audit for future legislation.

Last year, in a draft bill, we published proposals which would limit media access to coroners' courts.

Having undertaken extensive consultation we have now decided not to go ahead with these proposals.

No one wants to see criminals profiting from publishing books about their crimes.

At the same time, we must ensure that the freedom of the press to investigate and report is maintained.

Our preferred option, subject to further technical examination, would be for the public to have the right through civil orders to recover payments made to people where these payments can be constituted as benefits of crime.

The wilful abuse of personal data is of serious concern so there are proposals currently under consideration to clamp down on those who profit illegally from trade in personal data.

But Jack Straw has asked the Information Commissioner to produce guidance, in consultation with the Press Complaints Commission, to make sure we take into account concerns about the new rules - which allow for a prison sentence of up to two years.

Clear guidance will make sure that legitimate investigative journalism is not impeded but that the sanctions provide a strong deterrent to protect individual privacy.